

3 Tests to Discern a True Prophetic Word

Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry (Luke 1:41-42b).

We know Elizabeth spoke faithful prophecy, because the Bible tells us she was filled with the Holy Spirit. How can we tell if someone in our day speaks spiritual truth?

Ultimately, every possible Word from God must be tested by the perfect Word of God. The following points help this discernment occur:

1. True prophecy is under biblical authority. Prophecy isn't the highest authority; Scripture is. In Acts 17, Paul, who prophesies some of the New Testament, is teaching to an audience of Bereans. They are described as "noble" because they don't believe Paul's words until after testing them against the whole of Scripture (17:11). True prophecy is under, tested by and accountable to Scripture, and must therefore never contradict Scripture.

2. True prophecy is under godly spiritual authority. First Corinthians 14 describes proper conduct for church gatherings, providing an orderly framework for prophecy under the oversight of church leadership. This isn't open mic night at the karaoke bar where anyone can jump out of the pew and take the stage. Godly leaders are responsible for "testing the spirits" (1 John 4:1) and evaluating each prophecy before it's declared publicly in order to guard the church against false prophets.

3. True prophecy is true. A prophet who claims to predict the future must do so with 100 percent accuracy. Anything less, the Bible says, and he or she is a false prophet. Deuteronomy

18:22 says that “When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the word does not occur or come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You shall not be afraid of him.”

In light of the above, it is best whenever we are uncertain to walk the path of humility by saying something like, “I believe the Lord may have said this to me” or, “I would ask you to consider and examine this as I believe it may be from the Lord” rather than saying, as the prophets do a few hundred times in Scripture, “thus saith the Lord.” However, in Elizabeth’s case, the Spirit was so strong on her and clear through her that she prophesied perfectly. It was included in the Word of God because it was a word from God.

The Bible resides in authority over any other prophecy or teaching. Who or what are you prone to believe and trust more than Scripture? Your friends? A particular teacher or author? Yourself? {eoa}

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