




Biblical Truth About Dreams, Prophets, and Prophecies Part 1

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- God Dreams, Predictive and Literal Joseph's dream about his decreed destiny – unconditional dreams (unchangeable through prayer or action) Gen. 37 :5-8
 - “Meaningless (pizza) Dreams” – soul-cleansing dreams -
-“Much dreaming and many words are meaningless. Therefore worship God.” Ecc. 5:6

- **“False Dreams Masked as God Dreams”** demonic dreams
“Indeed I am against those who prophecy false dreams...they lead my people astray with their reckless lies. I did not send or appoint them.” Jer. 23:32
- **“Warning Dreams”** “For God does speak, now one way, now another...in a dream, in a vision in the night, He may speak in their ears and terrify them with warnings, to turn them from wrongdoing, to save them from the pit...” Job 33:14-18
 - Dream scenarios detailing the enemy’s plans or present actions can be changed through the prayers of the Church – this has happened.

- **Biblical Reality:** There are true and there are false prophecies that can be uttered by true prophets of God—some predictive and decreed by God (unconditional); most descriptions of God’s will but conditional in nature—dependent for fulfillment on “conditions” being met
 - “If My people...will repent and pray, then I will heal their land...” 2 Chron. 7:14
 - “He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.” Ps. 91:1

True Prophecies from True Prophets:

- **Amos 3:7**—“Surely the Lord will do nothing before He reveals His secrets to His servants the prophets.”
- **2 Chron. 2:20**—“Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper.”

False Prophecies

- **Jeremiah 23:16**—“This is what the Lord Almighty said, ‘Do not listen to what the prophets are prophesying to you; they fill you with false hopes. They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the Lord.’” —**note:** some false prophecies are false because the prophet “makes them up”
- **Deut. 18:22:** “If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not take place or come true, that is a message the Lord has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously...” error in comprehension/transmission – the prophet “presumes” the Lord has said something but has misunderstood
- **Paul in the NT** implies mixed: 1 Thess. 5: 21-22—“Hold tightly to that which is good (relating to prophecies); and stay away from everything that is evil (relating to prophecies)”

- **The Barn: the gift of prophecy** 1 Co. 14:1—“Pursue love, yet zealously crave spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophecy.” 1 Co. 14:31--“All of you may prophecy...that all may learn and be encouraged”
- **Prophet is a key gifting in the Church.** Eph. 4:11—“prophet” Eph. 2:20—the church is “built on the **foundation** of the apostles and the prophets.”
- **The Gift of Prophecy is new in the restored Church** Acts 3:21—heaven must hold the resurrected Jesus “until the time of the restoration of all things” – said to be the fullness of the Church prior to the return of Jesus

Definition of NT gift of prophecy: Prophecy is a Spirit-prompted, Spirit-sustained utterance in human words that

- is rooted in a true revelation from God (1 Co. 14:30—“But if a **revelation** is made to another who is seated, let the first prophet remain silent.”)
- but is imperfectly expressed because the prophet’s perception and handling of the revelation will be fallible.
- It is usually made to the gathered believers or to individuals spontaneously, or received beforehand by the spontaneous movement of the Holy Spirit, for the purposes of edification, exhortation, comfort, conviction or guidance.

Important Note: The NT gift of prophecy is *never* wholly free from human error because it *always* passes through a fallen, imperfect human vessel; and so prophecy needs testing and assessment on the basis of biblical truth and mature spiritual wisdom to separate what is from the Lord and what is not.

Definition of the Gift of Prophet – one who holds the office/equipping gift of the Eph. 4:11 prophet:

- anointed and matured by God to operate in a highly accurate and powerful dimension of prophetic ministry,
- including bringing about transformation/miracles by the power of his/her words;
- enabled by the Spirit to train up and impart anointing to others, especially those destined to excel in prophetic ministry and/or the office of the prophet;
- has spheres of assignment from the Lord, from a local church assignment, a regional assignment, to a prophet to nations.

Important Truths about the Gift of Prophecy & a Prophet's Words

Note: NT prophecy has a measure of divine authority greater than human wisdom but less than the authority of inspired, infallible scripture

- 1 Co. 13:9,12 : “For we know (as in “word of knowledge”) and we prophecy in part;””For now we see (perceive prophetically?) in a mirror dimly...”
- Acts 21:11--Agabus’ prophecy for Paul contained error – says “Jews” would bind Paul but in fact the Romans bound him.
- **Therefore:** Therefore: prophecy must never be taken as a perfect (infallible, inerrant) word from God with the authority of scripture

Note: Also, the OT true prophets' words were 1) inspired—God-breathed in their origin and full expression; 2) inerrant—without error in their original manuscripts; and 3) infallible--superintended (overseen) by God to be perfectly accurate in expression because God bypassed the fallenness of the prophets and made their words perfect. He did this also in the NT for the apostles who wrote scripture, but **not the NT prophets.**

Therefore: True NT prophets can speak false prophecies, false entirely or false in some parts of what is prophesied.

How Prophetic Speakers Can Misspeak God's Prophetic Revelation

- **We can misperceive the revelation's "raw material" itself** – we see a dream/vision but miss certain parts of it---it's too fleeting and we miss parts of what we quickly see; or we "make up" a revelation from our own imagination, wishful thinking, or current topical immersion *Example—my prophetic conclusion that The Barn was to grow to 1,000 members*

How Prophetic Speakers Can Misspeak God's Prophetic Revelation

- **We can misinterpret what we see/hear**— draw wrong conclusions about the meaning of God's revelation – *example* – *see a baby boy, interpret it as God giving a woman a physical son, but not* –
- **We can make an application mistake** as to what/when/or how the revelation is to be applied to the hearers –we confuse timing-- think something is for now when it's for later, or think it's to be acted on when it's to be prayed over at this point – *example—Lynn's prophetic words from lady at Toronto*



Biblical Truth About Dreams, Prophets, and Prophecies Part 2

3 “levels” or kinds of prophetic ministry we see in the NT:

- **Prophetic speakers** – those operating in prophetic speaking (different gradations: simple prophecy (giving an impression); gift of prophecy (more and stronger revelations—visions, dreams, words); the ministry of prophecy (gift given frequently and reliably, also add higher functions such as details, predictions, open visions, correction); the office gift of prophet (Eph. 4:11)—see info later
- **Gifting available to all--** all in the church may move in simple prophecy and the gift of prophecy—1 Co. 14:31—“For you can all prophesy one by one...”

False prophets – Scriptures—in OT, we have multiple passages, from Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Deuteronomy, that show us prophets who prophesy falsely but none are actually called *false prophets* (though in Luke 6:26, Jesus refers to OT false prophets)—we find false prophets in the NT-- twice mentioned by Jesus:

End Time Increase in False Prophets:

Mark 13:22—“For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and wonders so amazing that possibly God’s people themselves will be deceived.”

How to Recognize False Prophets: Matt. 7:15-16—“Watch out for false prophets. They will come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their **fruit** you will recognize them.”

False Prophets “Fruit,” 2 Kinds—

Evil Character and Lifestyle—Matt. 7:16—recognize them by their “fruit” of evil character manifested in evil behavior--

--show a life dominated by the flesh, not the fruit of the Spirit – especially shown by “fleecing the sheep”—taking money and provision instead of giving

Proclaiming Unsound Doctrine—Particularly doctrine concerning Jesus Christ that is not biblically accurate –

1 John 4:1-2—“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but evaluate (judge/test) the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God...”

Both: 2 Peter 2:1-3—“But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies...many will follow their sensuality...and in their greed they will exploit you with their false words.”

From **the Didache**—1st century manual of ministry protocols

Examples NT Example: Jezebel – Rev. 2:20—“prophetess” – unsound doctrine and wicked lifestyle;

: the Revelation character—the False Prophet-- found with the Beast—Rev. 16:13, 19:20, 20:10 – ends up in the lake of fire with Satan and his fallen angels

True prophets (Eph. 4:11) –men or women –

- **Agabus:** NT prophet, came from Jerusalem to Antioch— prophesied famine Acts 11:27-30, Paul's future imprisonment, Acts 21:10-12
- **Philip the Evangelist's four daughters**—NT prophetesses, Acts 21:8-9
- **Teach Sound Doctrine, Show Good Fruit**—behavior and attitudes show the fruit of the Spirit —the man of God must be gentle, giving, not money-driven, will do what they tell others to do
- **Scope of ministry**—ed., ex., comfort, plus guidance (sometimes very specific) and conviction (exposing secrets of the heart) at more mature, authoritative (and accurate) level—note: work in submission to church leadership

- **Scope of ministry:** prophecy functioning toward church leaders, churches, groups of churches, other areas as called (marketplace, political); called to lay or shift **foundations** in churches, work in church-planting; words are joined to signs and wonders and often signs in nature; accurate prediction of future events—high level of accuracy
- **Is foundation worker** – builds with words (prophet's words destroy and create at the foundational level in churches and kingdom works)
- **Often moves in miracles** because of the power of his/her words
- **Prophetic accuracy is high** but not perfect, Agabus is an example—
- **Responds to mistakes with humility**, not defensiveness.

The Danger of Infallibility for the NT speaker of Prophecy

- confuses OT and NT prophetic speaking. OT true prophecies are inerrant because God supernaturally *bypassed the fallibility of the human vessels*. For NT prophecy, *God does not bypass the fallibility of the speaker*—so some level of “mix” will always be there—the more mature in the Lord will be more of the Lord and less of the human.

Theological Error in Prophetic Movement

Over-realized New Creationism – thinking that your soul (mind, emotions—feelings, and will)—as part of your “new man” is “perfect” and therefore incapable of mishearing, misinterpreting, or mis-applying God’s communication to you personally

1 Co. 2:16—“we have the mind of Christ” – misunderstood and misapplied to mean that our thoughts/feelings/impressions are fully inerrant—*divinized mind!* – **Truth:** we *partake in* His mind, and His (*rhema*) thoughts to us—His worldview, His understanding of things by His Spirit’s giftings, His view of God and reality. But our minds are still an arena of God’s thoughts, our own thoughts, and demonic thoughts. Discernment and humility are required! If the NT prophetic speaker misunderstands the inherent fallibility of his words, he will inevitably grow proud and dangerous—cults and heresies arise from such men and women, who thrive on controlling others with their prophetic words. No humility (because none needed!—he is always right)

Two “Bewares” in the Contemporary Prophetic Movement:

- **Out-of-order Leadership in the Body of Christ.** If “the prophets” are followed blindly by members of the local church, then who leads the local church?
- **Is Political Prophecy a Biblical *Metron* (appointed sphere of authority) for NT Prophecy? (2 Co. 10:13-14)** – OT political prophecies—kings and military victories yes; NT – none. Why? God has not covenanted with a single nation anymore, but with the body of Christ—question: is it appropriate for NT prophets to prophesy the political future?

Need to Judge Prophets and Prophecies –

- **Judging Prophets**—by their fruit Jesus says we can *recognize* (“know”—to understand full, clearly, decisively) them – so we must “judge” (discern) them; they are not above judgment—no excuse—I am God’s mouthpiece, and all I say is from Him. No man’s judges me! No—“the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.”

Need to Judge Prophets and Prophecies –

Judging Prophecies -- Scriptures—local church protocols of “evaluation”—

- 1 Thess. 5:19-20—“Do not quench the Spirit; do not despise prophetic utterances. But examine (discern) everything; hold tightly to what is good, and stay away from what is evil.”
- 1 Co. 14:29—“Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment.” Major prophetic words must be judged—discerned (separated out), weighed for accuracy – at the time of the prophecy, or, if appropriate, later—but must be done if prophecy is off especially

3 Keys to Prophetic Ministry--

- **Prophecies Mostly Confirm:** most prophecies confirm what God has been already speaking to you—“now words,” but not all: some are “new words” most will be edification, encouragement, or comfort; but some could be specific guidance or a warning or bringing a point of conviction—usually by a mature prophet.
- **True Prophecies Can Be Packaged in Harsh Flesh:** Eph. 4:15—“Speak truth in love” – is the ideal way prophecy should be given, but sometimes truth is spoken but packaged in unsanctified human flesh, not the Spirit’s fruit; separate out the kernel of truth while ignoring the chaff of human flesh around it – David Wilkerson—true prophet of God but delivery was harsh and blunt. *Eat the meat, spit out the bones applies to content and to style for prophecies*

3 Keys to Prophetic Ministry--

Can God Trust You Not to Prophecy? Not all received revelations are to be openly shared with others: some are from God just to you, and some are from God but only to be prayed over by you, not spoken out. The mature prophetic speaker knows when to speak and when to not speak.

4 Tests for Accepting or Rejecting Prophetic Words:

1. Alignment with Scripture—conformity to, not in contradiction to, scriptural truth and the “tone” of God’s nature John 17:17—“The Holy Spirit will guide you into (according to) all truth.” God’s word is truth. Example—God told me I can fail to report (fill in the blank) on my taxes this year. No—scripture says pay your taxes!

2. Witness of the Holy Spirit (peace and “yes”—or not “no” and inner turmoil or confusion) in your own spirit – “For the Holy Spirit witnesses to my own spirit that ...” Romans 8:16; Eph. 1:14—“For He Himself is our peace...” example—God told me you were supposed to marry me. O yeah? Well, He needs to tell me!

3. Get Real-Time Affirmation by Trusted Mature Believers If **corporate prophecy**, implied endorsement of leaders present with spiritual wisdom – they must say: disregard that word if it was not of God

If **individual prophecy**, endorsement by two or three mature Christian who hear and affirm the prophetic word, usually after the prophecy is given – our submission of marriage decision to spiritual believers

Local church elders/prophets examine and evaluate “prophets” words

4. Get 2-3 External Confirmations if Prophetic Direction-- Ask and receive two or three “outside” confirmations by the Spirit from other sources of revelation – i.e., more prophetic words, scripture illuminated, some “sign” of an open door in circumstances – examples: ten prophecies in one year; letters written on a delivery truck that caught my eye