

Are personal prophecies from a modern Christian prophet biblical? Can a prophet prophesy "on demand?"

We recognize that there are those Christians who do not believe that God speaks through prophets today despite what the New Testament says. We can only point out that they believe a doctrine that keeps them from believing the New Testament entirely. So, we write this answer from the Scriptures for those who believe that all the New Testament is entirely for today.

The Old Testament prophets spoke prophecy to individuals, families, tribes and the nation of Israel and even the foreign nations and foreign individuals. We would expect the New Covenant prophet to do all that and more. It was common among the Jews in the Old Testament to seek a personal prophecy from a prophet. So obviously, the prophets ministered to individuals as they came expecting to hear the Lord speak through the prophet. For instance, the prophet Gad spoke personal prophecy to King David often as did other prophets:

When David arose in the morning, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, "Go and speak to David, 'Thus the LORD says, "I am offering you three things; choose for yourself one of them, which I may do to you.'" (2 Samuel 24:11-12)

Anyone could seek out a prophet and receive a word from the Lord. For instance, this passage tells us that "when a man went to inquire of God" that he would "go to the seer (prophet)." The book of First Samuel says:

(Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he used to say, "Come, and let us go to the seer"; for he who is called a prophet now was formerly called a seer.) Then Saul said to his servant, "Well said; come, let us go." So they went to the city where the man of God was. (1 Samuel 9:9-10)

The story continues beyond these verses but these two verses make it clear that seeking a prophet/seer for personal prophecy was very common in ancient Israel. We provide a way to do that online. We have Christian people coming to a Christian prophet online for a personal prophecy.

The Lord Jesus also gave personal prophecies to His disciples. Some of them are recorded. He gave both Peter and Judas specific prophetic words about their particular futures that came to pass. He gave His disciple Nathanael a very personal prophetic word when He first met him. Christ had already seen him by revelation. Christ told him in this word that he would see greater things. Here it is:

Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel.

"Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than these." (John 1:47-50)

The Apostle Paul in one of his writings to Timothy reminded Timothy twice that he had received important personal prophecies.

This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may fight the good fight, (1Timothy 1:18)

...and in the same letter...

Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed upon you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. (1Timothy 4:14)

Paul told Timothy that he could "fight the good fight" on the basis on these prophecies. Paul told Timothy that he had also received a spiritual gift through prophecy. Any reasonable believer should see that personal prophecy is highly valuable and desirable.

Prophecy on Demand

There are some older Pentecostal groups that may be under the false impression that a prophet cannot prophesy to everyone. These folks are generally under the impression that they have to wait for a prophecy to come before speaking. If you believe that, then it will happen that way. However, any prophet can prophesy to everyone if they believe that they can. They can open their mouths in faith and will be able to speak the word of the Lord to anyone. They can prophesy according to the proportion of their faith. They, like the Old Testament prophet, can speak prophecy "on demand."

In Second Kings chapter 3, three kings found themselves in a difficult situation and sought out the prophet Elisha for guidance. It is clear from this passage, that they believed that Elisha could speak prophecy "on demand."

But Jehoshaphat asked, "Is there no prophet of the Lord here, that we may inquire of the Lord through him?" An officer of the king of Israel answered, "Elisha son of Shaphat is here. He used to pour water on the hands of Elijah." Jehoshaphat said, "The word of the Lord is with him." So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him. ...Elisha said, "As surely as the Lord Almighty lives, whom I serve, if I did not have respect for the presence of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, I would not look at you or even notice you." (2 Kings 3:11-12,14)

Despite Elisha's disrespect for the King of Israel, he did give them a prophetic word and it was "on demand." Elisha did not have the word of the Lord until after they had asked him. In other words, he prophesied to them "on demand."

The Apostle Paul writes:

And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; (Romans 12:6)

A Christian prophet can speak prophecy "on demand" just like the Old Testament prophets. He does it according to the proportion of his faith. He can prophesy "on demand" if he believes that he can.

If there are examples of a personal prophecy recorded in the New Testament then that means that there were other prophets giving personal prophecy that were not recorded. Thankfully, there are examples of prophets and others in ministry giving personal prophetic words to individuals in the New Testament.

A Personal Prophecy to the Apostle Paul through the New Covenant Prophet Agabus.

Luke wrote about New Covenant prophets interacting with other believers. He writes about the interaction of the New Covenant Prophet Agabus and the Apostle Paul. Paul receives a personal prophecy from Agabus:

And as we were staying there for some days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands, and said, "This is what the Holy Spirit says: 'In this way the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" (Acts 21:10-11)

This is clearly a personal prophecy to Paul. There had to be many other personal prophecies that were not recorded. Prophets and personal prophecy were common in the Early Church. This passage mentions that among the leaders at Antioch that some of them were prophets.

Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. And while they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." (Acts 13:1-2)

A very personal word about the ministries of Barnabas and Saul came to them and was likely spoken from one of the prophets present in this group of leaders.

Not only did the Apostle Paul receive personal prophetic utterance but he also spoke prophecies. This is a corrective personal prophecy to a false prophet from the Apostle Paul: Luke writes:

But Saul, who was also known as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fixed his gaze upon him, and said, "You who are full of all deceit and fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to make crooked the straight ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and not see

the sun for a time." And immediately a mist and a darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking those who would lead him by the hand. (Acts 13:9-11)

In Paul's instruction to the Church concerning spiritual gifts, he describes the effect of personal prophecies on an unbeliever as the secrets of his heart are revealed. Paul writes:

But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you. (1 Corinthians 14:24-25)

Two or three prophets were expected to speak at every Christian meeting according to Paul. This was likely to be personal prophecy. (Where does the Bible say that it can't be personal prophecy to other Christians?)

Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said (1 Corinthians 14:29; see also 14:32, 37).

Paul also relates the expected characteristics of personal prophecy to other Christians.

But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. (1 Corinthians 14:3)

In general, we would expect that prophecy to other believers would build them up, encourage and comfort them. This is exactly what we see when mature Christian prophets minister among us.