

#7 A SPOKEN WORD.....

As I sleep, a voice gently speaks to me, saying, "My people suffer from lack of prophesying."

When we speak of "prophesying" we must define it somewhat. Many Christians do not understand what prophecy is. First of all, it is not fortune-telling which is of the demonic realm. It is not in itself preaching, exhorting or teaching, though these may at times include prophecy. In simple layman's terms it is speaking the word of God for the moment, or speaking God's word under direct inspiration by His Spirit. It may or may not include prediction.

The prophetic word is usually of a nature which encourages, prepares, warns or comforts others for some work or state of spirit that requires an extra measure of God's grace. The apostle Paul highly valued the gift of prophecy! He states in I Corinthians 14:1, 3:

"Follow after love; yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy."

"But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men edification, and exhortation, and consolation."

We still need pastors, teachers and preachers. We also need apostles and prophets! Now present day apostles and prophets do not add new doctrines to the Word, but they are still part of the ministries needed to pioneer and speak forth God's will to our generation. Prophetic utterances are usually not learned words that are spoken as such. They are usually supernaturally revealed bits of knowledge given to help a certain person or church. Yet a teacher or preacher may give a prophetic word that convicts of sin and reveals the state of an individual's heart. Prophets may still receive their revelations by dreams, visions and angels as they did in biblical times. What is said and revealed, however, must be judged by the Word of God and the Spirit as well as by its delivery and timing. One does not prophesy at will as one might teach or preach. God gives revelation for prophecy as He wills, not as we will; they come at His timing and by His chosen methods.

The book of Jeremiah has much to say about true and false prophets. Jeremiah accused the false prophets of speaking out of their own spirits, and said they had seen nothing. We still have false prophets around today who speak lies in the name of the Lord. Some will say that we have no prophets or apostles today, that they are not needed. Well, if so, the same must acknowledge we do not need the gifts of teachers, preachers and evangelists for they are all grouped together. Some say that we have the written Word and need no more. The same deny the Spirit's moving today and have head knowledge only of God's Word with no spiritual walk and real fellowship with God.

Mind religion alone is not of God. The mind is a mere channel that can be used for good or evil. Many have the letter of the Word without the spirit of the Word. Jesus dealt with the same sort in His time. The written Word of God is our foundation for testing all spiritual things; however, it never was intended to take the place of God and His Spirit. What would you think if your husband or wife honored your written letters to them above you? You say how stupid! Yes! Yet many Christians do the same with God. Even the Bible can become an idol if we let it hold a greater part of us than God Himself. We must not be afraid of prophets and revelations; let us instead test all things and keep what is good and reject that which is not.