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**The Nature of New Testament Prophecy:
An Examination of Wayne Grudem's Position**



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Simply stated, a prophet is someone who speaks the words of another. Consider Moses and Aaron. When Moses complained about being slow of speech and slow of tongue, this is what God said with reference to Aaron, “Now you shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth. And I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach you what you shall do. So he shall be your spokesman to the people. And he himself shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall be to him as God...So the Lord said to Moses: See, I have made you as God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet.” (Ex. 4:15; 7:1).

Aaron was Moses’ “prophet”. He spoke Moses’ words to Pharaoh. Therefore, when anyone is the Lord’s prophet, he must be someone who speaks the word of the Lord to the people. As we read in Deut. 18:18, “I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.” A true prophet, therefore, speaks the pure word of God with divine authority.

Is it possible that this view of the nature of prophecy is wrong or at best only partially true? This is what some scholars even from a reformed tradition are suggesting in our day. So, as I began my study for this assigned paper with my Greek NT open to 1 Corinthians 14:1, I felt the need to more thoroughly investigate this new position on prophecy. I had heard Wayne Grudem's name mentioned several times in this regard. I also gathered from Don Carson’s comments on 1 Corinthians 12 - 14 that he basically agreed with Grudem’s position. It was time to check out the rumours I had heard. This paper is my report to you of that investigation. May it and our discussion of it be to the edification of the church.

Wayne A. Grudem is an associate professor of biblical and systematic theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois. He is active in a Vineyard-affiliated church and is one of their chief defending theologians. You may be familiar with his book on systematic theology and the one he co-authored with John Piper on biblical manhood and womanhood.

Grudem has written two books on the subject of NT prophecy. The first is The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians, which is his Ph.D. dissertation submitted to Cambridge University in 1978 with slight modifications. This came out in 1982. A similar, more popular work, is The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today, published in 1988. The main thesis of these books has received the approval of such men as Philip E. Hughes and Vern S. Poythress of Westminster Theological Seminary as well as

Don Carson, also of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. J. I. Packer writes on the cover of The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians, "Careful and clear; a very valuable contribution".

A CONFESSEDLY NOVEL VIEW

In the preface to his first book Grudem writes:

I found that a detailed study of the biblical text led me to a definition of New Testament prophecy which was somewhat different from the teachings of many within the charismatic movement, but also different from the views of those, especially within Reformed and Dispensationalist circles, who have expressed objections to or skepticism about claims to prophecy found in charismatic groups today. But even though I do not agree fully with either group, I hope that in my somewhat new definition of the nature of Christian prophecy both pro-charismatics and anti-charismatics may be able to find a "middle ground" with a considerable potential for reconciling their current differences.¹

For someone to suggest a new definition of a biblical truth after hundreds of years of church history have elapsed is rather bold to say the least. Is it warranted? Let's take a look.

GRUDEM STATES HIS POSITION

In his first major summary statement, Grudem concludes:

...Paul thought of prophecy at Corinth as something different than the prophecy we see, for instance, in Revelation or in many parts of the OT. There, a divine authority of actual words is claimed by or on behalf of the prophets. But the prophecy we find in 1 Corinthians is more like the phenomena we saw in extra-Biblical Jewish literature: it is based on some type of supernatural "revelation," but that revelation only gives it a kind of divine authority of general content. The prophet could err, could misinterpret, and could be questioned or challenged at any point. He had a minor kind of "divine" authority, but it certainly was not absolute.²

¹Grudem, The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians, xv.

Again, he says:

...I am asking those in the cessationist camp to give serious thought to the possibility that prophecy in ordinary New Testament churches was not equal to Scripture in authority, but was simply a very human - and sometimes partially mistaken - report of something the Holy Spirit brought to someone's mind.³

Another key element in Grudem's position is the assertion that in the NT, the counterpart of the OT prophets are the apostles, and not the NT prophets. He states:

...those who are viewed as divinely authoritative messengers in the NT are most often called not "prophets" but "apostles." This is significant for our investigation because if the NT apostles are frequently seen as the counterparts to the OT prophets, then NT prophets might often be something quite different.⁴

If this position is accepted, then changes must be made in the thinking of both cessationist and charismatic non-cessationist believers. The charismatics would need to stop using a "Thus says the Lord" introduction to their prophesying, since, according to Grudem, this kind of "authority of words" prophecy is limited to the OT prophets and NT apostles. A more humble, "I feel the Lord has shown me...", would be more appropriate to the status of NT prophets.

On the other hand, the cessationists would now be free to accept the ongoing, less authoritative nature of NT prophecy without feeling that the finality and supremacy of the NT scriptures are being threatened.

STANDARD FOR COMPARISON USED BY THE EARLY CHURCH

Let's back up a bit. We know that following the day of Pentecost, there was a proliferation of prophetic activity in the early church. "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy..." provides

²Ibid., p. 74.

³Grudem, The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today, p. 14.

⁴Grudem, The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians, p.43.

evidence of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, the early church has to face the growing problem of false prophecy. “Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many,” Jesus warns (Mt. 24:11). John tells us that this indeed happened, for “many false prophets have gone out into the world,” he states (1 John 4:1).

Because of this, the early church needed to exercise care and discernment. Prophets and their prophecies must be tested. Paul exhorts, “Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good” (1 Thess. 5:20, 21). The Corinthian church is told, “Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge” (1 Cor. 14:29). John adds, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God...every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God” (1 John 4:1-3).

As the early church sought to carry out this activity of discernment in evaluating NT prophets, what did they frequently use as their standard of comparison? Let's check out church history. Here the work of F. David Farnell is quite helpful. Farnell is the chairman of the Department of Ministerial Studies at Southeastern Bible College in Birmingham, Alabama. In the first of a four-part series on NT prophecy printed in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, after referring to a number of references in Eusebius, Justin Martyr,⁵ Epiphanius and others, Farnell states, “Thus the early church used Old Testament prophets and prophecy as a model for New Testament prophets and prophecy...Here the understanding of a direct continuity between Old Testament and New Testament prophets is seen in the early church.”⁶ As the early church combated false prophecy in Montanism, Epiphanius in *Panarion* 48.2 indicates that an important argument against Montanism was that prophecies of true prophets must be fulfilled exactly.⁷ This is precisely what the OT requires if a prophet has the right to claim he is the Lord's (cf. Deut. 18:20, 22).

Surely it is not going beyond the evidence to suggest that the early church did not adopt a lower standard of evaluation or accept a different definition of the nature of New Testament prophecy. New Testament prophets had to have 100% accuracy, just as their Old Testament counterparts.

NO DISCONTINUITY BETWEEN JOEL 2 AND ACTS 2

⁵Farnell, *The Current Debate about New Testament Prophecy*, p. 292 quotes from Justin Martyr in *Dialogue* 82, “For the prophetic gifts remain with us, even to the present time. And hence you ought to understand that [the gifts] formerly among your nation have been transferred to us [the church].”

⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 291, 292.

In Joel 2:28 we are told, “...Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy...” This is spoken by an Israelite prophet to a people who were well aware of the nature of OT prophecy. It is this passage that is quoted by Peter as being fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. The New Covenant would be inaugurated by a proliferation of prophecy, greater than what was experienced under the Old Covenant. There is not the slightest hint that prophecy under the New Covenant would be inferior to that in the Old, as would surely be the case if New Testament prophecy by its very nature was often a mixture of truth and error. Neither Joel nor Peter indicates the least qualitative difference in the nature of this prophecy.

NOW CONCERNING AGABUS

In Acts 21:10, 11 we read, “And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. When he had come to us, he took Paul’s belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, “Thus says the Holy Spirit, ‘So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.’”

Grudem uses this prophecy as a typical example of NT prophecy, which can contain mistakes and errors. He looks at Acts 21:27-35 and suggests that neither of Agabus’ predictions came true. “Paul was not bound by the Jews but by the Romans, and far from delivering Paul over to the Romans, they tried to kill him, and he had to be delivered from the Jews by the soldiers.”⁸ Grudem further comments:

...it is not that Agabus has spoken in a totally false or misleading way; it is just that he has the details wrong. But this kind of minor inaccuracy is exactly compatible with the type of prophecy we found earlier in 1 Corinthians, in which the prophet receives some kind of revelation and then reports it in his own words. He would have a “divine authority of general content” (Paul would be imprisoned at Jerusalem), but with the details wrong.⁹

D.A. Carson also states with reference to Agabus, “I can think of no reported Old Testament prophet whose prophecies are so wrong on the details.”¹⁰

⁷Ibid., p. 293.

⁸Grudem, The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians, p. 79.

⁹Ibid., pp. 80, 81.

¹⁰Carson, Showing the Spirit, p. 98.

Someone is surely wrong here, but I would suggest that it is Grudem and Carson, not Agabus or the Holy Spirit. Let's look more carefully at this prophecy. To begin with we are dealing with a prophet whose reputation precedes him. In Acts 11:27 he "showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar." At the very least, the accuracy of this prophecy leads us to expect the same from his next prophecy.

Next, note the continuity with Old Testament prophets as is reflected by the graphic symbolism of Agabus' binding of his own hands and feet with Paul's belt. Not only does it put this prophecy on a level with Isaiah 20, Jeremiah 13, and Ezekiel 24, it also is an indication of the certainty Agabus must have felt regarding its fulfillment.

Especially telling, however, is the introductory phrase, "Thus says the Holy Spirit", followed by what the Holy Spirit said. In the NT the formula "Tade legei" ("these are the words of") is only found here and in Rev. 2, 3 at the beginning of each of the seven letters to the churches in Asia. In the LXX, this is the common rendering of "Thus says the Lord". Agabus was surely quite aware that by his symbolic actions and introductory words he was placing himself on the same inspired level as the holy men of God of the Old Testament who were borne along by the Holy Spirit.

But what about the "mistakes" Grudem alleges? Let's consider the second one first. Contrary to what Grudem says, the Jews did deliver Paul over to the Romans. They might not have done it willingly at first, but they still did do it! This is supported by Paul's own statement in Acts 28:17, "...I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans..." But did the Jews bind Paul? Surely they did, in the sense that it was because of their hatred that Paul was bound to start with. It was at their insistence that he not be released, but remain a prisoner at Caesarea (Acts 24:27). The Jews at Jerusalem were just as responsible for Paul's being bound as earlier Jews were for Jesus being crucified. They may not have personally and literally done the job, but their hatred brought it about (in the plan and purpose of God).

If Grudem demanded this kind of rigid literalism in the fulfillment of OT prophecy, what would he do with "I will send you Elijah the prophet" (Mal. 4:5)? Did Malachi only have an "authority of general content" at this point? Was he, like Agabus, mistaken? Or does the fulfillment explain what God meant when He inspired the prophet to say what he did? Sure the latter is the case with Malachi, and, I submit, with Agabus as well.

FEELING THE PRESSURE OF EPHESIANS 2:20

This text reminds us that the church is “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone”. Our focus is on the inclusion of the prophets with the apostles as the foundation of the church. That these prophets are NT prophets cannot be seriously questioned, especially in the light of Eph. 3:5 where the apostles and prophets again are found together as recipients of the revelation of the mystery that the Spirit has “now” made known.

If we accept Grudem’s description of a NT prophet, then this text presents two main problems. The first problem is that Eph. 2:20 gives NT prophets a rather high and exalted position in God’s plan for the church. They are placed right up there (or down there! - foundation) with the apostles. This is not really appropriate for those whose “word from the Lord” may and often does contain a mixture of truth and error that needs to be sorted out by the hearers. While the gift of prophecy to the church was to be eagerly sought, yet, from Grudem’s perspective, it would hardly place its recipient next to the apostles in founding the church of Christ.

The second problem relates to the clear implications of the imagery of being the “foundation”. Once a foundation is laid, it does not need to go on being laid. This clearly points to the temporary nature and cessation of the office of apostle. This poses no problem for Grudem and company. However, the same reasoning would also indicate that like the apostles, so the NT prophets were raised up to serve in the founding of the church. Once this task was complete, this office, like that of apostle, was no longer needed. This very definitely is not in line with Grudem’s view.

His solution to these two problems is to translate “*twn apostolwn kai profhtwn*” as “the apostles who are also prophets”.¹¹ This would make the apostles the sole foundation of the church and would emphasize their prophetic ministry, which Grudem says, is of the same nature as the OT prophets. Apostolic prophecy, unlike that of Agabus and the Corinthians, has an “authority of words” and is not mixed with error.

In support of his translation, Grudem points to the Greek construction behind “the apostles and prophets”. There is only one definite article (*twn* - “the”) to modify two nouns (apostles and prophets). This, Grudem suggests, could indicate that both nouns refer to the same group of people. He then proceeds to list “over twenty Pauline examples where clearly only one person or group is implied by this

¹¹Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians*, p. 97.

type of construction.”¹² This is at first glance an impressive array of texts, but it is also a list of very questionable value.

Granville Sharp is known for his extensive work with definite article constructions in Greek. “Sharp’s rule” does state that when two nouns of the same case are connect by kai and preceded by only one definite article, then the latter noun always relates to the same person that is expressed by the first noun. However, one of the clear stipulations of Sharp’s rule is that both nouns must be in the singular. You can see that this is not so in Eph. 2:20. And as Farnell points out,

Grudem’s cross-references cited to support an equation of apostles and prophets are invalid, because every one of the examples is semantically unparallel. Not one is a clear example of an application of Sharp’s rule to plural nouns as Grudem’s position on Eph. 2:20 would require.¹³

In Eph. 2:20, apostles and prophets are closely linked. They are both important components of the one foundation. But Greek rules of grammar lend no weight to support Grudem’s “apostles who are prophets” translation. The broader context of Ephesians would actually indicate that we are dealing with two groups of gifted people. In Eph. 4:11 we are told that Christ “gave some to be apostles, some prophets...” Here both nouns have their own definite article. They are two separate groups.

Before we move on, let’s also note the important position accorded to New Testament prophets. In Eph. 4:11 they are mentioned second only to apostles. Their importance is also seen in Rom. 12:6-8, where the first gift mentioned is prophecy. Similarly, 1 Cor. 12:28 lists “first apostles, second prophets, third...” The emphasis on prophecy seen in these texts, in my judgment, is not given enough consideration by Don Carson when he comments, “...New Testament prophecy, by contrast with that of the Old, cuts a very low profile...There are only two passages in the Pauline correspondence where prophets stand in more exalted company, Ephesians 2:20 and 3:5.”¹⁴ What about Eph. 4:22, Rom. 12:6-8 and 1 Cor. 12:28?

Only by minimizing the status accorded to New Testament prophets can you even begin to equate what is happening in the “prophecy” of the charismatic/Vineyard movement with the New Testament.

¹²Ibid., p.101.

¹³Farnell, Does the New Testament Teach Two Prophetic Gifts?, p. 78. (for the full discussion cf. pp. 73-79.)

¹⁴Carson, p. 96.

Ephesians 2:20 makes that very difficult to do. It is not surprising to find Carson objecting to Gaffin's emphasis on this text. He states:

It is as illegitimate for Gaffin [Perspectives on Pentecost] to use this verse as the controlling factor in his understanding of the New Testament gift of prophecy as it would be to conclude from Titus 1:12...that the New Testament prophets were pagan poets from Crete.¹⁵

Why is it illegitimate? Ephesians is a book with the church of Christ as its very theme. It deals in a very comprehensive way with this theme, including the gifts Christ has given to his church.

ON TO 1 CORINTHIANS 14

One of Grudem's main arguments for nonauthoritative congregational NT prophecy (as opposed to OT/apostolic authoritative prophecy), is 1 Cor. 14:29 where Paul instructs them, "Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge." Grudem explains:

...one can conclude that 1 Cor. 14:29 indicates that the whole congregation would listen and evaluate what was said by the prophet, forming opinions about it, and some would perhaps discuss it publicly. Each prophecy might have both true and false elements in it...Now this process is understandable only if there is a difference in the kind of speech envisioned by the OT and that in 1 Cor. The OT prophets claimed to be speaking God's very words. But it is inconceivable that Paul or the Corinthians thought that God's words needed to be evaluated to see whether or not they were true or useful. So the prophets at Corinth must not have been thought to speak with a divine authority of actual words, but rather with just a divine authority of general content, which made the prophecies subject to evaluation and questioning at every point.¹⁶

As far as I have been able to determine, this is Grudem's main beam upon which he rests his case for this new view of the nature of NT prophecy. Can it fairly be said to bear that kind of weight? You be the judge.

¹⁵Carson, p. 97.

¹⁶Grudem, The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians, pp. 66, 67.

Why does Paul need to instruct the Corinthian church to evaluate/judge/distinguish when it comes to prophecies/prophets? From other NT passages it is clear that because of the growing presence of false prophets both “from among yourselves” (Acts 20:30), and from abroad, the church must “test the spirits” (1 John 4:1). The apostle John doesn’t instruct his children to test them to see what part of their prophecy is true and what part is false, but rather to judge “whether they are of God”. You do that not only by how they conduct themselves (“Beware of false prophets...You will know them by their fruits” Mt. 7:15, 16.), but also by what they say. If they live ungodly lives or if they speak falsely concerning the truth or the future, then surely they are “false” prophets. After all, how much falsehood is allowed before one is considered a false prophet? Also, what false prophet has not mixed a little truth in with his falsehood, and laid claim to a few miracles in order “to deceive, if possible, even the elect” (Mt. 24:24)?

The need for careful judging, then, is not because of a shift from infallible OT prophets to fallible NT prophets, but rather because of the greater number of NT prophets coupled with the proliferation of false prophets. “To whom should we listen?” is the question. This is really no different than what needed to take place in OT Israel. Deut. 13:1-6 and Deut. 18:20-22 both show how the Israelites were to judge whether a prophet was the Lord’s or not. There is discontinuity between the covenants in the penalty for being a false prophet, but not in the need to discern between true and false prophets.

In my judgment, Grudem often spends much time and space on arguments that contribute nothing to bolster his thesis. For example, he focuses our attention on the Greek word for “judge” (diakrinw). He initially admits that it has “an extremely wide range of meaning”, and quotes from Barrett who says, “It is impossible to find a consistent rendering of the word distinguish (diakrinein), because Paul did not use it consistently.”¹⁷ But then, Grudem proceeds to claim that Paul’s use of this word “helps” us define the “kind” of evaluation which would be done, and that if Paul had meant that they were to judge whether a speaker was a true or false prophet, he “probably” would have used krinw instead.¹⁸ I hope no one will blame me if I find that form of argument less than convincing.

Although not as central to his argument as 1 Cor. 14:29, Grudem claims that vs. 30 supports his view of “revelation which is lightly esteemed”.¹⁹ Paul writes, “But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, and all may be encouraged” (14:30, 31). Grudem claims that this command for the first prophet to be silent could result in his prophecy being

¹⁷Ibid., p. 58.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 64, 65.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 67.

“lost forever and never heard by the church”.²⁰ This result cannot be proven by Grudem. He cannot prove that later on in the meeting opportunity is not given for the first prophet to resume his original prophecy, or to finish giving it at a later date, since “the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets”. Given the problems with carnality and confusion that were present at the Corinthian assemblies, we should not be surprised to find instructions regarding the importance of orderly submission to one another.

Finally, we will consider Grudem’s use of 1 Cor. 14:37, 38. “If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.” This is his comment:

...according to Paul, the words of the prophets at Corinth were not and could not have been sufficiently authoritative to show Paul to be wrong. If he is claiming for himself a divine authority of actual words, he is attributing to the Corinthian prophets something far less than that.²¹

Did I miss something? Because the Corinthian prophets are expected to submit to what Paul says, does that in any way imply that their pronouncements as true prophets of God are far less authoritative? Because the Lord Jesus Christ submitted to His Father’s will, did that make His “I say unto you” any less authoritative? If this is the kind of exegesis that must be resorted to in order to support a thesis, then it’s surely in order to question the thesis.

SOME OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

1. Be very wary of anyone who seeks to persuade the church of a “new” definition of some aspect of biblical teaching, especially one that claims to have been lost by the church for some 1800 years. To put it mildly, it borders on theological arrogance. Yet, it is the novel that often receives recognition in academic circles and theological publications.

2. Don’t be cowed by a person’s academic credentials. He may be a professor at a highly esteemed seminary and have the support of a number of degreed colleagues and know his Greek and

²⁰Ibid., p. 67.

²¹Ibid., p. 72.

Hebrew, but if what he says does not fit the plain teaching of scripture, we must not be afraid to flatly reject it.

3. When you read statements such as “the prophecy we find in 1 Corinthians is more like the phenomena we saw in extra-Biblical Jewish literature”²² warning lights should go on. The Bible is its own best interpreter. A knowledge of apocryphal books is not necessary to a proper interpretation of scripture. When a writer feels the need to use them to establish or support his position, he has substituted the chaff for the wheat.

4. Realize the influence, positively and negatively, that our friends and associates have on the moulding of our theology. It’s much more difficult to resist false teaching if it comes to us through the lips and keyboard of one whom we personally know and appreciate for his work in other areas. If all false teaching came from people who were harsh, unloving, self-centred snobs, we would be far less vulnerable to it.

5. Consider the practical difficulty of determining the will of God under this teaching. Since a modern day prophecy is likely a mixture of truth and error, others must be called upon to judge which is which. But, if the prophet is not kept by God from error, on what basis can we expect the judges to be kept from error in their assessment? We end up with a judgment that itself is probably not 100% accurate either. This is surely a very uncertain process. Give me the pure Word of God any day!

6. There is also the danger of becoming an unthinking slave to modern day prophets. People have been told whom to marry, what house to buy, what job to take and have obeyed. Instead of taking personal responsibility to make wise decisions based on the principles of God’s Word, they simply wait to be told by a “word from the Lord”.

7. Reflect on the dangers of the practice. It cannot help but detract from the centrality of the Bible as God’s final revelation. After all, the notion of God speaking right at this moment to my personal situation seems so much more exciting and dramatic than opening a 1900 year old book, or does it? How does modern prophecy really compare with true preaching of the Word of God when the Spirit is present and the truth is applied with power and assurance to the hearts of listeners? Modern prophecy, with its frequent triviality and banality, pales in comparison with good preaching.

8. If, in Grudem’s view, Agabus erred in his prophecy, how would many of the Old Testament prophecies stand up if subjected to the same kind of analysis? You could soon arrive at the same view of

²²Ibid., p. 74.

OT prophecy that you do of the New. Also, you could also end up with a Saviour who had errors in His prophetic pronouncements. Robertson warns of this when he states “Jesus prophesied that not one stone of the temple will be left on another (Luke 21:6). Yet anyone who has seen the wailing wall in Jerusalem knows that some stones still remain one on another.”²³

Tongues in the book of Acts are clearly foreign languages. All of the available evidence indicates that modern day tongues are definitely not known, human languages. Therefore to give them credibility and biblical support, an exegetically unjustifiable wedge must be driven between the nature of the gift in Acts and the nature of the gift in I Corinthians. You end up with two kinds of tongues and do not allow the Acts' tongues to define the Corinthian gift. A similar procedure has taken place with prophecy. Prophecy in the OT and from the apostles is clearly 100% true and authoritative. Prophecy today is admittedly not. Therefore to give modern prophecy credibility and biblical support, a similar wedge must be driven between NT prophecy and OT/apostolic prophecy. Then you have something “biblical” with which to equate modern day prophecy.

In earlier periods of church history, it is my understanding that although similar claims have surfaced, yet they really didn't have much impact on the church as a whole. Only a relatively small number were taken in by it for short periods of time. However, in our day, the three waves of Pentecostalism, the charismatic movement, and the Vineyard movement have gained a large following. Why is this? Perhaps one reason is that modern, shallow preaching has left larger and larger numbers of believers vulnerable to these winds of doctrine by which they are carried away. It may also be that we as preachers need to be better examples to our people of a warm, vital, spiritually intimate walk with our God. Are we so busy with our programs and our many areas of responsibility that we have neglected “that good part”, even sitting at the feet of Jesus and communing with our Lord in prayer? We do want God to speak to us and our people today. We do want spiritually alive services. But we want all of this to be in accordance with God's Word properly understood.

²³Robertson, p. 124.

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