

#19 Question: “How do we confirm personal prophecies?”

One of the questions that has been asked during the course of these teachings is, “Some prophecies are rather personal. How do we get those prophecies confirmed by the elders? If I meet someone in the grocery store and get an impression concerning them, how does that actually work? Should I ask them to have the elders of their church pray about it? What if their church does not believe in prophecy? [There are] pastors who say that prophecy is restricted to Old Testament times—or at least ended with St. John.”

The teaching that the use of the charismatic gifts ended with the period of the early Church and the Apostles is called dispensationalism. The teaching claims that there are eras in Church history when God dispensed upon the Church what was needed for that age. Their claim is that we no longer need the gifts for the building up of the Church and thus they are no longer given by the Holy Spirit. In its extreme form dispensationalism also claims that we no longer need water baptism because God’s people can be baptized by the Holy Spirit.

It is important for us not to stand in judgment over another’s interpretation of the Holy Scriptures. There are many, even in charismatic churches who have difficulty with the various charismatic gifts. They will argue that only the pastor can prophesy, and only those who are emotionally unstable need to use the gift of tongues. It is best not to try to argue with people about their theology of the gifts. St. Paul says, “Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters . . . Why do you pass judgment on your brother? . . . Then let us no more pass judgment on one another, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.” (Romans 14:1,10,13) The purpose of speaking prophetically into someone’s life is to encourage and strengthen them in the faith. Anything which will cause them to question that faith does not build up.

In the question above, we must assume that the person in the grocery store is someone whom you know. Blindly accosting strangers with prophetic words can be fraught with dangers into which even angels would fear to tread. If it is someone you know, then discuss it with them in the same way that was described in the previous teaching. Ask them if you can share an impression with them rather than blurting out, “Thus saith the Lord!” If the person agrees that your impressions are on target, then ask if you can share some insight into that. As the conversation proceeds it may open the opportunity to offer that you believe the Lord showed this to you for their upbuilding and encouragement. If it is from the Lord, the Lord will give the confirmation to that person. It is the Lord who is giving the encouragement. It is the Lord who will confirm His word to that person.