

The term 'providence' as it is commonly used in theology normally identifies a cluster of

## PROVIDENCE

PROPHETIC, see ATONEMENT  
PROVERBS, see Part 2

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D. A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14* (Grand Rapids and Carlisle, 1987, 1995); J. Deere, *Surprised by the Voice of God* (Grand Rapids and Eastbourne, 1996); C. Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech in Early Christianity and its Hellenistic Environment* (Tübingen and Peabody, 1995); R. B. Gaffin, *Perspectives on Pentecost: Studies in New Testament Teaching on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit* (Phillipsburg, 1979); W. Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians* (Lanham, 1982); *idem*, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today* (Eastbourne and Westchester, 1988); *idem* (ed.), *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today? Four Views* (Grand Rapids and Leicester, 1996); D. Hill, *New Testament Prophecy* (Atlanta, 1979); W. Kaiser in *EDBT*, pp. 639-647; J. A. Krämer *et al.* in *TDNT* 6, pp. 781-861; J. A. Moyer and J. P. Baker in *IBD* 3, pp. 1276-1287; C. H. Peisaker and C. P. Brown in *NIDNTT* 3, pp. 74-92; O. P. Robertson, *The Final Word* (Edinburgh and Carlisle, 1993); M. Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts: Then and Now* (Carlisle, 1996); W. A. VanGemeren, *Interpreting the Prophetic Word* (Grand Rapids, 1990); P. A. Verhoef in *NIDOTTE* 4, pp. 1067-1078; E. J. Young, *My Servants the Prophets* (Grand Rapids, 1955).

## Bibliography

See also: REVELATION.

The Thessalonians were told to hold firm not to the traditions which were 'prophesied' to them but to the traditions which they were 'taught' by Paul (2 Thess. 2:15). Some elders laboured in preaching and teaching (1 Tim. 5:17), and an elder was to be 'an apt teacher' (1 Tim. 3:2; cf. Tit. 1:9), but no elder is said to have the task of prophesying, nor is it ever said that an elder had to be 'an apt prophet'. James warned that those who teach, not those who prophesy, will be judged with greater strictness (Jas. 3:1). Contrary to the views of those who claim that 'charismatic leaders' governed the earliest churches, the evidence of the NT shows that it was teachers (in the role of elders), not prophets, who gave them leadership and direction.

## The cessationist position

According to an alternative position within evangelical scholarship, the 'cessationist' position, the gift of prophecy in NT churches always had the same authority as Scripture, contained no errors, but only the very words of God, and therefore ceased to exist in the church around the end of the 1st century, when the canon of the NT was complete. For a defence of cessationism, see the books by R. B. Gaffin and O. P. Robertson listed in the bibliography, and the contributions by Gaffin and R. Saucy to W. Grudem, (ed.), *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today? Four Views*.

## Prophecy and prophets in Revelation

Revelation 11 predicts the appearance on earth, for 1260 days, of two remarkable prophets. They will have great power and no one will be able to prevent them from carrying out their task: 'And if any one would harm them, fire pours out from their mouth and consumes their foes; if any one would harm them, thus he is doomed to be killed. They have power to shut the sky ... and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they desire' (Rev. 11:5-6). Yet the writer also predicts the coming of a powerful 'false prophet' who will work deceptive miracles and ultimately be cast into the lake of fire with the beast and the devil himself (Rev. 16:13; 19:20; 20:10).

The book of Revelation as a whole is, as its name implies, a great 'revelation' from God, and the book itself is the last great prophecy in the Bible. From chapter 4 onwards it points towards the future, describing in sobering yet