

A Prophetic Showdown Is Coming

✘ Just like Elijah confronted the prophets of Baal, the time is coming when God's New Testament mouthpieces will confront modern day merchandisers. The true will defy the false. The holy will challenge the unholy. Until that day, **spirits of divination**, with a little help from the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life, are working overtime to woo God's true prophets to the side of err.

Some **merchandising prophets**, with their miracle water, prophetic soap and prosperity oil, are catching naive Christians hook, line and sinker. Other gospel gainsayers are profiting with urgent announcements that God will heal the first five people who run up to the altar with \$100 bill in hand.

But perhaps the most dangerous merchandisers are those who use their gift to tap into divination. These **prophets** announce what the believer wants to hear in order to sow a false seed of faith in his heart and reap an improper financial reward, inappropriately earned position or wrongly received recognition. No matter the merchandiser's brand of deceit, it is a practice that stinks in the nostrils of God.

Are You a True Follower of Christ? Really?

✘ As I was preparing a sermon for Palm Sunday, I was struck to the core by John 12. Jesus made a triumphal entry into

Jerusalem. The Bible says a great multitude took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! The King of Israel!" (John 12:13).

Yet only a few verses later many no longer believed.

What happened? What shifted? What caused this multitude to go from celebrating Jesus and acknowledging Him as King of Israel to turning their back on Him and days later calling for His crucifixion? Simply put, He told them the truth—and they couldn't handle the truth. You might say they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved (2 Thess. 2:10).

But let me ask you a serious question: Are you a lover of the truth? Are you a true follower of Christ? Really?

Miracle Turns Strip Club Into Church



In a move to redeem some prime real estate in South Florida, a Haitian church purchased a closed strip club with the intent of turning into God's house.

Eglise Assemblée Evangelique de Christ in Boynton Beach, Fla., bought Platinum Showgirls strip club last spring for \$600,000. Though the property was theirs, they couldn't hold services in the building until it was renovated and up to code.

The problem: finances. Eglise Assemblée spent all its money to

buy the building and had been paying high rent at an interim facility. That left them without money to wrap up the redemptive project.

Don't Despise the Day of Small Beginnings

☒ It's easy to despise the day of small beginnings. **Small beginnings** often come with hard work and little help. Small beginnings usually offer tall resistance and modest encouragement. Small beginnings typically see limited budgets and abundant setbacks. Nevertheless, whatever God has called you to do, "Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin" (Zech. 4:10, NLT).

I remember when God planted a seed in my heart to **pray for the nations**. I had a large multicolored map on my wall and I was in awe of the massive opportunities for **prophetic intercession**. Suddenly, the Lord illuminated a tiny speck of an island on this map, one of the smallest islands in the Caribbean. This was my prayer assignment. I was somewhat disappointed. I wanted to **storm the heavens** of pivotal nations in the earth, but the Lord gave me a small beginning.

Knowing When It's Time to

Surrender the Vision

- ✘ I surrender ... I found myself saying those words while talking with the Holy Spirit about my frustrations.

Whether you are in ministry, in the marketplace or tackling the all-important task of raising a family—or perhaps, like me, doing all three at the same time—you will no doubt come to a point in your walk with God that you feel like giving up. Paul wouldn't have admonished us not to grow weary in well doing if he hadn't witnessed people losing heart at times along the journey (Gal. 6:9).

But I'm here to tell you that the answer is not to quit and give up. The answer is to surrender. And there's a vast difference between the two. As much as I want to sometimes, I'll never admit defeat in the midst of doing something God has called me to do. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Phil. 4:13). And, of course, we know that God always leads us in triumph in Christ (2 Cor. 2:14). I could rattle off a few other Scriptures to drive home the point, but you get the idea.

No, as much as I want to quit sometimes, I'll never admit defeat in the midst of doing something God has called me to do. But I have learned that there is a time to surrender the vision. Miriam-Webster defines the word *surrender* as "to yield to the power, control or possession of another upon compulsion or demand," and "to give up completely or agree to forego especially in favor of another."

Are You Following False Prophetic Voices?

✘ A young woman called me looking for a prophetic word. She was befuddled, sore vexed and all-out desperate to hear from God about a certain situation.

This young, Spirit-filled woman, we'll call her Tammy, insisted she just couldn't hear from God. She had prayed. She has worshipped. She had read books on **how to hear the voice of God**. Yet she adamantly confessed that she could not hear a word. She called me because she wanted to me to "go to the throne" on her behalf.

Tammy went on to rehearse every detail the devil was telling her. She told me how the devil said she was going to get fired on the next round of job layoffs. She told me how the devil said her car was going to break down soon. She told me how the devil said she was going to get sick. And she was full of fear.

Discerning Spiritual Climates and Battling Jezebel's Witchcrafts

Exhaustion; that's the best word to describe how I've felt ✘ for the past three weeks. And there is no natural reason for it. I've been sleeping plenty. Drinking lots of water. Getting plenty of

exercise.

(Enjoying more than my quota of Starbucks!)

Yet the morning I

penned this article—despite sleeping nine hours the night before—I went

back to sleep for two hours after taking my daughter to school. And when

I woke up, I was still exhausted—and disgusted.

I was starting to wonder what was wrong with me. And then I got a friendly reminder revelation from the **Holy Spirit**: It's witchcraft. Wicked **witchcraft**. How could I forget? It caught me off guard. Now I'm warning you.

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What Is the Holy Ghost Trying to Tell You?

✘ Although the Holy Spirit speaks expressly, we see through a glass darkly. Sure, it's easy enough to understand the words of that **still, small voice** in your spirit. But impressions, **dreams and visions** aren't always as clear as we'd like them to be—and reasoning blocks **discernment**.

I remember a time when a friend of mine was planning a trip to Los Angeles. She told me she was nervous about going, but I reasoned that it was a natural case of “the nerves” because she had an important meeting there. The week before she left, I started to get impressions that something bad was going to happen to her in Los Angeles. But it was like seeing through a glass darkly.

At first, I thought it was just fear. I was going through a major trial at the time and had so much coming at me from so many different directions that sorting through it all was more than a little challenging. Nevertheless, I pled the **blood of Jesus** and claimed the promises in Psalm 91 over my friend every day. The impressions—what I reasoned were imaginations—didn't stop. Yet I never had a clear word of the Lord “come unto me saying.”

Putting Spiritual Discernment Back Into Spiritual Warfare



I was raised in spiritual warfare. By that I mean, soon after I got saved I plugged into an **apostolic church** that vowed to run to the battle line to wrestle spirits of Jezebel, witchcraft, religion—and whatever else was opposing the purposes of God.

My church home was akin to a **spiritual war zone**. We were always on red alert through **prophetic warnings**, dreams and visions about the next attack. Indeed, spiritual warfare was a consistent thread in most of the praise, worship, equipping classes, Sunday morning sermons and leadership lessons.

You might call it “extreme apostolic.” We hunted down the demon(s) behind every doorknob like a child with a sweet tooth hunts for chocolate Easter eggs. Looking back, it seemed at times like a contest to determine who could present the most detailed dream or vision about the enemy’s impending plan. Once the enemy was spotted, a shouting match with the principality or power ensued that left you with a sore throat—and no respite from the warfare.

I was in a **spiritual warfare ditch**, where the enemy and his plans were ultimately exalted over God and His

plans.

Don't get me wrong. I believe wholeheartedly in spiritual warfare. But

we can get into a ditch with any principle if we take it to the extreme.

So we have to ask ourselves: What causes us to take biblical principles to the extreme?