

‘Words From the Lord’ Cannot Supersede the Bible

As stated last week in part 3 on the Holy Spirit, some suggest that today’s battle is not so much against liberals in the church, but against those who are “not open” to new prophecies and visions—those who “religiously hold to the written Word alone.”

This statement concerns me because it can be used to promote anything done in the name of the Lord such as prophecies, visions and words from the Lord. Granted, Acts 2:17 is relevant for us today, “And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams.”

This Scripture is balanced with, 1 John 4:1, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” Not everything done in God’s name bears His approval.

Jesus warns about false teachers within the church, “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves” (Matthew 7:15).

“Words from the Lord” cannot supersede the Bible, but rather confirm it. “Prophecy involves not authoritative Bible teaching, and not speaking words of God which are equal to Scripture, but rather reporting something which God spontaneously brings to mind” (Wayne Grudem). We hold religiously to the written Word because it is our guide ... to test what is being said: “The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets” (1 Cor. 14:32). The speaker should be careful since his words must be under, or subject to, God’s Word.

A “prophet,” as mentioned in the Bible, can be anyone in a position of spiritual authority or claiming to be. They are not to be elevated or idolized. We follow Christ, not men. False teachers aren’t ostentatiously dressed in red, armed with a pitchfork. They often look credible and talk convincingly; however, they bring destructive teachings into the church.

We saw this over the last decade in what many referred to as The Emergent Church Movement. I’m not questioning cosmetic issues in the church such as the style of worship, ambiance, lighting, mood, attire and so forth. What I am questioning, and what is alarming, is the massive shift toward relativism: separating from the faith that was once and for all entrusted to the saints (Jude 3), and thus rejecting biblical authority and absolute truth.

* Watch my short video, Answers for a Confused Church, on YouTube.

False teachers tend to avoid difficult truths such as sin, judgment and repentance, and focus on what people want to hear rather than what they need to hear (see Jer. 23). False teachers provide layers of truth mixed with error, but even a broken clock is right twice a day.

Today, when the truth of God’s Word is spoken, people are often offended because they’ve been conditioned to hear “feel good” messages that do little in calling out sin. As a result, churches are filled with people whose lifestyles reflect little change. William Still said it well: “Many, who for the first time come under the sound of Holy Ghost preaching, are mortally offended ... because they have never been exposed to the white light of the Spirit.”

The white light exposes sin and calls for repentance, holiness, purity and righteousness—topics that are rarely discussed in many churches across our landscape. Not

surprisingly, 2 Timothy 4:3 echoes throughout the ages with resounding clarity, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables."

How do we "test every spirit" and avoid false teachers? Determine if what they are teaching agrees with Scripture. For example, if one claims to be drunk in the Spirit, 1 Corinthians 14:40 tells us otherwise, "Let all things be done decently and in order." If one lacks control, remember that self-control is a fruit of the Spirit. If a claim is made that a "messenger of light" appeared with a new revelation, point to 2 Corinthians 11:14 where we find Satan transforming himself into an angel of light. If those who look to the Word are accused of quenching and grieving the Spirit, we are reminded that Jesus used the Word of God for finality, discernment and power.

As with any move of God, wisdom requires that we examine what is being sought and taught ... what is the focus? Repentance, holiness, obedience and purity should be primary rather than boasting, blessings, abundance and prosperity. The very thing that we need may be the very thing that we are not discussing—repentance: "The Church must first repent; then the world will break! The Church must first weep; then our altars will be filled with weeping penitents" (Leonard Ravenhill). Without holiness we will not see the Lord (cf. Heb. 12:14).

Not all recent moves lack authenticity: what many have experienced are valid moves of God. Small and large revivals occurring throughout the world are truly that. While revivals may grow from pure motives and humble beginnings, they can be quenched by bizarre behavior or by leaders who lack character, or who take the glory and promote themselves. God calls us to be concerned, prayerful and surrendered to Him.

Matthew 7:22-23 reminds us, “Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness’!”

Jesus is referring to those who “think” they know Him. This Scripture should cause all Christians to search their hearts as to whether they have been truly converted ... do they truly know Him, or do they only know about Him?

Want to know more about the next great move of God? Click here to see Jennifer LeClaire’s new book, featuring Dutch Sheets, Reinhard Bonnke, Jonathan Cahn, Billy Graham and others.

☐☐ *For part one of this series, click here. For part two, click here. For part three, click here.*

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