

Let the Lions Roar: Why Prophecy Is Critical in This Late Season

"But to the wicked God says, 'What right have you to declare My statutes, or take My covenant in your mouth? You hate instruction, and cast My words behind you'" (Ps. 50:16-17).

Financial breakthrough is coming in 2017!"

"This is the year of fulfilled promises!"

"No more delay! Prosperity is yours in the new year!"

"This is the year of promotion!"

Sound familiar?

Prophecies like these or any variety of others are shouted from rooftops online and in other venues every year at about this time. Many of these such words are being given by those God is addressing in Psalm 50. What right do they have to recite God's statutes? They are undisciplined, and God's true words are cast off.

It's time for the fear of the Lord to hit the prophetic movement in full force.

"Surely the Lord God does nothing without revealing His purpose to His servants the prophets. The lion has roared; who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken; who can but prophesy?" (Amos 3:7-8).

Lest you misunderstand my intention, I'll make it clear: Prophecy is critical in this late season. We must see an increase in clear, true prophetic revelation now more than ever. I believe God is hand-picking key voices who will not

shrink back and who refuse to carelessly play with this supernatural gift as if they were some Disney-level wizard.

It's time for the lion to roar with such force that these prophetic messengers are blown back as if standing behind a jet engine at full thrust.

The Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary notes: "As when 'the lion roars' none can help but 'fear,' so when Jehovah communicates His awful message, the prophet cannot but prophesy. Find not fault with me for prophesying; I must obey God."

What a striking contrast to so much of today's fortune-telling promises of wealth, health and happiness.

I read a "prophetic" word for the new year earlier today that promised miraculous wealth in the early part of 2017. My initial question was, "Is this word true for every Christian in the world?" Of course that is absurd, but this prophecy follows the pattern of so many that we hear at the first of the year. Big promises, freedom from anything negative and extreme satisfaction for all who hear. Yes, the fear of the Lord must return to the prophetic movement. The lion must roar.

I propose we embrace a prophetic protocol that has Jesus as the central figure. It's found in Isaiah chapter 11:

"And there shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. He shall delight in the fear of the Lord, and he shall not judge by what his eyes see, nor reprove by what his ears hear" (Is. 11:1-3).

The shoot from the stump of Jesse and the roaring lion are Jesus, and the prophetic role He plays is worthy of our

alignment. As we endeavor to reveal accurate prophetic words, it would do us well to pray according to this passage in Isaiah:

1. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him (and us): There is too much divination in today's prophetic culture. The spirit of Balaam is strong. Instead of the Spirit of the Lord, we are experiencing too much revelation from the realm of the soul or the demonic.

2. The Spirit of wisdom and understanding: Godly prophecy is the result of revelation received in the place of prayer. Why is this? Human wisdom and human understanding are all too eager to share their soulish revelation. It's only when we pray and live in the Spirit that we can truly adopt supernatural wisdom. The mysteries of God will be revealed, and human logic will be confounded. It's sadly rare to hear prophetic words today that shock our senses instead of satiating them.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil" (Prov. 3:5-7, MEV).

3. The Spirit of counsel and might: The Hebrew translation of the word "might" is "power" or "force." When the lion roars, you can be sure that immeasurable power and force will be felt. Instead of turning our stomachs like too many softball prophetic words do today, God's prophetic force will knock us to our knees. There will be clear direction, counsel, as to how we are to respond to the revelation. Cover to cover in Scripture, we read prophetic directives that are intense and dependent on the right response of the hearer.

To the angel of the church in Sardis write: "He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars says these things: I know your works, that you have a reputation of being alive,

but you are dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain but are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfected before therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. You have a few names even in Sardis who have not soiled their garments. They shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments. I will not blot his name out of the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Rev. 3:1-6).

You can be sure John felt the force of those words, and the counsel was clear and urgent. I yearn for prophetic unction like this today.

4. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord: Words that don't contain enough weight to cause the fear of the Lord to strike us are suspect. Even true, positive messages that would cause us to rejoice should still bear the marks of the fear of a most holy God. Instead of avoiding such sharp messages, the next generation of prophetic warriors will delight in the safety, the plumb line, that is the fear of the Lord.

"Now it will be, if you will diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I am commanding you today, then the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth" (Deut. 28:1).

"But it will happen, if you will not listen to the voice of the Lord your God, by being careful to do all His commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you" (Deut. 28:15).

God is ready to bless us beyond measure, and that blessing is even brighter in contrast to what will come to the

disobedient. This is the delight that the fear of the Lord produces—the realization that God is full of love and mercy and we can be free from his wrath.

5. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear: It's all too easy to gaze upon the landscape of our world and produce supposed prophetic revelation that will capture people's attention. We can't have any more tabloid-style prophecies that capitalize on the current events of our day. Proclaimers are much different than reporters. We need those who will hear God's voice in secret and proclaim it to the people much more than we need to hear opinion on what is going on in society.

"Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel who prophesy, and say to those who prophesy out of their own hearts, "Hear the word of the Lord!" Thus says the Lord God: Woe to the foolish prophets who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing!" (Ezek. 13:2-3).

My Prophetic Word for 2017

I don't mean this to be a snarky or creative way to end this article. I feel something burning very strongly in my spirit; something extremely simple.

While timely rhema revelation must be received, the church must return to confidence in the logos. The infallible written truth. The Bible.

When timely prophetic words are given to me, I value them highly. However, I don't seek after them. I don't crave them. I only need them when God knows I do. What I do long for is the Word of God, the Bible. I deeply desire for it to explode in my Spirit in fresh new ways. I want God's eternal Word to capture me!

"The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God shall stand forever" (Is. 40:8).

"Forever, O Lord, Your word is established in heaven" (Ps. 119:89).

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away" (Matt. 24:35).

I exhort you to dive into the Word of God. The wealth it contains will transform your new year much more powerfully than a low level prophetic word ever will.

Consider some of the following and begin your quest to encountering God through his Word. Take note of the promises and also of the conditions associated with them. Let the Lion roar. May the fear of the Lord delight you. May your new year be marked by the force of the very breath of our mighty God.

"Now consider this, you who forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver: Whoever sacrifices a thank offering glorifies Me and makes a way; I will show him the salvation of God" (Ps. 50:22-23).

"The Lord will cause your enemies who rise up against you to be defeated before you; they will come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways" (Deut. 28:7).

"Sacrifice a thank offering to God, and pay your vows to the Most High, and call on Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will glorify Me" (Ps. 50:14-15).

"Jesus answered them, 'Truly, truly I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. Now a slave does not remain in the house forever, but a son remains forever. Therefore if the Son sets you free, you shall be free indeed'" (John 8:34-36).

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1).

"Therefore submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

That's a start. Now go ahead and receive the remaining promises in the Bible that are waiting for you in the New Year. There are thousands. {eo}

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