

# Pastor Loren Sandford's Open Apology: How and Why We Got It Wrong

I promised long ago that if I got it wrong regarding the outcome of the presidential election and my prophecy that Trump would be reelected, I would publish an open apology. Since then, I have waited for procedures and challenges to run their course.

Last night, the Congress counted the votes, and the election went to Biden. The president has apparently conceded, promising a smooth transition. So, now is the time.

I want to tell you how I got it wrong. This is a confession and an explanation, not an excuse or justification.

Let me begin with this. I don't believe in rubber prophecy, stretch-to-fit. I've spoken against that for a number of years. For example, many have already exhorted me not to apologize, insisting that Trump actually won and the election was stolen.

Regardless, the fact remains that Joe Biden is confirmed as the president-elect. I will not protest that I was right to make my words fit the situation and deny getting it wrong. No rubber prophecy.

Here's the next piece. Part of my own prophetic discipline, laid on me by the Lord, has been never to feed on the words of other prophetic voices. A phrase given to me by the Lord that has guided me has been to practice "zero-based prophecy."

The Lord told Jeremiah in Jeremiah 23:30 (NASB), "Therefore behold, I am against the prophets," declares the Lord, "who steal My words from each other." We sometimes hear what other

prophets are saying, and it stirs us up emotionally. In that emotional stirring, we build a bit on what was said, adding to it in the rush of emotion, because the emotion carries us forward until the final product is no longer the word the Lord actually gave.

Until now, I have always sought the Lord on my own, gotten the word first from Him and then, and only then, have I compared it with what others were saying. So until recently, and specifically in this instance, I stood by that discipline from the Lord, and my track record has been accurate for decades.

My first confession is, therefore, that I departed from that discipline. I allowed myself to be caught up in a prevailing stream and to be carried along by it. In doing that, I actually compromised what the Lord had already told me years before.

The Lord told me in October of 2016, Trump's first campaign, that he would win that election but that he would not serve. I knew he would not serve the system, and he didn't. In the first week of December after that election, I saw in a vision the crisis that would strike in the fourth year. I warned that we needed to prepare, and now we remain mired in that crisis.

I warned from the beginning that his reelection was not a certainty if he didn't learn to temper his rhetoric and stop insulting his enemies. I called for prayer that the Lord would change the president's heart. I was roundly criticized by fellow Christians.

When I appeared on Sid Roth's *It's Supernatural*, taped in June 2018 and aired in September that year, I warned that the president's reelection was not a certainty, in spite of what other prophetic voices were saying, unless there was the kind of change of which I'd spoken.

I should have stood on that word of uncertainty. I didn't. I was wrong not to. Many who have a lot more fame and widespread

credibility than I do were confidently prophesying a victory, and it fed into my own insecurity and need to belong or fit in. How could I be wrong when all those who have such wide credibility over mine were prophesying a certainty?

In 1 Kings 22, Micaiah came before the kings among 400 other prophets. The 400 prophesied a victory for the kings if they went to war against Aram. Micaiah stood alone to speak what was actually true. The kings didn't listen to him, went with the 400 and lost the battle. King Ahab was killed.

Until now I've always been the Micaiah in the crowd, standing against the prevailing stream, and I've been right over the years. In this case, I compromised that and allowed myself to be caught up in the prevailing stream. For this, I repent before the Lord, and I humbly ask the forgiveness of the body of Christ. I have learned a hard lesson I pray I will not forget in the days to come. I will be redoubling my quest for intimacy with the Lord and His word in the quiet place.

Another element of how I got it wrong: The tendency we have to hear what we want to hear. Strong desire and strong opinions play a huge role in distorting the words we believe we hear, if we allow that to happen.

I will not go into what I think of the Democratic Party because this is not the time. I will say, though, that strong desire and a strong negative opinion of the Democratic Party played a role.

The hard reality is that lots of us with sterling records of past accuracy got it wrong. I see this as a rebuke from the Lord for an imbalance the majority of us fell into, and I will take it to heart.

I am also refocusing the prophetic aspect of my own ministry to the core of prophetic ministry. The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus, pure devotion to Him and the revelation of who He is.

Prediction is really a lesser thread in the wide sweep of Scripture. The core calling of the prophetic is to separate the precious from the vile—the holy from the unholy—and to ensure that the devotion of the people of God is pure and uncompromised. In fact, prediction is often conditional upon the people's response to prophetic calls for repentance and change.

One often-missed purpose of prophetic ministry is found in 1 Corinthians 14:24-25 (NASB 1995): "But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you."

There's the core of it. "convicted," "called to account." It seems like we too often miss or neglect those two significant words.

I apologize for allowing my own focus to be skewed. I ask forgiveness for allowing myself to be caught up in the stream of the 400 when God has called me to stand as a Micaiah. I apologize for allowing my own insecurity about belonging among other prophetic voices to carry me into error.

And finally, our obligation now as a whole body of Christ is to obediently pray for Joe Biden and his administration, whether or not we like the outcome, their agenda or their party.

And God bless you all. {eo}

**R. Loren Sandford** grew up a preacher's son in the Congregational Church in Illinois, Kansas and North Idaho. As a teenager, he played rock music professionally over three states and two provinces of Canada before leaving to attend the College of Idaho. In 1973, he completed a B.A. degree in music education, then moved to California and attended Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, earning a Master of Divinity

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