

Is Decreeing an Occult Practice?

In recent weeks I've heard respected teachers speak against decreeing, declaring and prophesying to "see a shift in the atmosphere." One teacher called it an "an occultic practice."

I encountered that same claim this past weekend in a firestorm attack on social media. One of the issues surrounded a book I quoted in which the author, Mark Batterson said, "Prayers are prophecies. They are the best predictors of your spiritual future. Who you become is determined by how you pray."

Several commenters seemed to lose the book's message about praying and decreeing Scripture over our families and situations and instead got derailed over an example he used about creating a circle of prayer.

Please stay focused with me. This article is not about Batterson. It is not about prayer circles. It is about praying, decreeing and prophesying God's Word over a situation, which has been described as witchcraft and unbiblical.

This is an important issue, which Satan can use to make Christians fearful of using these tools to pray with authority.

One of the detractors stated in his article, "You just won't find that line of thinking, terminology or practice in the New Testament. 'Prophesying' into the atmosphere, causing a 'shift' in regions and 'warring' in the heavenlies are mystical terms that produce hype in the hearers and nothing in the earth realm. There are no examples of it in the Bible. There is no Scripture for it. New Testament prophets don't prophesy into the atmosphere. Neither do Old Testament prophets for that matter."

Let's look at his statement, which I feel is dangerous—especially at a time when we need to better understand our power in prayer.

I believe the very thing that we are called to do is to pray, proclaim, decree and prophesy the Word of God into the atmosphere to see a shift. Why do I believe that? Because it is what Jesus did.

The practice is completely biblical, and Jesus is our example. In fact, there are numerous examples in both the New Testament and Old Testament. It is one of our greatest weapons of warfare.

It started in the beginning. When God created the world, He spoke it into existence. He called what was not into being. He decreed it.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the water. God said ...” (Gen 1:1-3a).

God spoke into the atmosphere, and it shifted.

Jesus did it as well.

“He rose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, ‘Peace, be still!’ Then the wind ceased and there was a great calm” (Mark 4:39).

He decreed, commanded, prophesied ... whatever verb you want to use. Jesus spoke to the storm—into the atmosphere—and there was a change, a shift.

Before He left, Jesus instructed us to do the works that He did. So by example, we are to also speak, command and prophesy to the storms, whether physical or spiritual.

“Truly, truly I say to you, he who believes in Me will do the

works that I do also. And he will do greater works than these, because I am going to My Father. I will do whatever you ask in My name, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it" (John 14:12-14).

When we pray God's Word, we are not prophesying according to our own will or desire. We are speaking His words back to Him. His words are His will.

"This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us" (1 John 5:14).

What about in Ezekiel 37 when the Lord told Ezekiel to prophesy to the dry bones and speak/decreed breath into them? Wasn't that a similar situation as we live in today? It was to bring life into that which was dead in a nation. Can we not do the same to speak life back into America and call the dry bones to come back to life?

What about the disciples as they shared the gospel? Many times, they didn't pray but decreed and commanded into a situation to cause a shift, change or healing. "Then Peter said, 'I have no silver and gold, but I give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk'" (Acts 3:6).

"Then David said to the Philistine, 'You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a shield, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have reviled. This day will the Lord deliver you into my hand. And I will strike you down and cut off your head. Then I will give the corpses of the Philistine camp this day to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the earth so that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And then all this assembly will know that it is not by sword and spear that the Lord saves. For the battle belongs to the Lord, and He will give you into our hands'" (1 Sam. 17:45-47).

He prophesied and proclaimed what was about to take place.

In the book of Job it says,

“For then you will delight yourself in the Almighty, and will lift up your face unto God. You will make your prayer to Him, and He will hear you, and you will pay your vows. You will also declare a matter, and it will be established unto you; and the light will shine upon your ways” (Job 22:26-28).

I could go on, but clearly there is scriptural precedence for decreeing and prophesying to see a situation or atmosphere shift. It is part of the weapons of our warfare as a tool of prayer. It is not New Age. It is not an occultic practice. It is biblical and a powerful tool Jesus modeled for us.

So why do we see so much division in the body of Christ, especially now, over these issues such as prophesy and prayer?

Because Satan is desperately working to diminish and remove them. Without prayer, without understanding the power of His Word, we become a weakened and ineffective body.

Remember, “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much” (James 5:16b). Satan, hates it when we pray effectively and fervently. He hated it when Jesus did it. He hates it when we do it.

And so, I have no doubt that this area of division is a tactic to stir confusion and controversy.

The bottom line is praying scripture isn't witchcraft.

I agree that we must use wisdom when we pray that we are not manipulating a situation—which is witchcraft. However, we are called to pray His Word, which we know is His will.

God called those things that are not as though they were. He declared what He saw in the spirit realm, and so it was.

“As it is written, ‘I have made you a father of many nations’ before God whom he believed, and who raises the dead, and

calls those things that do not exist as though they did" (Rom. 4:17).

This isn't "name it, claim it." This is a tool of spiritual warfare needed in this hour to see God's will accomplished on the earth. That is our role. To pray. To speak His Word. To decree and prophesy into situations.

What else did He mean when He said,

"For truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, he will have whatever he says" (Mark 11:23).

Let's speak to those mountains, the Goliaths, that taunts and flaunt themselves as greater than our God. We are called to decree and prophesy to them. It is up to Him to do it. {eoa}

Karen Hardin is a literary agent and writer. She is the author of *INFECTED: How to Stop the Global Spread of Rage, Deception and Insanity*. Her work has been published in USA Today, Western Journal, World Net Daily, Intercessors for America, Charisma, and more. She is also the co-founder of the prayer movement to take back our cities and nation.

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