

R.T. Kendall: 'Knowing John Paul Jackson Was a Privilege'

I have think of the irony. I never thought I would speak at John Paul Jackson's memorial service. I always thought it would the other way around considering I will be 80 in a few months; he was only 64.

In January 1991, my wife, Louise, and I flew to Anaheim, California, courtesy of John Wimber. I met Mike Bickle the next day and he was keen to have me meet someone. I sat in a room that looked like a doctor's office. In no time my name was called. I was introduced to John Paul Jackson by Mike, although he did not tell John Paul my name or anything about me.

For the next several minutes John Paul told me things about my life that seemed to me to be supernaturally revealed to him. He then prophesied a number of things; some have come to pass, some have not. Those which have come to pass include three books he said I would write and especially that I would have influence one day in South Africa.

When it was all over, as I was leaving I turned to him and said, "Young man, if what you say is true the world will know about it; if what you say is false, the world will know about it." I forgot I said that. John Paul repeated this several times. He said it scared him nearly to death.

Mike Bickle brought John Paul to see me in my vestry at Westminster Chapel in 1993. It was then John Paul gave more prophecies, especially one about our son T. R.—an almost incredible word that came true with amazing accuracy in 1995. The next time I saw John Paul was in September 2001, a couple weeks after 9/11. He then gave me the most astonishing and thrilling prophecy I have ever received.

However, this one has not been fulfilled. A couple years later I preached with him for CLAN in Scotland and did it two years in a row. Subsequently, I became a member of his board of directors. I introduced him to bonefishing in Bimini, Bahamas.

I had hoped we would have a return trip to Bimini this year. Most of all, for some reason I thought that he and I would have some kind of ministry together. We had preached together a few times, were on TV together, did some videos, but most recently a planned trip to India had to be canceled and also one to Hong Kong. So the thought of further ministry with him is now over. I am having to come to terms with life without John Paul.

I spent about 30 minutes making a video for use at his memorial service. Because of time it was edited down to seven or eight minutes. One of the things left out (they had to edit it because of time for other speakers) was John Paul's emphasis on "character is more important than gifting." One would have thought this goes without saying, but, sadly, there were a surprising number of Charismatic leaders who opposed this teaching. John Paul's view regarding character over gifting was one of the main things that made me feel comfortable about him. Holiness is more important than seeing miracles.

But now he is gone. The Lord snatched him away. Yes. It was the Lord. If you think it was a victory for Satan, shame on you! God is bigger than the devil. Why God was pleased to take John Paul is unprofitable speculation. But what is *not* speculation is God's will to do this.

We may never know why. It is none of our business. What *is* our business is to focus on God and trust in His faithfulness and sovereignty. My heart goes out to Diane his wife and their two sons—also those connected to Streams Ministries whose future may be in doubt. But God will look after each of them, be sure of that.

I will miss him. I am pretty sure I will miss him more than almost anyone who reads these lines. I shall seek the face of God more earnestly than ever—not to find out why God took John Paul but what we are to do in days ahead. I have only a vague idea. It will be interesting for me to see if John Paul's most daring words concerning my own future will come true. Don't ask me what they are. I will only say that if they are true, (1) I will be around a while longer and (2) God has plenty for me to do.

I must say that one of the most helpful prophetic words he gave me was some 10 years ago when we lived in Key Largo, Florida. Out of the blue he said: "R. T., you will live to a ripe old age. But if you don't get in shape physically you won't be around to enjoy it" (or words to that effect). I took them seriously. These words changed my life.

Steve Strang gave me exercises which I do regularly to this day. T. R. bought me a special book on dieting. I have no doubt that I would not have come through open heart surgery so brilliantly seven years ago—or be able to travel the world as I do—had not John Paul have given me those unexpected words. And yet I still thought I would die first. I think he did too. I think he was counting on a miracle to raise him up right to his death.

So John Paul was not right about everything. After all, Paul said, "We know in part and we prophesy in part" (1). Also, we prophesy "*in proportion* to our faith" (). And since nobody has a perfect faith except Jesus (John 4:34), none of us of us should expect to be infallible in our understanding of God's word or in our application of it. That is enough to humble us. None of us is perfect.

Many of us have a lot of thinking to do. I know I do. I don't think we should be hasty in trying to figure things out. I do suspect that there needs to be a sea change or paradigm shift in much of our thinking about the prophetic realm. For my

part, I am a “word” man. I don’t claim to have a prophetic gift. I only want to know what *God* wants me to know—nothing more.

One last thing (for now). I myself have made a big deal about prophetic people not saying “the Lord told me” when they utter their words. The habit of saying “the Lord told me” is the hardest to break for people like this. But John Paul not only agreed with me but asked me to share this perspective at his last Convergence Conference with 70 or 80 prophetic people present. I was very forthright with them—fully expecting them to be against me. If they were, they didn’t show it. In fact, all I talked with agreed with me. Whether they will be able to put into practice what I talked about—not saying “the Lord told me”—remains to be seen. It is my view that you and I should not say “the Lord told me this or that”; it is transgressing the Third Commandment not to take the Name of the Lord in vain or misuse His Name (; Matt.5:33-37).

To make the audacious claim “the Lord told me” means that God swore an oath to you which in turn means you can’t get it wrong. But thousands do get it wrong, which goes to show the Lord *didn’t* tell them after all. I fear that our desire to say “the Lord told me” is not out of the wish to give Him glory but to make ourselves more credible—which is not right to do.

I thank God for John Paul. It was a privilege to know him. Let us honor him but without esteeming him too much—or God will be displeased with us.

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