

PRESENT TRUTH

A Teaching Letter of Lifestream Teaching Ministries

For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. (2 Peter 1:12 NKJV)

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But the Lord was not in it...

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Introduction

While I normally don't do this, I think that this time I must speak out publicly about Todd Bentley and the Lakeland circus. Not because there is a need for anyone else to point out the deceptions and fleshly manifestations; but, because there seemed to be so much controversy and division on whether what was happening was God or not. It is amazing to me that so many people were so indecisive about the manifestations and the antics of Todd Bentley. Where is our discernment? Do we actually understand so little of the ways of our God?

In the early Charismatic days, the leaders would not have given room for this type of hype and deception but would have dismissed it out of hand as a confusing mixture of spirits. Now, not only is it accepted, but it is actually endorsed. We have become so open minded that we forget that our God is a holy God; that the throne room of Heaven is filled with beings who cry, "holy, holy, holy"; that the Lord has poured forth the Spirit from the Father whose first name is Holy.

In the Lakeland gatherings, Bentley has substituted "hype" for "holy", "bam" for "praise", and "angels" for the Holy Ghost. Where did we ever get the idea that this was acceptable?

But, people say, miracles are happening. Power is being manifested. Things are happening. We need to remember that activity, even powerful activity, doesn't mean anything. This was what Elijah learned when he was hiding in a cave after running from Jezebel.

1 Kings 19:11-12 NASB

- (11) So He said, "Go forth and stand on the mountain before the LORD." And behold, the LORD was passing by! And a great and strong wind was rending the mountains and breaking in pieces the rocks before the LORD; *but the LORD was not in the wind.* And after the wind an earthquake, *but the LORD was not in the earthquake.*
- (12) After the earthquake a fire, *but the LORD was not in the fire;* and after the fire a sound of a gentle blowing.

Elijah heard the mighty wind, the earthquake, the roaring fire; but, he didn't stir himself because he recognized that the Lord was not in it. Only when he heard the gentle blowing, the still small voice did he go out because he knew that it was the Lord.

Why are we so easily taken in by useless manifestations like “spiritual firebombs”, people being “slain” in the spirit, jerking and frenzied agitation, and “drunkenness”. We need to remember the lesson to Elijah, “but the Lord was not it”.

It is absolutely necessary that we learn the ways of the Lord. God was grieved with the children of Israel in the wilderness because they did not learn His ways. They yielded to the error in their heart.

Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in *their* heart; and they have not known my ways. ([Hebrews 3:10 KJV](#))

They didn't enter into their rest because of unbelief, disobedience, and a lack of knowledge of His ways. God is no respecter of persons—we are in the same predicament and will reap the same consequences if we don't learn His ways.

His way is in the gentle blowing, the still small voice; not the wind, fire or earthquake. The flesh hypes the spectacular and neglects the Word. Let's examine some of our problems.

Power

First, let's look at “power”. Everybody seems to think that any display of “power” must be the Lord. However, that is simply not true. All legitimate power and authority does belong to the Lord; but, there are those who exercise illegitimate power by operating from usurped authority.

Before He ascended, Jesus told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they had received the promise of the Father, that is, the Holy Spirit. With the Holy Spirit they would receive the power of the Holy Spirit. All power and authority has been given to Jesus, but the Holy Spirit administers all of the things given to Jesus by the Father. We cannot exercise any of the power of God without the Holy Spirit.

Now, we know and understand that the Holy Spirit is God as is the Father and the Lord Jesus. Because the Holy Spirit is God, no one controls Him, commands Him, nor manipulates Him. The Holy Spirit operates according to the will of the Father and not according to the will of any person. The Holy Spirit does what is pleasing to God. Any spirit which you can control is NOT the Holy Spirit.

In light of what was just said, does anyone seriously believe that anybody can wad up the power of the Spirit into a “spiritual firebomb” and throw it across the room so that it will “explode” and knock everybody down? Ridiculous. But, it makes a nice circus act for Bentley and his staff. This is not the power of God because the Holy Spirit does not operate in this manner—it is outside of His character.

The Lord will rule His Kingdom until all of His enemies have been put under His feet. This includes those that operate in illegitimate authority and power.

then *comes* the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. ([1 Corinthians 15:24 NASB](#))

Notice that during this time that Jesus is abolishing “all rule and all authority and power.” The Father has given all of this to Him. He will abolish every power and authority and rule that is not of Him. That means that right now in the earth there is authority and power operating that is not of Jesus; therefore, it must be from the enemy.

that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, (2 Thessalonians 2:9 NASB)

Those who operate in the spirit of anti-christ come with all of the power of the enemy, doing the work, the activity of Satan by signs and false wonders. We see from this that not all power demonstrating signs and wonders are from the Lord. How, then, do we tell the difference?

We judge what a man does by what a man is. Jesus said that our love for one another would be what marks us as His disciples. It is the fruit of the Spirit not the gifts that determine our legitimacy. And it is by the fruit or character of the Spirit that others determine or discern our validity as a servant and minister of God.

Angels

There has been an increase in this generation of angelic encounters. Again, like with power, it seems that most people think that any and all angelic encounters are with God's angels. Again, this simply is not true. Because of Hollywood's influence, people think that fallen angels always appear with an evil aura and manifest demonic attributes. However, the Scriptures tell us that even the Devil can appear as an angel of light. The whole point of deception is to deceive. Fallen angels don't tell you that they are fallen—they tell you what you want to hear; they build up your ego; they make you special and anything else that will draw you into their deception.

Angels are probably sexless since Jesus said they don't marry nor are given in marriage; that is, they don't reproduce. When God created angels, He made each of them for a particular job function and, since they don't reproduce, He made all that were needed for the things that He had for them to do. However, even though they are probably sexless, every instance recorded in the Scriptures of angels appearing to people speaks of them as male and never female. So, an encounter with a “female” angel is immediately suspicious and should be rebuked in the Name of Jesus.

There is also the idea of “commanding angels” and “releasing angels” and similar things. This is utter nonsense. Angels are servants of God—performing His will. Fallen angels serve the Devil and his purposes. The Scriptures tell us this about angels:

Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation? (Hebrews 1:14 NASB)

Yes, they are ministering spirits that render service for our sake. But, they are “sent out” by God not us. They minister for our sake according to the plan and purpose of God nor according to our desires. In this age they do not obey our commands. They obey the Lord. If you can command an angel to do what you want done, then that angel is not an angel of the Lord but rather a fallen angel who is deceiving you for its own purposes.

God's angels never promote themselves or the angelic world. They exalt and promote the Lord and the purpose of God. They never endorse anything that focuses on anything other than the Lord.

Anointing

Anointed One is the meaning of Messiah and Christ and that is Jesus. He is the Anointed One. And, yet, we have built a mountain of hype out “being anointed”, “receiving the anointing”, “moving under the anointing”, “transferring the anointing” and other similar unscriptural garbage. This mountain has been built out of Old Testament scriptures that speak of the Holy anointing oil and its uses. Then, the scriptures about the mantel of Elijah are spiritualized and thrown into the anointing mix creating a flesh-based understanding of the anointing and its uses.

The truth is that we are anointed by the Holy Spirit. Jesus received the promise of the Father and sent the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth to us. He was received on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter two. Peter testified that the promise was to us and to our children even as many as the Lord would call. Once received, that anointing, resides in us to teach us and lead us in the things of the Lord.

As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him. (1 John 2:27 NASB)

The Holy Spirit is not an object that can be moved from one person to another. He is not a force that can only be brought forth in the proper spiritual environment. He is God, administrating the things of God.

As for “mantels” and “anointings” that relate to so-called “offices” and “ministries” in the Church, that is just fleshly activity and the Lord is not in it. The five-fold ministry functions are gifts of Jesus to His people—He decides who and when and His decision is not subject to being “transferred” to someone else. The gifts of the Spirit are given to whomever He wills—He decides who, when, and how many. And these are not subject to being received or transferred at the whim of some human ‘minister’. Those who operate in such a manner are not operating in the Holy Spirit.

Recap

Power without character leads to deception. Power manifested for the sake of the “wow” factor is not the power of God.

Angels that focus on anything other than the Lord and His purposes are not the angels of the Lord. “Female” angels are not the angels of the Lord.

The “anointing” is not a force that is given or owned and operated at will or transferred to another person. True anointing is by the Holy Spirit. He operates as a person not a force. He resides in us to teach us the things of the Lord.

The Word tells us exactly what is happening if we will only believe it and apply it.

1 Timothy 4:1-2 NASB

- (1) But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,
- (2) by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron,

The Holy Spirit has very clearly (explicitly) told us that some will fall from the faith by paying attention to seducing spirits and demonic doctrines. This is brought about by the means of hypocritical words from liars without a conscience.

This has been going on for some time. Todd Bentley and the Lakeland circus is just the latest episode. However, it seems that each time that this occurs, more people are taken in than previously and the people of God as a whole are slower to discern the Truth. It is time for us to wake up and receive a love of the Truth or we may be the casualties ourselves next time.

For further study in this area, you might consider these lessons from the website. ---Art

[The Deception Series](#)

Lesson 1: Background of Deception

Lesson 2: Lying Signs and Wonders

Lesson 3: From Without and Within

Lesson 4: Path of Deception

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