

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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Prophets, Prophets Everywhere

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Introduction

The full title of this Teaching Letter is “Prophets, Prophets Everywhere and Not a Word of the Lord Among Them”. I am disgusted with the volume of so-called “prophetic words” this past year that simply weren’t from the Lord. And the sad thing is that once the “word” is given no one is held accountable for its validity. One ministry who sends “words”, “visions”, and articles out to a huge email list published a “prophetic word” last spring from an “evangelist” that was a word of judgment concerning America and give a time line of “by the end of summer”. What was prophesied simply did not happen. However, the one who gave this word that was published globally was never asked about the “word” and why it never happened. Instead, the one who administrates the email list is now holding ministry meetings with this “evangelist” who gave this false “word”. What has happened to accountability? It appears that if you have a known public ministry you can say anything as a “word from the Lord” and people will gladly receive it. And if it turns out to be false, the people will gladly ignore the fact that it was ever said. What is wrong with this picture?

Prophets Who Prophecy

From the Scriptures there is no doubt that New Testament prophets exist and that they have been appointed by the Lord [Acts 13:1, Acts 15:32, I Cor. 12:28, Eph. 2:20, Eph. 3:5, Eph. 4:11]. However, the Scriptures also warn us repeatedly of false prophets [Matt. 7:15; Matt. 24:11, 2 Pet. 2:1, I John 4:1]. We have to learn how to discern between the true and false. There are two primary ways of practicing this discernment. The first is the evaluation of the fruit of the Spirit in the life and ministry of the one prophesying and the second is the validity of the words spoken. We must hold those who prophesy in the name of the Lord accountable for their words. The Lord certainly does. This is what Jeremiah said of those who were prophesying “feel good” words to Israel.

[Jeremiah 14:14 NASB](#) Then the LORD said to me, "The prophets are prophesying falsehood in My name. I have neither sent them nor commanded

them nor spoken to them; they are prophesying to you a false vision, divination, futility and the deception of their own minds.

The words spoken in His name were false. They were false because the Lord did not send them nor command them to speak. Since their words didn't come from the Lord, they came from another source: 1) false visions; that is, visions from another source than the Lord; 2) divination; that is, witchcraft, astrology, soothsaying; 3) futility; that is, useless idols according to the meaning of the word that is translated as futility; 4) deception of their own minds; that is, their own deceptive heart.

I think this last one is the real problem with our current crop of so-called prophets. Their words are from their own heart and mind. They follow their own vain imaginings and speak their thoughts rather than those of the Lord. If you visit some of the prophecy sites and look at the words being given in the name of the Lord, you will be absolutely astounded at the utter stupidity of some of them and how out of character they are to the Lord's ways. If those speaking such things are not held accountable for their invalid words, how will they ever recognize that they are operating outside of the commands of the Lord? If they are not called to account, how will those who follow them be enlightened by the truth and protected from deception?

New Testament Prophets

In the Old Covenant days, if one wanted to hear from God he had to find a prophet of God. In our New Testament days that has changed.

[Hebrews 1:1-2 NASB](#) God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, (2) in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

Jesus has baptized us with the Holy Spirit who “teaches us all things”¹ and leads us into Truth². Jesus has also given us His ascension gifts of apostles, prophets, evangelists and shepherds and teachers³. All of these encompass the ministry of the Old Testament Prophet. Now, however, that ministry has been diffused and distributed by Jesus to multiple people.

Jesus gave us the gift of a prophet as one of the five-fold ministry gifts. The Holy Spirit has given a gift of prophecy to whomever He desires⁴. This gift is abundant enough that we all should desire the gift⁵ and we all should be able to prophesy⁶. This implies strongly that one can operate in the gift of prophecy consistently and yet still not be considered a “prophet”. That designation is determined by Jesus and, apparently, involves more than just the ability to prophesy. It may be that we have no clue as to what a true New Testament prophet actually does. The Lord needs to open our understanding.

1 John 14:26

2 John 16:13-15

3 Ephesians 4:8, 11

4 I Corinthians 12:7-11

5 I Corinthians 14:1-4

6 I Corinthians 14:31-32

One of the things that we do know is that New Testament prophets do not operate alone but are always related to a team. In Acts 13 we have “prophets and teachers” operating together, ministering to the Lord. Later in Acts we have Paul who was a teacher before being sent out operating with Silas who was a prophet⁷.

It would appear that this configuration of prophets and teachers was a standard team relationship for ministry. Why would the Lord do this rather than let each operate independently? I think it is because each of these ministries is responsible for the accurate handling of God's Word and God jealously guards His Word. The prophet receives revelation knowledge of the application and understanding of God's Word. The teacher systemizes the knowledge into an integrated understanding of God's plan and purpose for His people. The prophet depends on the teacher to anchor his revelatory word into the foundation of God's previous word. The teacher depends on the prophet to provide fresh revelation so that his teaching doesn't become just a dry knowledge base but maintains an active, life-giving word. The two ministries balance each other. As a team they can be very effective in helping the people of God mature.

The teacher without the prophet becomes a dry, academic presenter of the word without any life in it. The prophet without the teacher becomes a wild fire of “prophetic” insight that is unfounded and eventually becomes unscriptural.

It is because our modern group of prophets don't operate in teams but act individually that we have such an excess of erroneous “words”. There is no one to balance them. They tend to run their own ministries or churches where they are the “boss”, so who is going to speak against them? Or correct one of their words?

Prophets and teachers especially need to operate in team relationships as peers who can speak plainly to each other about the things of the Lord. These have to be committed relationships so that speaking words of correction to one another won't sever the bonds of the team. To do this requires love and respect for each other and confidence that each one can hear from the Lord.

I have such a relationship with a prophetic brother in the Lord. His name is Jim Clark. We get together for a full day once a week every week. We pray together; make prophetic proclamations for the Lord's work in our area; and study the Word of God. As we fellowship around the Word, the Lord opens our understanding of His Word and how it applies to our area. We discuss what the Lord is showing us and in the process the Holy Spirit brings balance and consensus to our minds. We come into a unity of the faith concerning the Word. We are peer brothers in a committed relationship together in the Lord. We are a New Testament team. We need many more of these. It would drastically reduce the number of “strange and erroneous” words that come forth from those who think of themselves as prophets.

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⁷ Acts 15:32

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