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MODERN DAY PROPHETS TRUE OR FALSE?

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"But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!"

- Galatians 1:8

The Book of Galatians, penned by the Apostle Paul, is a warning to the church at Galatia not to be seduced into believing the Judaizers who desired to place the assembly of believers back under the bondage of legalism (*the Law*). Paul's response in the Book of Galatians clearly establishes his apostolic authority and the Gospel he preached, since the Judaizers questioned his apostleship. Essentially Paul pronounces a curse (*Anathema*) on the Judaizers who had aspirations of bewitching (*seducing, leading astray*) the Galatians and bringing them back under

the curse of the Law. Although churches in America today sometimes get entangled in legalism, I believe the biggest threat is from some "anointed ones" who make certain statements that are in opposition to historical Christianity and sound hermeneutical principles. The similarity is that, as the Judaizers were attempting to bring about bondage (*enslavement*) within the early church, some of today's prophets have the same purpose — to enslave the church. Virtually any doctrine can be accepted by an audience as "biblical" when the prophet claims to have some "mystical anointing" and is operating by "revelation knowledge." Therefore, it is important to follow sound hermeneutical principles at all times, regardless of how renowned a prophet may be.

At this point, it would be redundant for me to engage in a discussion as to whether the visions, dreams, and prophetic utterances of today's prophets are legitimate. We may never know for sure

whether there is a definitive or objective answer to all claims made by modern-day prophets. While it is true that both the Bible and church history record visions, dreams, and prophetic utterances, one should be careful to ingest such phenomena in an objective manner using sound hermeneutical principles. Caution must be exercised in accepting a message from a “prophet” or “prophetess” when he or she claims divine authority (or apostleship). This is especially true when the so-called “messenger of God” instills fear in those who do not accept their message. Even the Apostle John admonished, “*Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*” (1John 4:1 KJV)

Most (though not all) prophets are members of a select circle who teach “hyper-faith” (extremism), and a “denial of reality.” In fact, the cult of Christian Science follows the same basic belief system. Christian Scientists teach that reality is “an illusion” and that sickness is “abnormal;” yet through positive confession, positive mental attitude, and denial of reality, all diseases will be healed. With the majority of prophets, the message is central to their teaching on faith, prosperity, and healing — sometimes referred to as the “*Name It and Claim It*” theology. To this select group, nothing else matters. I would term these prophets as “Pentecostal Exclusionists” — a group claiming to possess supernatural knowledge of the spiritual sphere. However, such teaching places them in a precarious position, in that the “Gnostic cult” of the second century taught similar views and claimed “secret knowledge” held only by an elite few. Likewise, if we listen carefully to the vocabulary of today’s “prophets,” we hear repetitive usage of the term, “*God told me...God told me...*” This statement not only captivates and convinces an audience; it confers authority upon the prophet concerning the Holy Spirit’s inspiration of his or her teaching. We must remember, however, that any “prophet” is the same as other believers, in that in his/her most enlightened and holiest moments of illumination, he/she can never claim that everything said is “all from God” and “none of himself/herself.”

Hebrew prophets were very different from modern-day prophets. They were distinguished from pagan prophets because they delivered their prophecies with an enduring sensitivity that they were human, frail, subject to the wrath of God, and desperate to know what God wanted to say to His people. There was no presumption in their words, even when they pronounced oracles of judgment from the Lord. And above all, Hebrew prophets never took advantage of the people through manipulative and abusive methods. Unlike prophets in the Bible, some modern-day prophets and pastors often frivolously say things that may be potentially harmful to people who are eager to “hear from God.” In my opinion, the most unfortunate effect of this is that most people in the Body of Christ are unable to *recognize* inaccurate or potentially harmful theology when they hear it. As an example, each year in the United States of America, approximately two hundred children die from lack of medical treatment because “Christian” parents refuse to allow its use. In many cases, the most basic medicine could have easily remedied the condition, and cured the diseases of the children. Yet in an effort to be “super-spiritual” and “full of faith,” these misguided parents were taught to keep “confessing the Word” until God “healed” their children. Even more distressing, when the anguished parents asked the prophet what went wrong, the answer is always the same: “You didn’t have enough faith.” The question is: *How much faith does God require to heal a sick child?* Nobody seems to know except the “prophets.” If you have found yourself asking questions about strange doctrines, perhaps the following information may help.

BE CAUTIOUS OF THE FOLLOWING TEN BELIEFS

(excerpts are from the book *Toxic Faith: Understanding and Overcoming Religious Addiction*, by Stephen Arterburn and Jack Felton-Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, Tennessee-copyright 1991)

According to the referenced book, the “Hyper-Faith” movement demonstrates **Ten Toxic Faith** elements:

1. Instant Peace: “When tragedy strikes, true believers should immediately have peace.”
2. Guaranteed Healing: “Positive Confession and faith are a guarantee that God will listen and act on your behalf.”
3. Irreproachable Clergy: “Teachers, pastors, and prophets of “hyper-faith movement” should never be questioned; they are God’s anointed servants.”
4. Monetary Rewards: “Material blessings are a sign of spiritual maturity and faith.”
5. Investment Tithing: “The more money you give to God’s anointed man or woman, the more God will give to you.”

6. Spiteful God: “Problems in your life such as poverty and sickness are a result of a particular sin.”
7. Biblical Exclusivity: “If it’s not in the Bible, it isn’t relevant in today’s world.”
8. Bullet-Proof Faith: “A strong faith will always protect you from problems, pain, and sorrow.”
9. Divinely Ordained Happiness: “More than anything else, God wants you to be happy.”
10. Possibility of Becoming a God: “If you focus on all that you are and can be, you will gradually discover that you can become a god yourself and control your fate.”

In conclusion I pray this article will help you become aware of the dangerous teachings of today. I do not believe all prophets are false, but I do believe that true prophets today are “few and far between” as the old adage goes. So be careful as you listen to prophets and faith teachers. Study the Bible carefully and read books by reputable authors. Then ask God to instruct you in sound doctrines that have stood the test of time. Let’s be like Paul when it comes to teaching and following sound doctrine which in the end protects the saints of God. ♥

AL TINER: Featured Student



What I have found helpful with the structure of Omega Bible Institute and Seminary; is the life experience credit. It certainly was a blessing to find a school to give a fair evaluation of my continuing education and life experiences. I also found the methodology for the courses work will keep you in the course and if followed properly you will learn the subject matter of the course. The first part of this year I was very sick. It was a blessing to know the staff at Omega was holding me up in prayer. For a distance learning program I have found Omega Bible Institute and Seminary to be a great blessing. It certainly fit my needs.

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ISAIAH THORNTON: Featured Student



“Omega Bible Institute and Seminary has changed my life for the better. I enrolled in the Associates program for Biblical Studies, and since that time my theological understanding and exegetical approach to the Bible has increased so much. It has made me a better teacher, pastor and created disciplines in me. Most of all it has made me a better husband and father. I am grateful for Omega Bible Institute and Seminary”

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Omega Bible Institute and Seminary wants to reconnect and stay in touch with its Alumni worldwide. Through our online newsletter we are giving opportunities to all Omega graduates and students who want to be featured in our newsletter. This way we will know how Omega helped you and served as a vehicle to reach your God-given purpose.

We would be over-joyed to receive a written testimony from you or articles that you wrote personally. You can send these via email to **admin@omega.edu** or mail to
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