

The Living Word Fellowship



An Equipping Community Church

The Word of the Month

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Judging Prophecy Part 2

Obeying The Lord's Commandments

Then He said, "Hear now My words: if there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, make myself known to him in a vision: I speak to him in a dream" (Numbers 12:6 NKJV).

God sets the standards for His people beginning, in the beginning. It is believed that Moses, the prophet, is the author of the first five books of the bible known to God's biblical curator's, the Hebrew people, as the *Torah*. One of the first places prophets and prophecy are mentioned begins in the wilderness of deliverance from Egypt.

Today the Lord is dealing with a prophetic church that is being delivered from the wilderness of unbelief. It appears that we are being tested by God as to our covenant faithfulness and love toward him. After more than twenty years of the restoration of prophecy in the modern church there remains a dilemma of false prophecy and a people who struggle in the knowledge and wisdom of judging prophecy. Observing even those who have received training and equipping I am amazed at the vulnerability of many who accept almost all prophecy spoken in the church as from God. There is a plethora of prophetic speaking in the church, on the internet, the television and various meetings where God's people gather. The hunger for God's voice is filled with no shortage of prophetic speaking. Yet, a part of the problem is a famine of judging prophecy. We must remember that ***judging prophecy is also a command of the Lord.***

A Test in the Wilderness

In Israel's wilderness journey from Egypt, Moses hears from God concerning the land they are about to enter. The Lord tells him to instruct Israel not to follow or partake of the ways the people of this land worship false gods. His last admonition to Moses is, "Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; ***you shall not add to it nor take away from it***"(see Deut.12:28-32, emphasis added). In the very next breath (chap. 13) He speaks of *prophets or dreamer of dreams*. We must note here that *God places prophets and dreamers of dreams in the same category*. He then warns Israel that these gifted ones have the ability to release false signs and wonders that lead to other gods. The substance of this admonition is found in verse 3 where the Lord tells those *with ears to hear* the following, "you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for ***the Lord your God is testing you*** to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deut. 13:3, NKJV, emphasis added). ***God is testing us***, the believing community, as to our love and faithfulness to Him and the covenant we have with Him. This is often missed in our instruction of judging prophecy, dreams and visions.

A problem today is that we are so easily swayed by hype in the body that we tend to go after other gods often in the form of man, doctrines of men, or their ministries. The kind of hype we are talking about is *excessive publicity* about one's call, gifting or anointing that being the primary reason for our attending their meetings. These meetings may be prophetic ministries with signs and wonders following, so much so that in our ignorance and need for acceptance, the *meetings and the ministers* become an object of our worship. In this trap, we will acknowledge *their anointing* more than *the One who anointed them*. Often times I hear that "*prophet so and so said, and if he said it, it's good enough for me*", or "I was healed by *prophet so and so*". We seldom hear anyone say, "the Lord worked powerfully through prophet so and so". We must ask ourselves this question, who is to be glorified in the earth God or man? Prophets and prophetic ministers are supposed to be servants to the body, while being the friends of God. They are carriers of the message of God's heart for His people and kingdom.

Another area of danger is when we lay hands on someone prophesying their call to a particular ministry. Sometimes, because of the content of that type of prophetic word people believe that they can now function in that ministry to the body. We should after more than twenty years be aware that the call comes long before the commissioning. However, because of God's grace at the time of the call, one may begin to function in the gift but that does commission them to the ministry. The Lord does not call the equipped but equips those He calls.

The afore mentioned kind of idle worship mentality will cause unnecessary stress on the prophetic minister often forcing them into a performance mode. It is in this mode that ministers can move into the soul realm of prophecy. That is, they have moved from clearly hearing God's Spirit into the fleshly realm of meeting the expectation of those to whom they are ministering. This happens more easily to young or inexperienced ministers who have little or no accountability to other leaders in the body of Messiah.

Rebellion, also plays a part in the heart of some who simply refuse instruction or correction from the authority that God has set in the church. This often happens when one becomes aware of their gift and begins to function in it without discipling or proper equipping. Unfortunately, their gift becomes their identity. Pride in hearing or knowing

things of God without accountability to pastoral prophetic leadership will tend to make one feel important and special to God. A classic example of such pride is the folly of Miriam and Aaron in their speaking against Moses' prophetic authority. Their prideful comment was, "Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also" (Numbers 12:2)?

Two things are apparent in their hearts. One is a *spirit of racism* toward Moses marrying an Ethiopian woman. The other is *the pride of being spokespersons for God*. These heart issues stem from the influence of the evil one who rebelled against God's authority and holiness. Part of Satan's fall came *because of pride in his gifting*. Before his fall his name was Lucifer or *Hillel Ben Shahar*. *Hillel* has its origin in the Hebrew root word *Hallel*, meaning to praise, worship or adore. *Ben Shahar* means "son of the dawn". By this name it is believed that Satan was the chief worship leader in heaven at the dawn of creation. It is possible that Satan was led by jealousy and ambition causing him to lead a third of the angels into rebellion against the authority of God! Unfortunately, pride has the power to lead some (like a third of God's angels) away from the love and power of the Almighty! If Satan's pride had the power to lead those angels into rebellion - the pride of our gifting has similar power to lead unknowing or unlearned saints away from the true grace of God? In that manner when our prophetic gift becomes our identity that pride may cause a similar rebellion in parts of the Messiah's body.

Recently, I heard that some Christians had attended *new age events* seeking words of direction, or for a mate. The problem of this kind of behavior is clearly a lack of intimate love for God, a lack of intimate knowledge of Him, often preceded by no discipleship in the early stages of their walk and no equipping in the gifted area of their life in the body. Unfortunately, in some situations they were not made aware of the need to be disciplined, equipped or that God has a gift for every member of the body. If we in the body of Messiah do not provide true prophetic words as part of the Bread of Life; then those who are hungry will eat the poison of false prophecy. We who have the authority set by God must disciple, equip and mentor the prophetic Miriam's and Aaron's of our time.

There are some measures currently taking shape to solve the problems mentioned. One area in particular are established prophetic ministries forming fellowships with like minded ministries. In this type of fellowship the problems of prophetic ministry are dealt with by the sharing of solutions worked out through the different experiences in the process of their own growth. The goal of these fellowships should be to bring solid discipling, equipping and mentoring to the prophetic people in the local church.

True spiritual authority will reflect the heart of God's command to love Him with all our heart and with all our soul. Discipleship teaches us to be disciplined ones, meaning that we remain disciplined to the ways of God, not the world. If we are properly disciplined we will not lean toward rebellion or prophetic elitism. Both Jesus and Moses spoke about and lived the commandment, "To love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul and body."

The early church, portrayed in Acts and the epistles, were admonished to live this command of God. If our relationship with the Lord is truly one of loving intimacy we will receive His word as one who lays his head upon the breast of the Master. In that kind of relationship we will not entertain, listen to, read or accept prophecies leading toward other gods. If we truly love Him with all our heart, soul, and strength it will be because of our intimate relationship with Him. That kind of relationship begins with obedience to love Him with all our heart, soul and strength.

By now we should have taken on the likeness of our God because of our love for

Him and our standing strong in the revelation of His love for us. This revelation will be more than head knowledge - it will become a way of life (knowing Him, not just about Him). If we truly desire a higher level of communion with God we must have spiritual intercourse with Him. An intercourse of love that reproduces the character, heart and purpose of the Father, portrayed to us by the Son, and empowered by His Holy Spirit. This will require obedience and a living sacrifice of worship, praise, prayer, word study, and meditation, all taking from our personal agendas and turning to Him with our whole spirit, soul and body. Then we will begin to draw close to Him seeking the reflection of His image as looking in a mirror. We will see Him because we know Him!

Further tests in the Wilderness

Moses wrote, that the Lord would raise up a Prophet like himself and, “ I (the Lord) shall put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which he speaks in My name, I will *require* it of him”(Deut.18:18,19 NKJV, emphasis added). This prophet, because of His commission, will speak as the Father *commands* Him. In that obedience we find a foundational command to hear what He speaks from the Father’s heart. God, *requires* that we listen to what this prophet speaks because it is the same as the Father himself speaking.

Jesus is the Prophet of whom Moses spoke. We know from the gospel of John that Jesus only spoke what He heard the Father saying! If we do not hear what the Father speaks through Him then God will *require* it of us. The word *require* in the Deuteronomy text refers to; *ask for, require, demand*, with the idea of *avenging*. In this scripture we find the heart of all prophecy in both covenants. True prophecy comes from the Father’s bosom where His Son was conceived as the Living Word of God. Prophetic speaking is releasing the Living Word from God to His kingdom people. This is where we find the heart of John’s revelation (Revelation 19:10b), ***“Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus, is the spirit of prophecy”***, for every word He speaks is a living, infallible oracle from God the Father. Therefore the true prophetic word from the Son must be received as coming from the Father and if we do not acknowledge and obey it, we may suffer the displeasure of Yahveh the Eternal One.

In the very next verse, the Lord speaks of a prophet (one prophetically gifted, ordained and commissioned) who presumes to speak a word in the Lord’s name or speaks in the name of other gods shall be guilty of the death penalty under that covenant. The word *presumes* is translated from the Hebrew word *Ziyd*, which infers to - *one who acts rebelliously, arrogant, rude or proud*. Here God deals with two issues of a false prophet. One, is to the prophet that speaks in the Lord’s name out of his own rebellious pride of title, rebellion of authority with arrogant characteristics. He or she is speaking in false spiritual authority out of their own issues of life and ministry. The second issue should be obvious to the believing church, that is a prophet or one gifted in prophecy who speaks in the name of other gods. When one speaks in the name of someone else they are speaking in the authority of that name. They may never say the name but will walk in the authority of the name. Authority is received through relationship with the one carrying the authority. The question is: does that authority point us to the commandment of loving God or to loving the man who carries the authority? If it is the latter then that prophetic person speaks out of a *false spiritual authority* from the kingdom of darkness.

The Trap at the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil

Much of today's church is couched in a good works syndrom. Rather than our being salt and light to the world we have taken on the likeness of the world in order to be accepted by the system. Doing this we affiliate ourselves with the kingdom of darkness in this world. Jesus said, *"If you were of the world, **the world would love its own**. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you"*(John 15:19 NKJV, emphasis added). How then have we become affiliated with the world except in a compromise of acceptance by the world. If we read further in that portion of scripture we find that those who truly follow the Lord will not escape persecution.

This good works syndrome comes primarily from our orientation of grace, grace, grace. Yes, we are called to do good works but those good works must be God's good works. So many of us today do good works out of unsanctified mercy, compassion and grace. These works are rooted in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Man's good works can be evil works in the sight of God simply because they are created out of fleshly desire to do good works for personal recognition or satisfaction rather than for God's glory (see Matthew 7:22,23). The greatest grace given by God is the sacrifice of His Son on the cross. In the blanket of that grace we do much that is not necessarily of God; but out of unsanctified works couched in our own abilities. True grace is God's ability in our humility and availability for His ministry through us. It has absolutely nothing to do with what we know to be good or what we have learned to minister in a given situation. Grace ministers through man at a time given by God.

Major assumptions causing error in judging prophecy are twofold. Observing past prophetic models, we find that most people in the church have been taught or have assumed that a prophet's character is harsh, intimidating and super spiritual. This is far from the truth if we see Jesus as the prophetic model like Moses. Most often in scripture seemingly harsh words come from the compassionate heart of a covenant keeping God. God is love, therefore even His wrath is righteous anger. Seemingly harsh words then were - the truth spoken from the heart of love!

The Lord often speaks with words that carry a tone or manner that subdues our flesh. These kinds of words were spoken to a people who were rebellious in maintaining their covenant with God. The Lord disciplines those He loves! All prophetic correction comes from the heart of a loving Father in order to point us to His covenant ways. Today, the church is so grace oriented that even loving correction, whether pastoral or prophetic, is thought to be cruel and harsh. This comes from our adaptation to worldly ways. We will continue to fail in our judging prophecy until we see the loving heart of our Father portrayed in the prophetic speaker even if the word seems harsh. According to the writer of Hebrews, *"The **word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart"***(Heb. 4:12 NKJV). In this scripture, **the word is Jesus**, the Living Word. *He is the embodiment of the conception, ideas and thoughts of God the Father*. In Hebrew thought a word was more than just a sound expressing a meaning, it actually produced something. Similarly, in Hebrew thought God's word not only said things it did things! If the Word dwells in the speaker then it will do something rather than just say something because it carries the very life and power of God Himself. God's word is sharp and piercing, dividing our fleshly desires from the desires of our soul and spirit. This word judges the thoughts and intents of our personal life, our own

pursuits. The Greek word translated *discerner* is *kritikos*, meaning; *related to judging, fit for judging and skilled in judging*. If this *logos* - Jesus dwells in us then we become fit for judging and skilled in judging because He the Living Word, the prophet like Moses is embodied in the believer. Our prophetic speaking becomes more than words that mean something but words that do something in the realm of God's kingdom. True prophetic words often carry this same theme; *God has spoken and God is speaking*. His word is still alive whether it be written or spoken.

A Harsh Word in the Midst of Love

Moses thought it impossible that he alone should be a single prophetic voice to six hundred thousand people. In Numbers 11:1-15, we find the people complaining to Moses about the food that God provided. Three things were apparent in Moses prophetically. One is that *he felt* God placed the burden of the people on only him. The prophet expressed to the Lord, that *He told him* to carry them in his heart as a guardian carries a nursing child. Finally, he asked the Lord where he was to get the meat (food) the people craved besides the manna God provided. This was so much a part of the prophet's heart that he saw himself as "wretched" before God. He simply was unable to bear the burden of the people alone. The word from God was a harsh word to be delivered in the midst of love.

The Lord reveals through scripture, some character issues of Moses in this scene of self judgment. If Moses was to carry this burden alone the Lord would have told him to do so. Moses assumed that God had put this burden on him without realizing that he himself was trying to make something happen that only God had the power to do. He had put on a cloak of self condemnation by trying to carry a burden God did not intend for him to carry. Moses was walking in false humility and immaturity in his gift and calling. Had he not cried out for help, and delivered this word out of presumption, he could have fallen into false prophecy. This is also a picture of the church today crying out for more food (hype, excitement, etc.) rather than exalting the Lord who is the Bread of Life. We often expect a prophet or leader to come in and give a quick fix word, thus putting a false burden on them. From this kind of thought comes a great deal of false prophecy and hype in the church today. We pull on them rather than pray for them to clearly hear God for the burden of the church.

The wisdom of God brought resolve to Moses' problem by releasing the spirit of prophecy upon the seventy elders joined to Moses. This is a picture of God's heart for all to be able to prophesy and to judge the word spoken. It's not about individual ministries but about a body filled with all the fullness of God. Equipping a prophetic church is not just teaching people how to hear and prophesy God's heart. It is also about building God's character and love in those who prophesy. Carrying the prophetic burden often requires a setting apart in the tent of meeting waiting on the time of delivery. The tent of meeting is the place of coming into the council of the Lord. It is in that council that we find the timing and method to deliver the word whether it be harsh, edifying or comforting. The council of God is the place where His love is known and manifested through obedient men. In the final analysis we will find the likeness of God's Son. Out of that council comes a pure word from the Lord. The purity of that prophetic word will not bring stress to the body in it's judging. God showed us Moses' frailty so that we can recognize our own. The prophetic community needs each other, to point the body, to the Son and the kingdom of God.

Moses and the seventy prophesied in the place God called, *Kibroth Hattaavah*

(*graves of craving*), because there they buried a people who yielded to craving. They craved things that came from the place of their deliverance. God had delivered them and had fully sustaining them. They had no need of anything, they were living in the shadow of the Almighty One. Yet they whined and complained, craving for the meat, fish and vegetables of Egypt, the land of their captivity. (see Numbers 11:18,19;32-35) Is the church being set up for a word that will come out a *Kibroth Hattaavah* or are we willing to stop our fleshly craving and look to our provider of life?

Moses considered himself clothed in humility which is the attribute that kept him from falling more than he did. He obeyed the Lord even in the midst of a craving disobedient people. In humility before God, he prophesied a strong word from the Lord's heart along with the seventy elders.

He also prophesied of one coming who would be a prophet like himself. This prophet would by God's design carry a greater degree of humility than Moses and would speak all that God commanded. To those who would not hear the words of this coming prophet God the father would personally hold the accountable. All Israel had heard the words of Moses concerning the judging of prophecy and that they were being tested - to know whether they loved the Lord their God with all their hearts, and all their soul. Jesus is that prophet and it is to His image that the prophetic church is being conformed. We must hear the words of this prophet and obey the command of God to judge all prophecy!

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