

# **What Does God Actually Say about Modern Charismatic Theology, Health-Wealth & Prosperity Churches, and Continuing Prophetic Revelations?**

On any given day of the week on Christian Television, and in many churches around the country on Sunday's the words, "God told me this", or "The Lord told me to do this", or "God told me to tell you", or something similar can be heard over and over.

## **God Told Me?**

How do we know what God has said, is saying, or even whether what we are hearing is really from Him?

The question before us is: has God really started speaking directly to everyone His revelation that is to be shared with the church? Has He really said that if we believe enough we can get well, we can prosper, and is it really His will that believers be wealth?

In the Old Testament times there was a clear test: if what they said drew people away from the true God, they were false prophets; and if what they said did not come true, they were false prophets.

## **Old Testament Tests for Prophets Were Strict**

To start this tie of finding Biblical answers, look with me at those tests of true and false prophets. Remember there were many false prophets even back then, and there are only going to be more as the days get closer to the End, Jesus said, so this is vital for us to understand.

Deuteronomy 13:1-5 (NKJV) "If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, 2 and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods'—which you have not known—'and let us serve them,' 3 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. 4 You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him. 5 But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has spoken in order to turn you away from the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of bondage, to entice you from the way in which the Lord your God commanded you to walk. So you shall put away the evil from your midst.

Deuteronomy 18:18-22 (NKJV) I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. 19 And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him. 20 But **the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name**, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.' 21 And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?'— 22 when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, **if the thing does not happen or come to pass**, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

So God had zero tolerance for false prophets in the Old Testament. How about the New Testament?

## **New Testament Warning About False Prophets**

Right from the start there were warnings from Jesus about false prophets, we saw those in Matthew 24 and Mark 13. But more specifically, with the birth of the Church we see a constant warning from the Lord:

Acts 20:28-35 (NJKV) Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, **speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves**. 31 Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. 32 "So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. 33 I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. 34 Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with

me. 35 I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

## **Deception is Satan's Mode of Attack**

Satan's realm is the whole realm of sneaking in and corrupting the truth, sowing tares, and impersonating God's servants to lead many astray.

II Corinthians 11:13-15 (NJKV) For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. 15 **Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.**

## **God's Solution is Always His Word**

What was to be the solution for false teaching and false teachers?

I Timothy 4:1-11 (NKJV) Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times **some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons**, 2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, 3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. 4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; 5 for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. 6 **If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed.** 7 But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness. 8 For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. 9 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. 10 For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. 11 **These things command and teach.**

So the Word was to be the test, the guard, and the standard. Each believer was to listen, and as a good Berean (Acts 17:11) search to see if that is what God has said.

Acts 17:11 (NKJV) These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.

The common denominator of much of the modern charismatic confusion in the Church is the abandonment in the practices of some, of the formerly nearly universal belief among evangelicals that the Canon of Scripture was closed at the end of the apostolic era.

An unbroken line of faith Bible teachers from the time of the Apostles to the present have taught and affirmed that the Word of God is as it says finished, complete, authoritative, and sufficient.

## **Do Not Add to His Word**

In the past all the cults and false teachers showed up with additions to the Bible: Joseph Smith's Book of Mormon is a notable example.

Any additions to God's Word always undermine the reliability of the Word, and soon elevate the new revelation above God's Word. Most charismatics would say that they in no way wish to lessen the Scriptures, and would clearly declare that their prophecies are not on the same level as the Bible. But by their practices, the net affect is the same.

Confusion, doctrinal errors, and the opening of a new avenue for Divine Revelation are all happening before our eyes. What has happened is that the Bible is no longer unique. There are now dreams, visions, prophecies, and signs that God is supposedly giving to believers.

These insights and words are being shared and have an immediate impact upon those who hear them. Their conscience is struck with the necessity to respond in some way. So now there is Philippians, Romans, and some words of prophecy from a recent pastor, prophet or new Apostle.

Either God is speaking through people or He is not. Since most believers wouldn't want to resist God, they listen and try to respond. Is that how God intended it to be? Confusion, uncertainty, and a never-ending stream, of hard to believe utterances, many of which never come to pass?

## **Only God's Word Is Inspired**

The real issue is a misunderstanding of the Biblical form of inspired revelation. God defines that clearly in II Timothy 3:16-17 and II Peter 1:20-21. The question for us needs to be:

God has explained to us that when we read the Bible we have the most intimate and fresh experience possible: we can hear Him speaking to us. That is the greatest possession we could ever wish for us. It is ours in His Word.

Listen to the depths of what God told Paul to share with Pastor Timothy:

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that **the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work**” (2 Tim 3:16–17, emphasis added).

Then Peter explains that God is the One who sends out His Word, it is at His will and by His prompting.

II Peter 1:20-21 (NKJV) knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

God has declared that all we need to stay in the truth is to test everything we hear, see, and read against His Word. The Word is all we need for life and godliness.

II Peter 1:2-4 (NKJV) Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, 3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

## Is the Canon of Scripture Closed

The bottom line to halt the confusion, and to preserve the truth for the next generation is to affirm that the canon of Scripture is complete, God has spoken, His Word is ours and there is no continuing revelation coming in, through, or for the church.

There are two passages we need to know. The first is in Jude 1:3. Look at what God says through Jude as He was warning about the errors, false teachers, and Scripture twisters. Though the canon was not yet done, the way God describes the Word of God is in a soon-to-be finished way:

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that we should earnestly contend for **the faith** which was once for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude 1:3).

Note the fullness of what God says.

- First, the Scriptures have revealed “the faith”. There is an article in the Greek text, it is not general it is specific. We have the faith that God wants us to have. There are not more versions or variations we have it now. We have the one and only faith sent by revelation from God.
- Second, it is “once for all”. The Greek word hapax means that what we have was something never needing repeating. We have the once for all revealed truth of God. The faith, the Gospel, the message from God needs nothing added, it is complete.

Now, look again at the ending to our Bibles. God was finishing the gift to His Church of His Word with this sobering warning:

“I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God shall add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book” (Rev 22:18–19).

## **God Never Said Look for New Revelations**

God never instructs us to look for fresh, new, daily revelation. On the contrary He said seek out the old paths (Jer. 6:16), and Jesus said we live only on words that come from God. Anyone who presumed to speak for God was held to a life and death scrutiny (Deut. 18:20-22). These long standing truths have been brushed aside in modern times because of the rush for the new, the novel, and the never before heard.

And not surprisingly, wherever there is a preoccupation with "fresh" prophecy, there is invariably a corresponding neglect of the Scriptures. After all, why be concerned with an ancient Book if the Living God communicates directly with us on a daily basis? These fresh words of "revelation" naturally seem more relevant and more urgent than the familiar words of the Bible. Is it any wonder that they draw people away from Scripture?

That is precisely why modern evangelicalism's infatuation with extra-biblical revelation is so dangerous. It is a return to medieval superstition and a departure from our fundamental conviction that the Bible is our sole, supreme, and sufficient authority for all of life. In other words, it represents a wholesale abandonment of the principle of sola Scriptura<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> MacArthur Blog, 9/2010.

## Amazing Modern Prophecies: Would the Lord Say Such Things?

Probably the best-known prophecy of the past generation was given by a believer before a television audience of millions, by Oral Roberts. This prophecy gives us a public record to examine. Thirty-five years ago in 1977 Roberts said that a 900 foot tall Jesus had come to him and told Oral to build a 60-story City of Faith hospital in Tulsa. The prophecy recounted on TV and in many mailing was that the Lord wanted Roberts to unite faith healing and modern medicine so that God could give the cure for cancer.

By the early 1980's the building was built but was heavily mortgaged and the debt was staggering Oral Robert's ministries. Only two floors of the sixty were occupied and the debt was staggering. In January 1987 Jesus appeared again and threatened Oral's life if the needed millions were not raised. The deadline (literally for Roberts life Jesus said) was March of that year. The millions came in from sacrificial donors, but the City of Faith closed by 1989, no cure was found for cancer, and vast portions of the building were never finished.

Now, listen to what Oral Roberts told all those who invested missions into the City of Faith<sup>2</sup>:

God said in my spirit, "I had you build the City of Faith large enough to capture the imagination of the entire world about the merging of My healing streams of prayer and medicine. I did not want this revelation localized in Tulsa, however. And the time has come when I want this concept of merging My healing streams to be known to all people and to go into all future generations."

As clearly in my spirit as I've ever heard Him, the Lord gave me an impression. "You and your partners have merged prayer and medicine for the entire world, for the church world and for all generations," He said. "It is done."

I then asked, "Is that why after eight years you're having us close the hospital and after 11 years the medical school?"

He said, "Yes, the mission has been accomplished in the same way that after the three years of public ministry My Son said on the cross, 'Father, it is finished.'"<sup>1</sup> We may gasp at Oral Roberts' hubris, but he is not the only charismatic who thinks he is receiving private revelation from God. Most Charismatics, at one time or another, feel that God speaks to them in some specific manner, either through an audible voice, an internal impression, a vision, or simply by using them as a vehicle to write a song, compose a poem, or utter a prophecy.

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<sup>2</sup> 235 words from John MacArthur's Blog, <http://www.gty.org/resources/print/articles/A366>

## **Conclusion: The Word of God is Our Final Authority, Not Ongoing Revelation**

In the Old Testament God said that any error on the part of a prophet was to lead to execution (Dt. 13:1-5), we already read those verses. His prophets were not allowed to make mistakes. In the New Testament church each prophetic utterance was carefully checked before it was received. What has happened to the modern church?

I Cor. 14:29 (NKJV) Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge

Then, as the church matured and a generation passed there was an even greater need to guard against the false teaching of a false teacher in a true church.

I John 4:1 (NKJV) Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

Without maintaining that God used Apostles and Prophets, and redefining historic doctrines of inspirations opens an unverifiable stream of people's thoughts, ideas, impressions, and agendas.

Either God has chosen to give us His complete Word, and it has come, we have it, and the revelations have ended; or it will be possible for anyone to say anything and the church would not be able to say that it wasn't from God. That is almost what we see going on in some parts of the Charismatic movement.

God is always at work in His Church. He is transforming us, using us to win the lost, and empowering us to resist the world around us. But to confuse His present work with the inspiration of the Bible is very dangerous.

## **God Has Already Told Us What To Do In His Word**

Some of the most common words that can be heard among many believers today are: "God told me to", and then are shared some of the strangest private messages from God that are completely believed to be true by those sharing them, and also are totally unverifiable to the listener.

To say that the Lord "told me, or "God said to me" immediately elevates an idea to a level that makes it even with the Bible. There is a section from the Westminster Confession of Faith that summarizes the unshakable place God's Word is to have in our lives:

The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by



good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men (1.6, emphasis added).