

K-490 False Prophets of the Last Days

by Art Katz

Art Katz critiques the phenomenon of false prophets in the last days, emphasizing the need for serious and oracular prophetic messages to maintain the integrity of God's word.

Duration: 55:05

Scripture: 1 Kings 18:26-29, Psalm 119:105, Proverbs 19:21, Matthew 7:24-27, John 4:23-24, 2 Timothy 4:3-4, James 1:22

Topics: "False Prophets"

Description

In this sermon transcript, the speaker shares his personal experience of witnessing a demonstration of power without the presence of the living God. He describes a situation where a preacher performed miracles and people were amazed, but the speaker felt an unbearable anguish because he sensed something was wrong. He also mentions another incident where a well-known evangelist turned out to be a notorious homosexual, causing him great pain and questioning the discernment of the church. The speaker emphasizes the importance of discernment and urges listeners to question the history and credibility of preachers before accepting their messages.

Transcript

to a brother who had written a little book in defense of the current prophetic phenomenon, a very dear man, a scholarly man, and a missionary himself. And I'm complimenting him on how much I appreciated his book, and then I bring up some points of concern of my own that responding to his book gives me opportunity to express, and that basically his premise about prophets, of whether they are true or false, is whether their predictions are accurate. I think some of the Kansas City authorities, the fellowship there that has been really a host to a lot of these prophetic men, talk about percentages, that it's unreasonable to expect an accuracy greater than 65%.

But as we go on to increasing maturity, we'll become 70, 75%, and then maybe just before the Lord's coming, we might be hitting 100, as if the issue is the issue of the accuracy of prediction in assessing the validity of prophets. And I'm rejecting that entire criterion, because I don't think that the issue is the issue of prediction, but the issue is the issue of the namely the prophetic word. And what I notice and observe as I hear some of these men who are being described as the oracle of the hour publicly to the congregation that has been formed in their own hearing as they sit on the platform, that if someone had made that description of me, and I would not think it appropriate, I would instantly leap to my feet and take the microphone and rebuke the man who was complimenting me in that way, which of course never

happened.

They sit there and they receive these acknowledgments openly and publicly, and they will be held accountable before the Lord for that. And by the way, not only did I notice lightness in those sessions, humor, and it's not that I'm opposed to humor, I love humor when it's appropriate. I sometimes get funny myself once in a rare while, but not on occasions where you're waiting to hear the oracle of the hour.

It's somehow incompatible, and that when the thing is over, instantly people are on their feet and chit-chat and lightness, and where are you going to eat, and like nothing had happened. There's something organically wrong with that that I can't express better than what I'm saying. So I'm observing these symptomatic things and trying to construct and see a pattern that perhaps we should understand, because God himself fingers lightness as being a symptom of false prophets.

And I've been looking while we were talking to find the exact scripture, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and I can't seem to find it. I know it's there, if anyone can find it. It's verse 32.

32 of chapter? 23. Well, maybe it's good, you know, to examine that word. I like that word.

I don't like the phenomenon, but I like the word as being very descriptive. What would you say lightness means, as something inappropriate in what purports to be a prophetic setting? What is lightness? Well, it's something that doesn't need to be heavily considered. Okay.

It does not command or demand our very serious attention. In fact, it's not high seriousness at all. You know, one of the pre-reproaches I have to face besides being loveless and, I forgot what, arrogant, is that I'm too serious.

Have you ever had that one thrown at you? You're too serious. So, this lightness is a distinguishing symptom of something false. Is that to say that there are not moments when we can enjoy a light moment, a word of humor, a quip or something like that? No, it's without saying.

I mean, praise the Lord. I mean, that's the very lubrication of life itself, but it's totally incompatible with the serious endeavor of the proclamation of the prophetic word, all the more when it has been publicly announced and defined or lauded as being the oracle of the hour. We have some vocabulary here that we need to sift through, and in the letter I write, for me, it's not the issue of prediction.

It's the issue of the message, and it's not that these men do not bring biblical messages, but it's the kind of biblical message that is a common place. That is to say, anyone could bring it. There's nothing to be faulted in terms of doctrine.

It's correct, but it is not oracular. It is not a message that bears prophetic weight or intensity or seriousness. So, I'm going to come back again to this word oracular.

These men are described as the oracles of the hour, and their message should therefore be oracular. How would you define that word? What is an oracular message? What is the oracle of God? Oral, O-R-A-L, is in the very word oracular, so it's emitted from the mouth, but so can like things also be emitted, and even lying things be emitted. What distinguishes the oracles of God? I mean, if men have been described as this, what are we to understand by that statement? Because if we let that word become cheap, we'll not have the value and the meaning that God attaches to it.

It's a serious loss. It brings with it a way of perceiving things that was not there before that word came. It opens up a vista of who's seeing things as God sees them, which is altogether not as we see.

What would you say about this age? We're only just getting our feet wet in it. What is characteristic of this age, these last days? In the latter days, he says, you will consider this. What kind of an age is this? Shallow.

Shallow, deceptive, confusing, bewildering, violent, filthy, immoral, amoral. What's the difference between immoral and amoral? Which of the two would be more dangerous, the amoral? Amoral society doesn't even know that it's immoral and doesn't even give a rat. This is an age of such ebbs and tides and fluids, filthy and sick and perverse and violent and things shaking and governments breaking down and splintering and fragmenting and collapse of kingdoms and whole civilizations, mass genocide, Bosnia, mass rape as a political military strategy.

First time in history, the Nazis had never condescended to that. Soldiers have always taken their liberty, but a policy of rape as a policy, unheard of. A genocidal extermination of whole races and ethnic groups, what do we call it, cleansing? Ethnic cleansing? There are terms that have been generated in our time now that never had an existence.

Mom and I, and maybe Jane, have lived long enough to know an age that by comparison to this, my God, it was like an age of innocence. We lived before World War II, it was an age of innocence and the rapidity and the escalation of evil. I got things that I could read that you'll fall out of your seat of what's going on in the New York City public school systems.

Actual depiction of anal intercourse for junior high school kids and a 14-year-old snot-nose writing a public letter chastising adults for reducing or limiting their ability to see those things that we want to be fully informed, but don't tell us with your old-fashioned morality that we can't, you know, this liberal attitude, where did you get it from? A teacher who's likely a lesbian. And so I mean there was an age if ever, why am I saying all that? If ever we needed to hear the oracles of God. It's in such an hour as this and it's going to become more turbid, t-u-r-b-i-d.

Turbid is what happens to the Mississippi River that comes out of the ground pure. By the time it flows out to the Gulf of Mexico, it's carrying every kind of filth and scum and oil and prophylactic and hypodermic needle and every kind of vile thing. It's become turbid with filth.

This world is full of turbid darkness. What is God saying in Isaiah, is it 60 or 61? Arise and shine for your light has come. A thick gloom and darkness pervades the earth.

That's the description of the last days. We need oracular statements. We need the light of God.

We need to see what he is seeing that and has as he would have us to see. But if we allow that word to become cheapened and become a label that is affixed to anyone who is giving predictive prophecy or even the gift of knowledge or what might even be worse fortune-telling and call that oracular prophecy, we have had it. Cats, why are you so insanely jealous over this issue of whether something is truly prophetic or not? I'll tell you why.

Because the church is built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, the real thing, or it's not a real church. And if you allow the admission of a false foundation, what can you expect for the superstructure? If we have to be jealous over anything, my God, let us be jealous over the foundational

things to the faith. And the enemy who knows this, what will he seek to traduce and to contradict and corrupt and make false? But these very foundations.

And what do the scriptures explicitly warn us? That in the last days, there will be false prophets and false apostles. In Revelation, God compliments that church that has recognized those apostles who say they are apostles but who are false. God compliments that they have the ability to discern that.

Would you say that right now, on a scale of zero to ten, what would you say, generally speaking, is the level of the church's discernment? All you have to do is invoke the sanctifying word and put it as a label on any mixture of your own, God of your own conceiving, and call it Jesus, and 99 out of 100 saints will take that hook, line, and sinker without a moment's question. What we're talking about, what are the elements that constitute the prophet and an intense jealousy for God as God, for the integrity of God as God? How would he know whether it's a false God who's being purveyed under the label Jesus or in fact the truth? What gives him a handle on that more than any other? That he can bring that discrepancy to the attention of others who might have been suckered in to receive it because it's labeled the right way. How does he know the difference more than we? This is a key question.

As the Lord lives before whom I stand is not a little catchy phrase that Elijah is invoking to impress Ahab. It's his credential. He doesn't say PhD.

My PhD is this. I have a history with God. I know him.

I have been in the secret places, in the councils of God, in the dark, strange dealings with God. I know him in my own intimate and intensive personal experience in history. I know his voice, his familiar accent.

I know his characteristic way. As I've said before, and it's worth saying again, my view about Israel, which is very different and radically other than most of those who are sympathetic toward Israel, is not based on hearing something that has come down to me from heaven. Now, art does say to the Lord, this is the way you have to understand Ezekiel 37, but that it's a view that is, what shall I say, the outworking and the expression of a history with God of his ways, his dealings, his judgments, centering in the principle of death and resurrection that gives me a view of Israel, its future, and God's dealings and its destiny in a way that others are not seeing it.

You understand what I'm saying? My prophetic view of Israel is not the result of a voice that has come down from me to heaven. Now, this is the way you have to see that. It is the summation of a walk, of a lifetime, in God's own dealings with me, in the history here at Ben Israel, in the centrality of the reality of death and resurrection, that makes me to know, to know, that I know, that I know, that Israel must die, and that there must be a resurrected nation, that only a resurrected nation can fulfill the millennial destiny of God.

Excuse me. As I go on in this letter to say that these men who are light, whose messages are only a preliminary that you have to wait through to get to the action for which you have come, namely their predictive prophecies that excites and titillates the audience, have also at the same time strange histories, or that is to say, non-histories. Where is their history in the body of Christ? All of a sudden they have been thrust onto the charismatic evangelical stage, but you hadn't heard of them before.

Where have they come from, and what's their history, and who knows them, and who can commend them? You see what I mean? Well, let me read that. So, it's not that the messages have not been biblical

and good, so much as that they have not been oracular. That is prophetic in the sense of the weight intensity and solemnity of them, or the seriousness of them.

True, my sampling has not been extensive, but I have not been struck by so much as any of those whom I've heard, and indeed the last time was marked by a painful levity and unbecoming lightness after we were informed that we were to hear the oracle of God for the hour. Please understand that the issue is not personal peak, P-I-Q-E, like I'm not just ventilating a little personal irritation or disappointment, but that the prophetic standard, which is in a certain way the statement of God before his people, is at stake. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus.

It's not only a loss of things pertaining to the word prophetic, it's a loss pertaining to the things, to the name Jesus. There is a leveling or a belittling of the statement of God before his own people that rises and falls with the credibility of that which is prophetic, because the essential burden of the prophet is the intense jealousy over the integrity of God himself. The prophet communicates the reality of God himself as he in fact is.

That's the ultimate end for his prophetic being. What was Elijah doing before all Israel on Mount Carmel? Why did he set up that whole confrontation? Let it be known this day who is God. Let that God be God who answers by fire.

Elijah's jealousy was that God would be revealed to the people who purport to be the people of God, and who've gone off fornicating after false gods. It is jealousy for God that the people would know God, the God of their fathers. So the issue of what is truly prophetic is the issue of God.

God rises or falls with the credibility of that prophetic ministry. One of the symptoms of the age, and a disturbing one, is that a book recently written by one of these now greatly celebrated personalities is on the Holy Spirit, with the encouragement to know the Holy Spirit in his own person, and that we have given too much attention to Jesus and the Father, but neglected the Holy Spirit, and that this is the key to the understanding of God, which I'll tell you that the epistolic fathers of the faith would turn over proverbially in their graves to hear that kind of a view being promulgated, and yet it is on the bestseller list. It is the bestseller.

These are disturbing signs, talking about three on a scale of ten in terms of discernment, the enormous popularity of this phenomenon and of these personalities. In fact, what shall we say about the phenomenon of personality itself, the fascination of personality, and God's people being drawn to the personality of men, and their aura, and their charisma, or their miraculous power to slay in the Spirit, and the things of that kind, the excitement, and how I had to--I'm always giving you experiences out of my history, but Katharine Kuhlman, now hopefully with the Lord, in one of her last public displays, was reaching behind the people who had come up for prayer, and of course when she touches them, they would go down, but reaching behind the person to touch the catcher, and the catcher would go down, and people shrieked with delight at this exciting novelty, and the flashbulbs would be popping, and the people would be running to the apron of the platform to photograph this thing, and I'm standing four feet, or sitting four feet from it, just having finished a message on Elijah, which was a scandal and for which I'm still a stink and a reproach, and her first words after I'd finished and taken more time than I should, saying, well, we have heard about the Holy Spirit, now I'm going to demonstrate him, and then performing all of this, and I'm standing four feet from the falling bodies in the unbelievable agony or anguish of seeing visibly a demonstration of power without the sense-felt presence of the living God. You ever put those two things

together? The anguish was so unbearable that I had to get up and yank anger with me, and leave, and walk off the platform before four thousand people, but I could not abide it a moment more.

In fact, I've had occasions in my life where things like that have happened, full gospel, regional or national or international conferences where something is spoken or done, where I have come within an iota of not just leaving, but yanking the microphone out of the hand of the man who is speaking words that my ear finds no fault because it's perfectly doctrinally correct, and yet my spirit is altogether so knotted and anguished that I cannot bear for him to go on a moment more, and then to find out three months later that he's been revealed as a homosexual, and that he had been ministering while in that condition, and no one noticing, and then when he came into the great ballroom at the largest hotel in New York City, the lights went out and a spotlight fell at the entranceway as he stood there in his magnificent stature and came with his own organist playing, and now God's great man of faith and power, Jerry, whatever his name is, and the people stand up wide-eyed, and in comes the great man walking down the aisle to the platform, and every eye upon him, and when that message was over, 5,000 people got up, less one, and walked around the great ballroom in a line so they could come under the hands of this great man of faith and power who was found to be a notorious homosexual. If I would tell you who was on the platform, talk about discernment. Names that are household names are the most respected, thoroughly established, famous, evangelist, full gospel leaders in America, not discerning of something.

My God, it's just an excruciating pain. So, what are we saying? How do we get through all this? Don't miss this. His message was letter perfect.

Talk about deception of the last days. There was nothing in what was spoken that could be faulted technically or doctrinally. The lie was the lie of the spirit.

So, I wonder if that does not account for the low estate of God's people, the squelching, the swallowing down, the going on, the looking aside, no one wanting to take issue. In fact, if you're the only freak in 5,000 whose guts are going haywire, what is your likely fraud? Is something wrong with them or something wrong with you? If you think something's wrong with you. I said to somebody yesterday, I think my dear brother is visiting today, I said not the least of my ministry is to save men from insanity who think that they alone are just terrible freaks because of the way that they react and perceive because everybody else is having a ball and shouting hallelujah and amen, and they alone are just in an anguish, a paroxysm of pain over the same thing that others are delighting.

So, you're going to be alone. Remember we said this, the prophet is essentially alone, and yet I'm going to say in this statement that he's not living in isolation. In fact, except that the prophet is in a community situation, he's either false or will become that.

If he's just surrounded by a bunch of back slappers and self-approving men, he's on the road to becoming false. So, a prophet needs the protection of community and true vital fellowship, as we said last night, to receive exhortation and rebuke. But when he stands for God in the crisis moment of delivery, we're in a situation in which he finds himself, like what I'm describing, he's going to be very much alone.

And so, not the least of the requirement is a character that can bear the pain of being alone, of being rejected, of feeling freaky, or being out of it. And in yet a confidence that though 4,999 people are wide-eyed and enrapt with astonishment at the great figure, and you alone have your guts exploding and every alarm going off within, that you can have a confidence in your discernment, though you're one out of 5,000 who has not vowed to me to bail. That would take an extraordinary assurance in the accuracy of

what is going off in your spirit, because you're often required to act on that.

As for example, a meeting where everyone was having a ball, and they were just praising the Lord, and you're incapable of it. You cannot enter into their so-called joy, and you have another discernment altogether. And then I get up and I say to the congregation, you have to forgive me, but I can't enter into your joy.

I have another sense whatsoever, and I believe it's God's sense, and I'm going to require you to come into my sense of things and forfeit your own, for I believe it's God's. And then I go off and I start speaking that and sure enough, before that message is over, they have been brought from one perception of reality to another. The prophet bears, or should bear, an exclusive, unique sense of the reality of things as God sees them, though he be one out of the whole number that are there, and have the courage to speak on what he senses and sees and perceives as being real, and that it's not some idiosyncratic thing, procuring it to himself, that he is experiencing.

Are you following that? That's chutzpah, you know that Jewish word? Unless it really is grounded in God. If it's a false prophet, it's more likely to be some idiosyncratic thing, some vagary of his own mind, of his own imagination. And so if critical things are at stake, a whole moment of truth that comes to a congregation or a conference or a meeting of ministers, that very much rests on the accuracy of that vessel, and who has the history in God.

So, I think that the greater issue is not so much as whether these prophets are accurate, most of the time, so much as whether they are prophets at all. To confirm the church in its own present likeness by their own example is analogous to the false prophets of the Old Testament time who confirmed Israel in its sin. All in all, what is their revelation? How oracular is it? What is it more or other than the general preaching of others who make no profession of being prophetic? Is their distinctive not much more the sensationalism or excitement of their gifts, or the anticipation derived from the hero status generated largely by their affirmation of each other? The conference that I described that was right, where the man was publicly described as the oracle of the hour, had so much flattery in it that it was absolutely sickening.

I had never attended a conference where men were complimenting each other, right and left, in such laudatory exclamations that it was almost embarrassing to hear it. No one said enough. They just basked in it.

Or another conference where it was so dull and so dead and so bereft of any sense of God's presence or power or anointing on any of the speakers, and the next guy would get up and pay tribute to the guy who had preceded him and say, wasn't that a word from the Lord? Weren't you powerfully moved? Didn't you feel the presence of God as you spoke? What an anointing! And you're looking and scratching your head, what? I'm totally out of it. Someone's missing it. And that meeting was at a meeting of New Testament churches, ministers of New Testament churches purporting to be, and I say it in this letter, the best of what is available in Christendom today.

And yet they'll use that kind of lavish language totally out of keeping with the reality of what is in fact going on. It's a courtesy. It's a, what's the word? It's a professional response.

It's evoked. There's a cue given. You respond to men and their expectancies.

Imagine a man would get up and say, I don't know, but from the beginning of this meeting, till this hour, we're coming to the end of it. I have yet to sense God's presence or see his anointing in any speaker. I don't know what's wrong, but I think that we need to pray.

That man is finished. But as a matter of fact, that's what happened at that same conference where that miraculous thing, when it was being described as the ugly arm, it was bereft of anointing of God's presence. And we were anguishing.

There was a lot of us and talking among ourselves in the break and my God, what is this? And then there came a Saturday afternoon when the platform was open and men were being invited up to express anything they had or any impression. I was never called on, but he was called on, a brother who's a pastor in the Minneapolis area. And I thought, oh, let's see now what he will say.

Because he was saying to us, I have not experienced God's presence or anointing since this thing has begun. He got on the platform. He mentioned enormous pressure, the peer pressure, because this conference took place in his city.

And he was personally friendly with the pastor of his church. It was being staged and related to all of these other men. And he began by saying the propitious and conventional right things.

And my heart was sinking because I knew he was bartering away his whole future in God. He would never recover from this. And evidently, it caught him and he stopped and took a deep breath.

And then he spoke the truth. He said, I have to say that from the moment this conference began to this present hour, I have not sensed the presence of God nor the anointing of any speaker. It went on like that.

But oh, praise God, the moment of truth has come. And then he got off the platform and master of ceremonies who had been making all of these lavish introductions and lauding men and complimenting men took that statement and by such an artfulness, so twisted it as to diffuse it and saying, well, wasn't that a wonderful insight? And now let's all stand to our feet and let's thank the Lord and let's ask the Lord for our, as if nothing had happened. It's like a moment that came in London at the world conference of Pentecostal churches that was so dull, so predictable and so dead.

It was an agony to sit until toward the end, a cry, a little cry came up out of the balcony in tongues. I felt myself breathing for the first time. And I, my heart began to pound with excitement.

God is finally breaking in among Pentecostals, the people of spirit. And what shall we hope? And I was waiting for the man at the mic to say, and then someone gave the interpretation in German. It was an international conference.

I could pick up a few words, my scant understanding of that language, a cry of God for the Allah, God calling us people for preparedness. It was a real word. And I thought that the next thing in my naivety was that the master of ceremonies would say, is there someone who could please translate that German interpretation for all of us who are English speaking.

But instead he turned to the piano player and went, I'll never forget that, just like that, a signal. And the piano player began, he is Lord, he is Lord. Everybody, the whole thousands of delegates, he is Lord.

And so in the name of he is Lord, the Lordship of the Lord was dismissed. And the embarrassment of a penetrating cry put aside and business went on as usual. These are critical crisis things.

Someone said later, if Paul himself had been there, he would not have been permitted to in any way break into what was going on and upset it. I'm raising the question why it is that people follow after these things with excitement and why these personalities have received the kinds of acknowledgement that they have, that it might be a statement of the dryness of the church, the grayness, the lassitude, the predictability, that people in the church sense. And they're waiting for something to break, the monotony.

And here's a visible personality of a compelling kind with a certain excitement that maybe it's a prophecy for you that will come, that explains this fascination. Another interesting sidelight is that some of these personalities have as their credential reference to angels, that it's angels who have given them this word or this understanding about this person. And this is something novel.

I don't know about any of you here. I've never heard this before, where angels are invoked or sometimes even described as being with that prophet right there in the moment, to give them explanation or edification about the things in which he's speaking. Or that it's through a message that has come through angels to them that their prophetic calling was established.

So likewise, my concern for the reference to angels is not so much that this is invalid in the experience of saints. I mean, there can be angelic visitation. Michael the angel came to Daniel.

That there can be this in the experience of saints and ministers, but that it becomes an authorization or validating of the prophetic calling when the message itself fails to do so and serves as a substitute. Instead of the prophetic credentials being validated by the prophetic word, it's validated by reference to angels. This is the authorization.

This is what gives the prophet his credibility and his weight, is that his ministry and calling came by visitation of angels, or even his presence speaking and revelation is by angels. So rather than the assessment and the credibility coming by the word and the weight of the word as a prophetic word, as an oracular word, it comes on the basis of a supernatural phenomenon that may well be dubious at the best and false at worst. God's word, for the want of a better word, is ponderous.

And we know it when we hear it. As Marsha said, when that word came, she knew it. It's a word of another kind.

It makes a particular demand upon our attention and likewise a requirement in our obedience. One way in which I discern whether a word is from God or from man is, what does it require of its hearer? If it's non-requiring, however biblical or inspirational and fine-sounding, I would suspect that its origin is not from God's secret place in counsel. God's word is not for our entertainment or our titillation.

God's word invariably requires. How can you hear God and not be required of? It's just inherent. God does not speak for effect.

And yet, how little of what we hear is requiring, in a sense of requiring sacrifice. Well, I'm talking about prophetic, but now this is true also of just most preaching that we hear. One thing that distinguished Finney's preaching from present-day preaching is, Finney never spoke in general terms.

He never left it up there, and you put on the shoe if it fit. He made his word clear. He was speaking about you.

He's speaking about you, your condition now, your attitude, what you're doing, saying. That people, the word of God bored into them. They were convicted and broken.

He never allowed the word to be expressed in a general way, which is characteristic, I think, of most speaking today, because we think that if a word is biblical, we're fulfilling God's requirement. Remember what Paul was exhorting to Timothy about, preach the word, be instant, because people will be wanting to have their ears tickled, but exhort, rebuke, correct. In other words, when Paul describes the word of God, he's not telling Timothy to be a sermonizer, that the word is a word calculated to reprove, correct, exhort, and bring change.

But people, he said, will not want to hear that. They'll want their ears tickled. So, what I'm speaking about is especially deadly in terms of prophetic proclamation, but it's equally true in all proclamation.

We were saying yesterday that the false prophets leaping upon their sacrifice, thinking that there was a God who would hear and answer. They did not know that they were false. They did not know that they were deceived.

They really expected an answer. And there's Elijah mocking them when no answer came. So, for people to be confronted with the truth of their condition, that it really is false, though it has the correct label, you call it Jesus, is an astonishing indictment.

And indeed, unless God honors that with his power and authority, the man who makes it is likely to find himself stoned to death. People don't know that they're deceived. And one of the most startling things that has come to me in the last year is that I understood about Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses and other clear cultic and occultic groups, New Age and so on.

But what startled me for the first time was that you can be as deceived in the vocabulary of the faith as you can be deceived in the terminology of New Age. Think on that. Same deception, same power to deceive.

It only is employing an orthodox and legitimate vocabulary. But that deception can come through it, maybe even more powerfully because it's disguised in the conventional language of the faith, than if it came in language that is clearly not of the faith. But that deception is not only possible, but rampant in that particular area.

And maybe the first task of the prophet in the spring cleaning of the church is not to confront the New Age movements, but to confront the church in its own deception in the employment of orthodox language that does not correlate to orthodox reality, but serves as a guise and a cover to humanisms and other kinds of presumptions and variances from God that are altogether concealed under the covering of orthodox language. This is the most powerful and blatant form of deception presently going on in the world. But who can see it? Because to the ear it's entirely credible and it's saying the right thing.

Like that man at that full gospel international conference at that hotel in New York, God's man of faith and power, upon whom the spotlight fell, who brought his own ordinance, his word could not be faulted. It was orthodox. It was about the blood and it was about atonement.

Like the man that we heard at the Ukrainian Messianic Baptist Church, everything he was saying was legitimate orthodoxy. But my guts were so knotted, it was so painful, all the more because of the jarring dissonance between something that is audibly orthodox and yet existentially a lie. That ought to go in your notes.

That's the statement. Here we're burrowing into the anatomy of deception and the most formidable character of deception in the last days is not going to be some Hitlerian fantasy out of left field that is so bizarre that it can be instantly identified as being off the wall and out of the bowels of hell. It is going to be couched in the most conventional orthodox biblical language.

When it says that they will kill us and claim we are doing God a service, shows that the persecution of the remnant church of the last days is not so much the threat that comes to us from the world, but from a religious dimension that think they're doing God a service. Talk about deception. They think they're really doing God a service.

They're removing the fly from the ointment. They're removing that ungainly, hyper-spiritual fundamentalist who insist on the Ten Commandments and the Word of God and don't understand what God is doing now. This is a new hour.

He's reconciling and unifying and bringing together in ecumenical wholeness all the families of the faith. All children of God who believe in the one God. You may remember if you read the book Spirit of Truth how that book was birthed, how that message was first given.

By going to see or hear a speaker so talented, so excellent, that I could hardly wait to get there. It's rare to hear real preaching. I went on like the hind, the deer going to the water brooks, sitting up in the balcony and waiting for the moment to begin and looking about and something was wrong already in what I was seeing in the way the posture of the people.

Then the Word came forth and I'm listening and I'm approving and that thing was happening in my guts. That contradiction between the legitimate sound of the Word and the spirit of it. This was my first revelation.

This is how the book, the thought came. The Spirit of Truth is the technical Word of Truth, but the Spirit of Truth is far more searching and deep that the Spirit was contradicting the Word. His Word was radical and biblical, but his spirit was saying to the congregation, now don't get upset.

Don't think I'm actually requiring this of you. Remember, this is just a Sunday sermon. We have an unspoken agreement.

I'll provide you with a biblical message every Sunday and you provide me with a man's income and things that pertain to my necessities of life and we'll just get along famously. His spirit was saying something contradictory to the Word and the dissonance between the contradiction was unbelievably painful and that's how God began to open to me the whole subject of Spirit of Truth. So, this is a real key to end time deception, but what would be the issue about whether one is going to discern it or not? The words are going to be impressive and orthodox.

How will you recognize it as deception and lie? What do you think hearing that verse would be more difficult to discern, good or evil? Good. Evil is apparent, but good is subtle. Good has much going for it.

Good has much to commend it, but if the good is not from God, but just emanates from a kind of altruistic humanistic personality who can sound it, can good be as destructive to the interest of God as evil? More so, because it appears as good, but if it keeps you from the particular and perfect will of God, it is evil and more deadly than evil because it is not recognized as evil because it purports to be good. So, you didn't answer my question. What will enable you to discern through seeming orthodoxy of things sounded to recognize things that are deceptive? I would just say in the line of what we're speaking about, if you'll understand me, this is an insane, extreme, prophetic statement.

You've got to hate that which is good. I always feel like crawling under the table. Good thing Inga's not here.

She let me have it. You understand what I'm saying? If it's at the expense of... Remember that the oil of gladness was upon Jesus because he loved righteousness and he hated iniquity more than his brethren. And I'm saying that we've got to hate good as much as we hate iniquity.

I'm talking about false good, that which purports to be good, appears to be good, that would appeal humanistically to us as being nice, pleasant, or right, which is as vicious as evil because it is equally as calculated to keep us from the perfect will of God. And unless you hate good in that sense, hate sentimentality, hate mush, hate that which appears and gives a nice feeling. I mean, what is a false prophet anyway? It's the guy who says, peace, peace, when there is no peace.

He makes nice. And which of us around the table this morning doesn't like nice and to be made nice? There's something that yearns for it. And therefore they have a ready market, large audiences, great responses, mass mailing lists, because we want that which is nice, good, pleasant to the ear.

And in fact, if you examine 90% of all of these predictive personal prophecies, what is their character? And there's a future for you and a destiny, and you're going to be doing great things for God. And by next year, this time, the guy sitting there, he's just a bump on a log before, just occupying a pew seat, all of a sudden, he himself has a vision of God's faith and of the man of power for the hour. Invariably, these prophecies of that exalting kind, they're good and pleasant to hear.

It's very rarely the word of judgment that unless you change your ways, that by next year, this time, you'll be pushing up daisies. What would be an example in the life of Jesus recorded in scripture of his own vehement opposition to the word good, when he himself was, what's the word? In a complimentary way, called good. Remember, good master? What must I do to inherit eternal life? How flattering.

That's the kind of thing you say to a rabbi. They love it. Good teacher.

I could see the rabbi, yes, young man, can I help you? But Jesus rose with such prophetic indignation. Why callest thou me good? He wouldn't allow that compliment for himself, because he knew what the speaker meant by it. And to accept that premise for himself allows the speaker to remain on the ground by which he's good.

When the scripture says, there's no man good, no not one. Why callest thou me good? There's no man good but God. We've got to come to the same vehement hatred of what purports to be good.

Because I think it's in this area that last days deceptions are going to abound. They'll not be presented as sinister or evil, but as seemingly good. As for example, unity.

This desire for unity of the body of Christ, isn't that good? A peace, agreement, harmony. And then to social ills, the necessity for a world government where every nation would be responsible to a central author. It's all going to be good.

So we need to be able to hate good in that sense as to hate evil, even more so seeing how much more deadly. Okay, maybe we ought to stop at that point. I'll just finish this little paragraph.

God's word is ponderous. We know it when we hear it. It makes a particular demand and a requirement on our obedience.

And that kind of word can only come out of the counsel of God. My concern is at the basing of the church, a decline of the value and valuing of the word, when that which is not out of his counsel is announced as being the prophetic word. So out of what formative relationships in the body have these prophets come? Their public prominence has been sudden.

I wonder if there were an appropriate nurturing, not only of the gift, but of the character of the man. Before they were visited on the body, how long and rightly have they been part of the local body? Have they been sent out by the same? Or have we been witnessing the score of celebrities who obtained verification through each other and are received through eagerly from the church wanting to be relieved of its power, P-A-L-L-O-R, which means its readiness, its drabness, its predictability. It's one Sunday like another and wanting some break in that predictable monotony.

And here's an exciting personality. And we're not too careful to ask where he's come from, what his origins, what his history, what his church connection, what body has sent him, who knows him, who has approved him, out of what fellowship has he been sent, with the blessing. In fact, it's the same kind of thing that will characterize the lying signs and wonders.

People are so hungry for the demonstrations of power that they're not too careful to ask or to examine what is the source and the nexus from which that power has come, wanting only to see the manifestation of power. So, everything is already in place for the last day's deceptions. And of all the ministries, which one is appointed to recognize them and to identify them and to cry out against them and to make them know and will lose their heads in the process? It is the prophetic ministry.

So, serious stuff for all the church. And the church that is as false as its foundation is of no value to God in this last day's purposes, and will even find itself opposing God, even in the name of God. Little good will they do toward Israel and the remarkable dealings that await that nation.

And in fact, will find themselves obstructing God's dealings in the name of good. And why don't you leave these people alone? Haven't they suffered enough already? This benign concern for Jews from churches that will see our witness or word or prophetic calling or warning of judgment as not being nice. Why don't you leave them alone already? That's not loving.

So, Lord, we just want to thank you, my God, as we're feeling for something and approaching something that will be subtle, deadly in its power, not easily recognized. If there's something in our own souls that is craving, something in us that yet desires the approval of men, wanting to have our back slapped, wanting to be taken into their counsel, rather than finding the lonely and difficult secret counsel of God. Lord, we just ask you to search us, to examine our hearts, my God, to keep our hearts with all diligence for all of the subtlety and seductive power that is already at work to reduce and to limit and to keep us, my God, from

the vigilance for the church, for your word, for your name.

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