

THE PRESUMPTIOUS PROPHET

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People today need to read their Bibles more. In view of what Moses wrote in Deuteronomy 18:18-20 statements like the woman preacher Joyce Meyer made recently simply are unconscionable. She said, “There have been times when I thought the Lord was talking to me and it was me talking to me . . . thus saith Joyce Meyer . . . When you’re messing around in the spiritual realm, you’re not dealing with perfection” (WPTY Channel 24, Memphis, TN, July 28, 2003). Now consider what Moses wrote, “I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.”

Peter punctuated preaching on repentance in Acts 3:19 with the following proclamation: “And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people” (Acts 3:20-23). Therefore, the precautions given by the prophet Moses and the superior subject of his prophecy, Jesus Christ, are pertinent for people living today.

Perhaps considering just what such statements, being heard in seemingly ever increasing situations, betray would help people gain or regain, as the case may be, a proper respect for things divine.

The Precepts

The word “precept” found 35 times in the English Bible means “a command or principle intended as a general rule of action . . . an order issued by legally constituted authority to a subordinate official” (*Webster’s*, p. 897). Twenty-one of the thirty-five times the word appears it appears in Psalm 119. Verse 100 reads, “I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.”

The Perfection

The Psalmist alerted the world against trying to improve on God's word. He wrote, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple" (Psa. 19:7). James wrote, "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (Jas. 1:25).

The Proof

Isaiah said, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20). Jeremiah carried the same thought onward, "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein" (Jer. 6:16). The importance and power of that which is written by inspiration is declared in I Thessalonians 5:21, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." Faith emerges from the written word. Hebrews 11:1 says, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Preachers whose primary purpose is to publish a promise of prosperity are perverted. Their messages cannot produce faith because they defy the word of God. For example, the Bible prohibits women from public preaching, yet people like Joyce Meyer, mentioned at the outset, do so in rebellion to passages like I Timothy 2:12, "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." The Bible says, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

The Purpose

The purpose statement in the book of John pertains to the whole Bible. John wrote, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:30-31).

The Permanence

Possibly this is the point where millions miss the way. Not only was the word of God complete in the first century, it is permanently set. The completion of the New Testament proves the will of God to be unalterable by subsequent generations due to the very nature of the document—it is a *testament* or *will*. Mankind, men or even

women, may not modify it. The one who died for it said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Matt. 24:35). They will not physically pass away; they will not pass away from their unique position as the precepts of the living God (cf. John 12:48-49; Rev. 20:12)