

Soothing Poison

The Seductive Old Lie of the New False Prophet

By Daryl Wingerd

Near my home in the heart of America, outside a quaint church building where Christianity is supposedly represented, stands a sign that says, “None Need Saving; No, Not One.” This all-too-obvious play on Romans 3:10—“There is none righteous, no, not one”—boldly rejects the plain truth of the Bible and conveys instead what many religious post-moderns believe to be God’s *real* message to mankind: “I’m anxious to have you *all* in heaven with me, and I’m perfectly happy with you *just the way you are.*”



This widely accepted perversion of the biblical message has led to the near-total elimination of words like sin, wrath, and repentance in many churches. Rather than being warned of God’s coming wrath, people who love and practice all forms of ungodliness are assured that God is not angry with them, that hell is fiction, and that forgiveness is automatic. Worst of all, this truth-denying theology reserves only a token place for Christ’s sacrifice as a substitute for guilty sinners. After all, if everyone is acceptable to God as they are, then there is no need for the removal of guilt through a barbaric execution that supposedly appeased divine wrath.

The “gospel” of the modern false prophet is clearly wrong, but it is not new. Consider what the Lord said nearly three-thousand years ago about some false prophets in ancient Israel who were telling the same kinds of lies.

1. False prophets speak their own words, not God’s.

The Lord said through Jeremiah, “I did not send these prophets, but they ran. I did not speak to them, but they prophesied. But if they had stood in My council, then they would have announced My words to My people, and would have turned them back from their evil way and from the evil of their deeds” (Jer. 23:21-22). “They speak a vision of their own imagination, not from the mouth of the Lord” (Jer. 23:16).

False prophets’ teachings are rarely scrutinized by those who believe what they say because most of their devotees only want to have their ears tickled. So, they “accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires” (2 Tim. 4:3). In other words, they find pastors and teachers who are saying what they want to hear. Like the drug addict who keeps ingesting a toxic substance because it makes him feel good, these listeners keep believing the false prophets’ lying message because it soothes their conscience. Listeners who are interested in truth more than in maintaining a robust sense of self-esteem want to hear what is right,

even when it stings. They test what they are taught by comparing it with what they read in the Bible, and they reject any supposed truth that does not square with it.

2. False prophets comfort those who should be warned.

False prophets are loathe to call sinners to repentance because a message of repentance is not what most sinners want to hear. Instead they quiet the sinner’s conscience with the assurance that they are *already* at peace with God. Like the false prophets in ancient Israel, “They keep saying to those who despise Me, ‘The Lord has said, “You will have peace”’; and as for everyone who walks in the stubbornness of his own heart, they say, ‘Calamity will not come upon you’” (Jer. 23:17).

Does your favorite pastor or teacher assure people that they are at peace with God while they continue practicing sins like drunkenness, covetousness, fornication, adultery, or homosexuality? Does he (or she) comfort people by saying, “God is happy with you as you are because that’s the way He made you”? If so, he is no friend, of you or of God. God’s true message to unrepentant sinners leads many to find comfort in Christ through repentance and faith, but the message itself is frightening: “Behold, the storm of the Lord has gone forth in wrath, even a whirling tempest; it will whirl down on the head of the wicked. The anger of the Lord will not turn back until He has performed and carried out the purposes of His heart. In the last days you will clearly understand it” (Jer. 23:19-20).

3. False prophets provide no benefit for their hearers.

Rather than calling sinners to repentance and showing them how they can have *true* peace with God through faith in Jesus Christ, the modern false prophets calmly and confidently assure them that they were never God’s enemies in the first place: “None Need Saving, No, Not One.” But promises of *peace* with God that don’t require *reconciliation* with God are grounded on quicksand and as worthless as fools’ gold. As the Lord says of false prophets and their lies about God’s unconditional acceptance, “They are leading you into futility” (Jer. 23:16). “I did not send them nor command them, nor do they furnish this people with the slightest benefit” (Jer. 23:32).

The pastors and teachers who claim to represent Christ yet militantly trumpet this kind of anti-Christian dogma should have been rejected long ago as fanatics. Instead, their soothing but poisonous delusions about God and His ways continue filling the vacuum created by the absence of biblical discernment, where literally *anything* is accepted—anything, that is, that makes people feel good about themselves.

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