

A NEW PERSPECTIVE...
jamie buckingham

Beware of that which is extra-Biblical. Jesus warns us that in the last days people will come with "great revelations". These so-called revelations are designed to take God's people's eyes off the fundamentals of the faith and cause them to roar off on fanatical tangents -- to their own destruction.

Several years ago an individual was "ministering" in the area, stating that God was speaking a new word today. Now I believe that too. However, this person was saying that the new word was not to be limited by the old Word, the Bible. That through prophecy and other utterances God was now fulfilling His kingdom and speaking final words to His people.

Sorry, friend. That's a lie. I believe God is speaking today -- and I don't believe that His voice is limited to the words printed on the pages of the Bible. However, I also believe that unless what we "hear" is confirmed in the Bible (as well as confirmed by the Body and circumstances as John Sherrill so beautifully put it last Sunday morning), then it is a false word.

For centuries evangelical Christianity has rejected any

word of God that was not found specifically in the Bible. This is folly, for it literally quenches the Holy Spirit. But to follow every word (or any word) that is not in line with and confirmed by the Bible is just as bad. It's called fanaticism.

Yet in between the extremes of folly and fanaticism lies the way of God. Don't be fooled into thinking God is in a hurry (the only time God is in a hurry is to see a lost person accept Jesus Christ). Pressure deadlines, prophecies that set up time limits ("do it in three days or else"), or any words that seem contrary to the basic teachings of the Bible are to be tested and tested and tested again.

In II Peter 1:16-21, the Holy Spirit reminds us that even though Peter actually heard the voice of God on the Mount of Transfiguration, this Voice was not as sure a voice as the written Word. In all we do, let's not get so "far out" that we leave God behind.

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The evening service at the large Episcopal Church was preceeded by a covered dish supper. Since I had finger-lickin' good chicken on my fingers, I needed to wash my hands before going in the sanctuary where I was to speak. I spotted a men's room and asked my wife to wait while I stepped inside.

Seconds later I was back. "Didn't you wash your hands?" Jackie asked.

"I couldn't get to the wash basin," I said. "Then, noticing her puzzled look I pulled her toward the door and said, "Look in. You'll see why."

"What's wrong with you?" she gasped, trying to pull away. "I'm not going to look in a men's room, even if it is Episcopalian."

But I pulled the door open anyway, and then she understood. The room was filled, piled from floor to ceiling with cardboard boxes--containing paper towels.

I suppose it was being used for storage, but only by standing on tiptoe and peeking could you see the water.

The episode is symbolic of what I often see in the Kingdom ministry. People come,

seeking something that will wash away their sin, lift their burdens, replace their misery with joy and give hope for life. They come seeking living water. But we're so excited over the non-essentials that we forget towels are useless without water.

That's not to say towels are not part of God's plan. They are. Just as the various gifts of the Spirit are important to ministry. But water is essential for dirty hands, while towels are merely desirable.

Now I'm glad many churches are stocking towels, and some of them even using them. But I pray we'll never block the way to the water by overstocking.

It was David du Plessis who said, "You can't have a New Testament Church without having New Testament people." I am fully convinced that if we lead people to the water that they will take a drink, and out of that drink will pour fountains of living water from their very inner beings. Our call is to build New Testament people. God will build His church.

A NEW PERSPECTIVE...

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Nine steps to a new spiritual restoration in the life of the Believer.

(1) Get thoroughly dissatisfied with yourself. Complacency is the deadly enemy of spiritual progress. The contented person stagnates.

(2) Set your face like a rock toward a sweeping transformation of your life. Timid experimenters are tagged for failure before they start. Throw your whole soul into your desire for God's will in your life. Be willing to try anything, even the foolish and ridiculous, for the sake of obedience.

(3) Put yourself in the position to receive God's blessing. There are plainly marked paths which lead straight to the green pastures. Walk in them. They are Bible reading and study. Prayer in the Spirit and in the understanding. Praise in all things.

(4) Do a thorough job of repenting. Don't hurry to get it over with. Hasty repentance means shallow spiritual experience. We have a wretched way of tolerating half-dead sin in our life.

(5) Make restitution wherever possible. If you owe a debt, pay it. If you hold a grudge, get rid of it. If any have

ought against you, make it right. Don't wait.

(6) Bring your life into accord with the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

Take your Bible in one hand, paper and pencil in another, and run a self-inventory. For God's sake, and yours, stop applying Bible truths to the lives of other people. Make it personal.

(7) Deliberately narrow your interests. The Christian

should be special-
in ministry. Too many projects saps spiritual energy. If you narrow your interests God will enlarge your heart.

(8) Begin to witness. Find someone who needs Christ and make them your personal mission field (it might be a husband, child, or employer) Refuse to rust out. If no one asks you to do something, listen to the Voice of God and step out anyway.

(9) Take All the authority God gives. Many have given all but have not taken all. Jesus gives us authority over all Satanic spirits, over all disease, over the things of this world. Walk in the victory.

Oct. 1972

A NEW PERSPECTIVE. . .

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My world came to an end exactly 7 years ago this week.

After pouring my very life blood into a church for almost 8 years, I walked into the pulpit, resigned, and walked out into a dark, cold rainy Carolina night.

That night, while a committee of men that I had lived with for all those years met behind a locked door to discuss the "terms" of my leaving, I went home, shut myself in the darkness of my bedroom, and cried. I was exhausted, for we had been through almost a year of fighting before the end came. But I was afraid to go to sleep. Afraid, because I knew that if I did, I would have to wake up in the morning and face another day.

I remembered reading about a man who had resigned from the ministry being asked what he missed most. He said, "I miss the trumpets in the morning."

I hated to face the morning without the trumpets.

But I had never heard the trumpets. Only the echos. And I had gotten Jesus all mixed up with the church.

Thus when my church was taken from me, I felt lost. There's nothing wrong with "church" as long as one doesn't look to it for salvation, strength, security or comfort. These things can only be found in the "living" Lord, not in the echos.

Thus what happened to me back in October, 1965, was the finest thing in my life. Oh, I didn't think so then. Then I could only see death. Since then I've learned that except a grain of wheat fall into the ground (and die) it cannot give forth life.

Some seeds die willingly. How blessed they are. Others, like me, have to be stomped to death. That's blessedness too, only it just takes a while longer to realize it.

Now, in looking back over these seven years, I can see the hand of God in every move. That's the reason it's best not to try to evaluate any event on the day it happens. Wait. Take the long look. And one day you'll be able to look back and say with the hymn writer: "Jesus led me all the way."

A NEW PERSPECTIVE. . .

Heartbeat

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The plane was late leaving Bogota for Panama. I slumped in my seat, exhausted. The last 5 days had been spent in and out of the Amazon jungle. Just the night before I had slept in a hammock on the porch of a tiny palm-thatched hut on stilts, 40 miles south of the equator and 500 miles from the nearest road.

Seated beside me was a friendly young Gringo who was a sales representative for an American chemical company. When he found I had been visiting missionaries he said, "I don't understand those guys. They seem to think these people need to accept Jesus and change. They don't need to change. All they need is education and equipment and they can make it on their own."

Then I told him about the Andoke Indians I had spent the night with. The Andoke's have a word for all white men: duiojo. It means, "People who burn". Once a tribe of 10,000 they now number less than 100. They have never forgotten the Peruvian rubber hunters who came with their education and equipment and made slaves of the Indians. At night, as the rubber hunters sat around the fire needing entertainment, their educated minds let them pour gasoline on the Indians, set them afire, and laugh as they ran screaming through the jungle.

My traveling companion became very quiet, but when we parted in Miami he said, "I need to take a second look at human nature, don't I?"

"And at the Bible," I said, "where we find that only thru Jesus can we find peace."



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