

## Answering the Arguments of the Modern “Apostles” and “Prophets”

### Introduction

***“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2Tim.3:16-17).***

Are the Scriptures truly sufficient for correcting, rebuking and teaching as they claim? If so, then they would give us the parameters for the way in which the Holy Spirit would equip and use His ministries “...to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up...” so that we will not be “blown here and there by every wind of teaching...” (Eph.4:10-16).

Those involved in the prophetic movement have developed a series of pat answers to counter the concerns of those that question some of their doctrines and practices. These arguments must be refuted before any significant progress can be made in discussing their errors and heresies.

The most common accusation against those who question them, is:

#### **1. Jesus said that we may not judge.**

A superficial reading of **Matt.7:1-5** will show that Jesus is not against judging per sé, but against hypocritical judging; judging others while you have the same faults! In fact Jesus is encouraging His followers to help others cope with their problems, but only when they have dealt with their own faults:

***“Do not judge, or you too will be judged... first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye (My emphasis).***

Jesus, who says that one should not judge, seems to contradict Himself when He says, just a bit further on, that one must judge:

***“Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them” (Matt.7:15-17).***

How else will a false prophet be recognized if it is not done by judging his teachings, prophecies and practices?

To judge is a clear command given in the New Testament:

***“Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh (judge) carefully what is said” (1Cor.14:29).***

***“The spiritual man makes judgements about all things” (1 Cor.2:15).***

***“Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1).***

***“Test everything. Hold on to the good” (1 Thess.5:21).***

## **2. The argument of “You cannot limit God”**

Often when manifestations like the falling of gold dust, spiritual drunkenness, jerking and screaming are questioned and concern is expressed that these things are not consistent with God’s revelation to the church, the answer is given: **“You cannot put God in a box!”** The same answer is given when one expresses the fact that “Ekstasis worship” seems similar to the state induced in pagan worship practices. Some will also explain that *“God will offend the mind to reveal the heart.”* This statement will not be found in Scripture. It is an invention of Toronto Blessing leader, John Arnott (John Arnott, The Father’s Blessing (Orlando: Creation House, 1995)).

When querying these extra-Biblical manifestations, it is not a question of “putting God in a box”, but a question of taking His Word seriously when it says: ***“Do not go beyond what is written” (1Cor.4:6).***

In many churches, just like in the cults, critical thinking is not encouraged, with the result that discernment is dulled and worship becomes a sensual experience. Scripture clearly teaches that ***“We live by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor.5:7)..***

Counterfeit Revival minister, Rodney Howard-Browne explains that

*“you can’t understand what God is doing in these meetings with an analytical mind. The only way you’re going to understand what God is doing is with your heart.”*

The Word, on the other hand contradicts what he says; it warns believers:

*“Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise...Therefore do not be foolish, but **understand** what the Lord's will is” (Eph.5:15-17, my emphasis).*

## **3. Another popular argument put forth by many ministries is that to question them, is to persecute them.**

Rick Joyner, for example, attributes all criticism to satanical inspired persecution. Questioning them, according to him, “ is Satan’s ultimate deception.” In his book The Final Quest which is full of heresies, he states that this is what he heard the Lord say to him. The result of this type of subjectivity is that no meaningful dialogue can take place, because according to them, the Lord has spoken. The New Testament, however, does not support the concept that disagreeing with someone’s doctrine is necessarily the same as persecuting him (see article on judging on **Beyond the Torn Veil** – [www.nickmaartens.co.za](http://www.nickmaartens.co.za)).

## **4. Criticism causes disunity**

Another common tactic used by many is to accuse those who attempt to correct their false teachings as being divisive. **It is not truth that causes disunity, but untruth!** Unity in the body of Christ is important, but it should be based on Biblical truth. Truth may not be crucified for the sake of a false unity.

## 5. Abuse of authority

Another reason why many false prophets have placed them above criticism, is their **warped idea of authority**.

They usually quote *“Do not touch God’s anointed ones”* as a warning to those who criticize them. Because of this traditional mind-set of seeing themselves as *“God’s anointed ones”*, they are given a position and a status which is far above other *“ordinary”* believers. Mixed with the subjective terminology of *“God spoke to me,”* so often heard in modern prophetic utterances, we have the ingredients for serious spiritual abuse.

Where does the expression *“Do not touch God’s anointed ones”* come from? It comes from **Psalm 105:15**. In the context of the Old Testament the expression *“My anointed ones”*, refers directly to the Old Testament ministries of prophets and priests. Nowhere in the New Testament do we find teaching that gives anybody the right to equate the modern pastor/minister or prophet with the Old Testament prophet or priest. If one does want to talk about *“anointed ones,”* in the context of the New Testament, we have to include all believers, because the Holy Spirit was poured out on everybody in Acts 2. The apostle John also explains that: *“As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you...”* confirming that all New Testament believers are *“anointed ones”* (**1 John 2:27**).

This warped idea that only special ministries are God’s *“anointed ones”* is expressed in the book by Bob Yandian, *Decently and in Order – A Guide to New Testament Government*.

Although it claims to be a guide to New Testament church government, it goes on to draw its examples from the Old Testament! On page 18 the writer states that according to God’s Word it is His choice to have one man who hears Him and who rules over the church. He then refers to Moses and the kings of Israel as examples to support his point of view!

One of the most important references of Jesus to the issue of authority, makes us realise that New Testament authority is the exact opposite of our traditional understanding of it.

When the mother of Zebedee’s sons asked Jesus whether they could sit in positions of authority, his answer was:

*“You know that the rulers of the gentiles **lord it over them**, and their high officials exercise authority over them. **Not so with you**. Instead, whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave”* (**Matthew 20:25-27**, emphasis mine).

From this passage it is very clear that authority in the church of Jesus Christ may not be exercised in a way which is common to any secular, worldly organisation. The elevation of persons because of their distinguished qualities, is worldly.

The reverence of leaders within the body of Christ has at its root a desire to feel some sort of sensual *“presence”* of God.

Biblical authority knows that it is limited by the saying of Jesus:

*“One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren”* (**Matt.23:8**).

## **6. The argument of: “He is such a good, sincere person that does so much...”**

Good men can be deceived and the idea that because someone is godly he can be believed, is a deception in itself. The lifestyle of a man is not sufficient guarantee for the truth of his teaching. It is his teaching that must be judged, not his character. A good man who teaches wrong doctrine is more easily believed than someone with a bad reputation.

## **7. The argument of: “So many follow him, surely he can’t be wrong”**

Jim Jones made 700 people drink poison with him! Millions are following the Muslim faith. From a Christian perspective, does that make them right? The Word should determine truth, not numbers or majority rule.

## **Conclusion**

***They “were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of the mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so” (Act 17:11).***

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