

A "Lying Spirit" in the Church of God Today!

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Something strange is happening in the church of God today! I believe that the Bible tell us why!

We have seen the antics of these leaders in the church of God proclaiming themselves to be all sorts of things, prophets, watchman to the Laodiceans, Eliakim, Zerubbabel, the Two Witnesses, and also threatening to call fire down from heaven, and the list goes on and on.

Also many *weird* doctrines are coming out of these churches-of temple building, a utopia is coming *before* the tribulation; Of Elijah (Herbert W Armstrong) coming and going, then, God would raise up another work and prophesy again! Some are even claiming that Elijah (Herbert W Armstrong) God is going to *resurrect* and be one of the Two Witnesses! These leaders are also claiming to have written additions to the Bible!

Weird strange doctrines are floating around the churches of God today; Now what I find really weird, not that these leaders of these churches believe the nonsense that they preach (*as disturbing as that is*), but what's really strange is-that the people in their congregations believe it!

Now if you find this disturbing, you should, because there is something really wrong going on here. The Church of God in the beginning of its growth avoided all this, and shunned anyone that made any of these bold proclamations-but now it's commonplace! How can the pendulum swing so far this way in such a short time?

The Bible shows Us the Answer

I believe the Bible shows us what is going on, and it was prophesied to happen. Many do not realize that prophecy is *also* history, God says, "Let them bring *them* forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they *be*, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come." (Isaiah 41:22).

"Whatever has happened in the past is present now. *Whatever is going to happen in the future has already happened in the past.* God will call the past to account." (Eccl 3:15 God's Word Translation). Things that happened in the past will again happen in the future. These are *only* the things God allows to repeat themselves for a *specific purpose* and therefore God put these events in end time prophecies.

These is an interesting past event that happened in the book of Kings. God sent a "lying spirit" among his prophets to persuade Ahab to go into war against Syria and it cost him his life.

These prophets were giving the Kings of Israel and Judah *a message that was partly true, and partly a lie.* It took another prophet of God whom God did *not* send this lying spirit to, to reveal the whole truth to them, and it cost him prison time because the prophets and the king *did not like the message!*

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Book of Kings

In the first book of kings the last chapter Ahab wanted to go to Ramoth-Gilead and take over the land. Jehoshaphat King of Judah made "peace" with Israel (see 1 Kings 22:44). Jehoshaphat was a righteousness king (1 Kings 22:43).

Ahab on the other hand was not. He took "possession" of the Vineyard of Naboth after Jezebel had him killed. God proclaimed death to Ahab and Jezebel, and Ahab humbled himself before God but that did not last, because in chapter 22 he wanted to take Ramoth-Gilead.

Jehoshaphat believed it was his to take because it belonged to Israel due to the covenant God made with Israel, but Ahab's intention was for greed and power.

So Jehoshaphat enquired the prophets like they did in the days of the Judges to enquire of God if God would deliver it into their hands (see Judges 1; 1 Kings 22:5).

So "Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramothgilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, *Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king.*" (1 Kings 22:6). All the prophets were in agreement, why? As we go on we will see why!

Then, "And Jehoshaphat said, *Is there* not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might enquire of him?" Here he is saying "are these all the prophets"? "were there any more we can enquire"?

Ahab said, "And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, *There is* yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may enquire of the LORD: *but I hate him*; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so." (v.8) Proof here that Ahab did not have a repented heart but continued in evil. Also Ahab hated the prophet's message, he hated the truth because he never told Ahab what he wanted to hear he just told him the truth!

Now this prophet was dedicated to speaking the truth of God nothing more as it says, "As the LORD liveth, what the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak." (v.14).

In the mean time while the guards were out to get Micaiah, it looked like an Evangelistic charismatic type campaign was going on in front of the Kings of Israel and Judah (see vv.10-12). They were fully persuading the Kings of Israel and Judah to go against Syria, and they made it sound like an easy victory (v.11).

Then, the truth comes out! Micaiah the prophet says, "So he came to the king. And the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go against Ramothgilead to battle, or shall we forbear? And he answered him, Go, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver *it* into the hand of the king." Yes the King will have victory, King Jehoshaphat of Judah-as we see in the text, *only* one king is mentioned, and Jehoshaphat was the righteous king that enquired of the Lord.

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Then Ahab says, "How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but *that which is true* in the name of the LORD?" (v.16). You see, this prophet said nothing but the truth from God; He did *not* preach a message that the king *wanted to hear* but the truth, and Ahab hated him for it!

Now the truth was, they were going to have victory, that was the truth about the message the *other* prophets were giving them. *The lie was that Ahab was going to be victorious as well!* Instead Micaiah said, "I saw all Israel [not Judah] scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace." (v.17). Ahab knew he was speaking of him (v.18). As we can see from the text in verse 18, that the victory that he said would happen in verse 15 was for *Jehoshaphat King of Judah*, and that Ahab would die and achieve no victory (v.18).

So the message of the prophets was a *mixture of the truth and a lie!* What was the reason? They were God's prophets? What happened?

Micaiah's Vision

Micaiah sees a vision from God that answers the question, "And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left.

"And the LORD said, *Who shall persuade Ahab*, that he may go up and fall at Ramothgilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner.

"And there came *forth a spirit*, and stood before the LORD, and said, *I will persuade him*.

"And the LORD said unto him, *Wherewith?* And he said, *I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets*. And he said, *Thou shalt persuade him*, and prevail also: go forth, and do so.

"Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath *put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets*, and the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee." (vv.19-23). Notice it wasn't concerning Jehoshaphat but *Ahab*. This lying spirit was among the prophets to "persuade" Ahab to go to war; and they were very persuasive (see v.11).

Why did God send them a "lying spirit"? Well because *that's exactly what Ahab wanted to hear!* He lusted after Ramoth-Gilead convincing Jehoshaphat it was for God and the covenant God made with Israel when in reality it was for his own personal gain. God says, "I will judge thee according to *thy ways*, and will recompense thee for all *thine* abominations." (Ezekiel 7:8). Ahab did *not* want to hear the truth, this is why he *hated* and put Micaiah in prison (vv.8, 26-27). So God sent him prophets with a "lying spirit" it was Ahab's *judgment* that led him to his death!

God says people *prefer lies over the truth*, "That this *is* a rebellious people, lying children, children *that will not hear the law of the LORD*:"

"Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, ***Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits:***

"Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.

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"Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, *Because ye despise this word*, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon:

"Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant." (Isaiah 30:9-13). This is exactly what happened to Ahab. He was killed the very day of the battle.

Prophecy for the end time

Could this event happen once again? Is it prophesied? History is prophecy, and if end time prophecies show this to happen again then it will, and I believe it has as the evidence suggests!

The Apostle John wrote that the church of God, "Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the *spirit of error*." (1 John 4:6). We must have spiritual discernment-of rightly dividing the word of truth. But today in the church of God we do not see this! Instead people are being *preached at* instead of studying their bibles to see whether the preacher is *faithfully preaching the scriptures, or twisting them for his own purposes*. It's a "spirit of error" and influence that is guiding the minds of these people to cause them to go into error. Today in the church of God these leaders can't seem to get their doctrines right, they are littered with errors, and in one case lies as we have exposed in our booklet "Who is that Prophet?" It's a "spirit of error" that is influencing these people.

The Apostle John also wrote, "These *things* have I written unto you concerning *them that seduce you*." (1 John 2:26). There are those with a seducing spirit leading the church of God into error and lies; the Holy Spirit is not teaching them the scriptures, and then teaching them faithfully out of the word of God to the church! Instead the spirit of "error" is guiding them in these doctrines.

John says, "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye *need not that any man teach you*: but as the *same anointing teacheth you of all things*, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." (v.27). The Holy Spirit guides the members of the church of God in all truth and the Pastors that preach the word of God are also guided by the spirit of God as we listen to them and will guide us all in truth. Man's teachings *not* guided by the spirit of God-the church of God *by the spirit* should be able to weed out and eliminate in the church of God *these seducers and the false doctrines and trash them*.

Jesus in the book of Revelation praised the Ephesian church for doing just that, he said to them, "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: *and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars*:" (2:2; See also 1 John 4:1). The church of God used to do this very thing of testing the false teachers and doctrines. However the church of God today is *not* doing this; instead they are listening to these seducing spirits that teach them error, and lies.

Notice what Paul says of these end times, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the *latter times* some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to *seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils*; *"Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron*;" (1 Tim 4:1-2). These people who speak lies, have their " *conscience seared with a hot iron*" meaning as Gill's Commentary puts it, "metaphor may be taken either from the searing of flesh with an iron, or

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cauterizing it, whereby it grows callous and hard;" They believe their hypocrisy and lies so much that their hearts are hard, set in stone and nothing will be able to change it. These elaborate doctrines that these leaders in the church have come up with, do you think anything will be able to change their minds that they see the error of their ways?

Where does this spirit come from? Could it be that same "lying spirit" that persuaded Ahab through the prophets, is persuading the church of God today?

Notice what the Apostle Paul writes about those people who love not the truth, "...because they received *not* the *love of the truth*, that they might be saved.

"And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they **should believe a lie**:

"That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thess 2:10-12). Although the Apostle Paul is speaking of the world and God's judgment on them; it can *apply* to the church of God also if those in the church "love not the truth," because *this was the sin*, a rejection of the truth that can happen in or out of the church of God, and the same judgments apply to that sin. Paul said God would send them a "strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." This is the same "lying spirit" God sent his prophets in Ahab's day.

Why did God send a lying spirit among those prophets? They loved *not* the truth! Only one prophet did as he said himself, "As the LORD liveth, what the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak." (1 Kings 22:14). The other prophets did not have the same attitude. In fact one prophet struck the true prophet of God because he said that these prophets were lying and were seduced by a lying spirit (1 Kings 22:24). They instead want to believe a lie as Isaiah prophesied-as God said by Jeremiah, "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and *my people love to have it so*: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" (5:31). Why do many in the church of God continue to support these people? They *love* the Armstrongism! They love the false doctrines of the Elijah to come, church eras, the place of safety, 19 year time cycles etc...If they didn't, they would have reject them! Instead many of the church of God members feel comfortable with it, and love the leaders of the churches preaching it, and so God gives them what they want! They want false doctrines and errors, and God gives them what they want! "...and I will judge thee *according to thy ways*, and will recompense thee for all thine abominations." (Ezekiel 7:8).

Therefore God has sent them these leaders who *rose up* from *within* the church of God, who love Amrstrongism as well, they "love to have it so." God has sent them with a "lying spirit" the "spirit of error" speaking "perverse things" to *the church of God* because they "love to have it so." Therefore any *other* false doctrines that these false leaders bring with them the church of God members have accepted them as well since *they love error* and *not* the truth!

Notice in the Old Testament, these were *God's prophets* that loved a lie instead of the truth, so God sent a "lying spirit" among them as a judgment against them. These false Apostles and leaders also come from *within* the church of God who *love not the truth* that Herbert Armstrong was *not* Elijah and Zerubbabel and the Apostle and any other title they want to hang on him, they will *not* accept these truths therefore God has sent a "lying spirit" among them, and you see the "spirit of error" in these churches. Paul wrote that heresy and error would be from *within* the

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church of God, "Also of *your own selves* shall men arise, *speaking perverse things*, to draw away disciples after them." (Acts 20:30).

When examining their doctrines as we have of the "little book" being Malachi's Message, an *addition* to the Bible, or claims of one being a high Priest of Jesus. The coming Utopia *before* the Great Tribulation, or falling away completely from the Truth as in the case of the Worldwide Church of God (now Grace Community International) etc...these many errors and lies being perpetuated by the false leaders proves to me that God has sent a "lying spirit" among these church leaders, because they themselves "love to have it so"! And their congregations accepting all these "perverse things" *also* "love to have it so." *And all these false doctrines are mixed with the truth of God like the prophets of Ahab!* The Sabbath, the Holy Days, the purpose of life, the identity of nations, God's law etc...Many truths of the Bible are mixed with these errors just like the prophets in Ahab's day.

It is no wonder that the church of God today does not have the impact it did 40 or 50 years ago! How can it, when these people instead of preaching the Gospel are too busy wondering who is "that prophet," or who is the "Apostle" and "successor to Herbert Armstrong," or which is the "true church" etc...and not focusing on the commission Jesus gave his church to preach the Gospel and be a Watchman to his people Israel-WAKE UP!