
Editorials

WHOM DO THEY THINK THEY ARE KIDDING?

There is a international anthem among an elite class of Charismatic celebrities today. It's a stern warning repeatedly directed at their critics with a residual effect upon their devotees. It's the frequent and methodical strategy that they recite against anyone who opposes their unscriptural doctrine and practice. It's a charge of "blasphemy of the Holy Spirit" and "touch not the Lord's anointed." The threats are sometimes delivered with trance-like (with a deep voice) intonations of various sicknesses, pox and plagues that will befall all the children of the detractors, "pharisees" and "heretic hunters."

These indictments, however, are a flagrant misuse of Scripture and a tactic to ward off substantiated biblical criticisms of their Scripture twistings and lack of integrity. It is a diversion to hold the scripturally illiterate at bay and keep their faithful from questioning their most outlandish conduct and off-the-wall teachings. It is, in no uncertain terms, a form of blatant manipulation and spiritual terrorism. And the intensity of their assaults only heightens when they see their dishonesty and deceitfulness about to be exposed. Spiritual dictators always resort to pummeling and manipulation.

But just who is blaspheming whom? And who is really touching God's anointed?

As has been carefully exegeted and shown in a previous PFO article: "the 'anointed' are the whole people of God! ... It is wrong to suggest that only a few select leaders are the anointed of God." (See further, "Touch Not the Lord's Anointed — Divine Command or Cop-out?", *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 13, No. 3, pg. 4.)

Additionally, it should be noted, the Scriptures never give to any Christian unquestionable authority. No leader, in the Old or New Testaments or even today, is endowed with such an exclusive calling as to not be examined in their faith and practice or even chastised when found derelict. The command of "touching not the Lord's anointed" is clearly an injunction against soliciting or initiating physical harm against God's people. Context bears this out.

Consider, for example, the very persons — David and Saul — who are the chief participants involved in this "touch not" command (1 Samuel 24:6, 26:9). Both of these men, while kings, suffered rebuke in their lives. Saul by the reproof of both David (1 Samuel 24:10-15) and Samuel (1 Samuel 13:13-14), and David himself by the powerful admonition of Nathan the prophet (2 Samuel 12:7-12).

In the New Testament, we find Apollos ("a learned man with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures") being corrected and instructed by Priscilla and Aquila in Acts 18:26 and the Apostle Peter being confronted "to his face" by Paul in Galatians 2:11-21. These men did not act in defiance to these rebukes, but accepted them. They did

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not set themselves upon a pedestal of distinction so as not to be challenged or questioned. They did not curse those who corrected them or wish harm on their children. The clear injunction of the New Testament for leaders and teachers was demonstrably at work here: James 3:1 — a more strict judgment, not a circumventing of scriptural accountability as well as Galatians 6:1.

More alarming, however, is the fact that these self-appointed spiritual aristocrats and demagogues are guilty of violating the very command of God which they flagrantly accuse others of doing. In the course of many years of evaluation and criticism, PFO and the ministries with which it closely aligns, have never stooped to name-calling or inviting disease and devastation to come upon those against whom we disagree. Yet, consider just a brief sampling of what has proceeded out the “anointed” mouths of some of the more prominent superstars:

“I place a curse on every man and every woman that would stretch his hand against this anointing. I curse that man who dares to speak a word against this ministry” (Benny Hinn at his July 1999 Denver Miracle Crusade as shown on the *Praise the Lord* show, Sept. 10, 1999).

“I have been disturbed by a bunch of, oh I’m just going to say it, a bunch of crap. ... Go ahead and tape it, put it on your slime-ball radio broadcast. You’ll have to pray it through Pastor Phil, but this old German, I’d say sue the bastards” (Paul Crouch on the *Praise the Lord* show, October 1994, cited in *Christian Sentinel*, Spring 1995, pg. 9).

“[Our detractors] continue to oppose Jesus Himself. ... Soon the Lord may say, ... ‘I rebuke you for speaking falsely in My name. Repent while there is still time. My kindness toward you is running thin.’ Are you willing to wager your salvation on the fact that you are correct?” (Michael Brown in *Let No One Deceive You*, pp. 19-20).

“Be careful! Your little ones may suffer because of your stupidity. Now I’m pointing my finger today, with the mighty power of God on me, and I speak. ... And your children will suffer. If you care for your kids, stop attacking Benny Hinn” (Benny Hinn at the World Charismatic Conference, Aug. 7, 1992).

“Several people that I know had criticized and called that faith bunch out of Tulsa a cult. And some of ‘em are dead right today in an early grave because of it, and there’s more than one of them got cancer” (Kenneth Copeland, “Why All Are Not Healed,” tape #01-4001).

“I refuse to argue any longer with any of you out there. Don’t even call me if you want to argue doctrine, if you want to straighten somebody out over here. ... I think they [i.e., those he labels ‘heretic

hunters’] are damned and on their way to hell and I don’t think there is any redemption for them. I say, ‘To hell with you.’ I say, ‘Get out of God’s way, quit blocking God’s bridges or God is going to shoot you if I don’t’” (Paul Crouch on TBN’s “Praise-A-Thon,” April 2, 1991).

The type of judgment issued by these men is that which our Lord was truly addressing in Matthew 7:1. Never in any of its criticisms, has PFO been so bold to pass judgment on the salvation of these teachers, nor has it ever wished sickness, death and damnation on them (or their children). These teachers, who claim to be so greatly “anointed” of God and at a spiritual apex, demonstrate the absence of one of the most fundamental teachings of Christ and the inspired New Testament writers (Luke 6:27-28; Romans 12:14; James 3:9; 4:11-12; 1 John 2:9).

Christians are instructed to judge doctrine and actions, to test the spirits, and to expose the fruitless works (Matthew 7:15; Romans 16:17-18; 2 Corinthians 2:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:21; 1 John 4:1; Ephesians 5:11). We are not, however, permitted to judge motives or salvation — those are judgments which belong solely to our Lord (1 Corinthians 4:5). We are never to crassly wish ill and evil on others.

Then too, there’s the question of “blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.” Once again, modern-day teachers have wrenched a passage from its proper context in an effort to sidestep accountability for their doctrine and conduct. They give new meaning to the title of “The Untouchables.”

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, as recorded in the Gospels (Matthew 12:31-32; Mark 3:28-30 and Luke 12:10), is an historical event which involved having a complete revelation of Jesus Christ and rejecting it by attributing His works to Satan. It has nothing whatsoever to do with religious superstars, latter-day revivalists and faith-healers. What sheer arrogance it is for these “untouchables” to suggest that a testing of their “signs and wonders” and their “revelation knowledge” is tantamount to the person, life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

The “unforgivable sin,” as it is also called, is one that has, no doubt, caused every sincere believer a moment of anxiety. As such, it is repeatedly and wrongly used to bludgeon away discernment and is worked to the advantage of these false teachers. Truly, as Christ said, “men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19).

Adam Clarke offers this sane and sound advice regarding blasphemy of the Holy Spirit:

“Many sincere people have been grievously troubled with apprehensions that they had committed the unpardonable sin; but let it be observed that no man who believes the divine mission of Jesus Christ ever can commit this sin” (*Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible*, pg. 794).

Y2K BUST

But then there's the question of Paul's admonition not to grieve the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30). Does an examination of the teachings and conduct of the men who claim a celestial calling cause one to grieve the Holy Spirit? Paul did not equate such action by the Berean believers, but rather commended them for their diligence and faithfulness to the Word (Acts 17:11). He also instructs Christians that their ways are not to be "secret and shameful" (2 Corinthians 4:2). We can grieve the Spirit by engaging in any of the bad behaviors laid out in Ephesians 4. The setting of the verse makes it clear as to what Paul is warning about.

In reality, if the Holy Spirit is being grieved, it is not by modern-day Bereans, but by men and women like Benny Hinn and his wife, Suzanne, with their reckless and unrestrained speech under the guise of the Holy Spirit. Consider the following:

"Those who put us down are a bunch of morons. ... You know, I've looked for one verse in the Bible, I just can't seem to find it. One verse that says, 'If you don't like 'em, kill 'em.' I really wish I could find it. ... *Sometimes I wish God would give me a Holy Ghost machine gun — I blow your head off!*" (Benny Hinn on TBN's "Praise-A-Thon," April 1990, emphasis added).

"If your engine is not revving up, you know what you need? *You need a Holy Ghost enema right up your rear end.* ... Be God-pleasers, don't be people-pleasers. Because if you're a people-pleaser, you're a butt-kisser. If you're a people-pleaser, you're a butt-kisser. There's no other word for it" (Suzanne Hinn at the World Outreach Center, July 1997, emphasis added).

"The Lord also tells me to tell you in the mid-nineties, about '94 or '95, no later than that, God will destroy the homosexual community of America" (Benny Hinn at Orlando Christian Center, Dec. 31, 1989).

Holy Ghost machine guns? Holy Ghost enemas? False prophetic words of destruction? Can any rational-thinking person believe that God is behind such comments? Can any sane Christian maintain that God is honored by these remarks?

Now, more than ever, the Church needs be on guard against these preachers, with their electronic pulpits and worldwide crusades. They have jaded their followers to where anything is acceptable. Christians must not be terrorized by their idle and angry threats, nor intimidated by their fallacious use of Scripture. Obeying the frequent commands of Scripture, to watch for and defend against false teachers and their teachings, are the activities which bring spiritual growth, discernment and maturity, and honor our Lord and Savior.

—MKG

The paralyzing blizzard of Y2K problems predicted by some didn't amount to a snow flurry. Gary North, Hal Lindsey, Chuck Missler, Grant Jeffrey and other doom-sayers warned of bank collapses, utility failures, aircraft disasters and 1 billion people dead on account of computer failures.

The only catastrophe appears to have happened to the Y2K doom-sayers themselves. Their disaster-preparation products were up against a Jan. 1 deadline and despite all the pessimism the Y2K gurus could muster, sales did not come close to meeting expectations. Stockpiles of goods went unsold as consumers began to put more trust in the sound and reasoned responses of government and civil officials.

Perhaps these would-be Jeremiahs knew all along that their prediction of global crisis was purely oversell — or at least they were not confident enough to put their money where their mouth was. Last year, the Christian Jew Foundation issued what it called a "\$25,000 Y2K Challenge" to doom-sayers such as North and others. It was quite simple: If only half of what was predicted to occur would happen, the foundation would write a check to the favorite charity of any who would sign a contract accepting the challenge. If, on the other hand, Jan. 1 arrived with only minor or inconsequential snags and business proceeded as usual, the Y2K alarmist must write a check for \$25,000 to the Christian Jew Foundation for its ministry work. No one accepted the challenge.

Some of the doom-sayers had merely jumped from one bandwagon onto another, from Bible Codes to Y2K. No doubt they will now latch on to some new fad or conspiracy theory. Most of these men have offered no confessions, no apologies, no repentance, no acceptance of any responsibility for their erroneous forecasts. There has been one notable exception: Gary North.

Late last year, it appeared North had begun to hedge on his prediction. He informed the Y2K merchants who logged onto his web site that the rush to buy their goods would come in 2000, not in 1999. North wrote: "You figured people would finally wake up this year. So did I. We were wrong. The world would go into 2000 almost as unprepared as it was a year ago, or five. The world is oblivious." The windfall, according to North, for these entrepreneurs was yet to come. "Why do you want to sell it now, when nobody wants to buy it? Why do you ask for minimal mark-ups now when people will trade their heirlooms and appreciating currency for it next year. ... The bonanza lies ahead," North told readers.

Then on Jan. 10, 2000, North wrote:

"Clearly, as of this week, I was wrong in my predictions. ... I will now pay a price. I do apologize if I have embarrassed you or made your life worse. ... I believed that Y2K would create havoc. It still might, depending on how many bugs are still in the systems, but I will not here appeal to the 'still might'