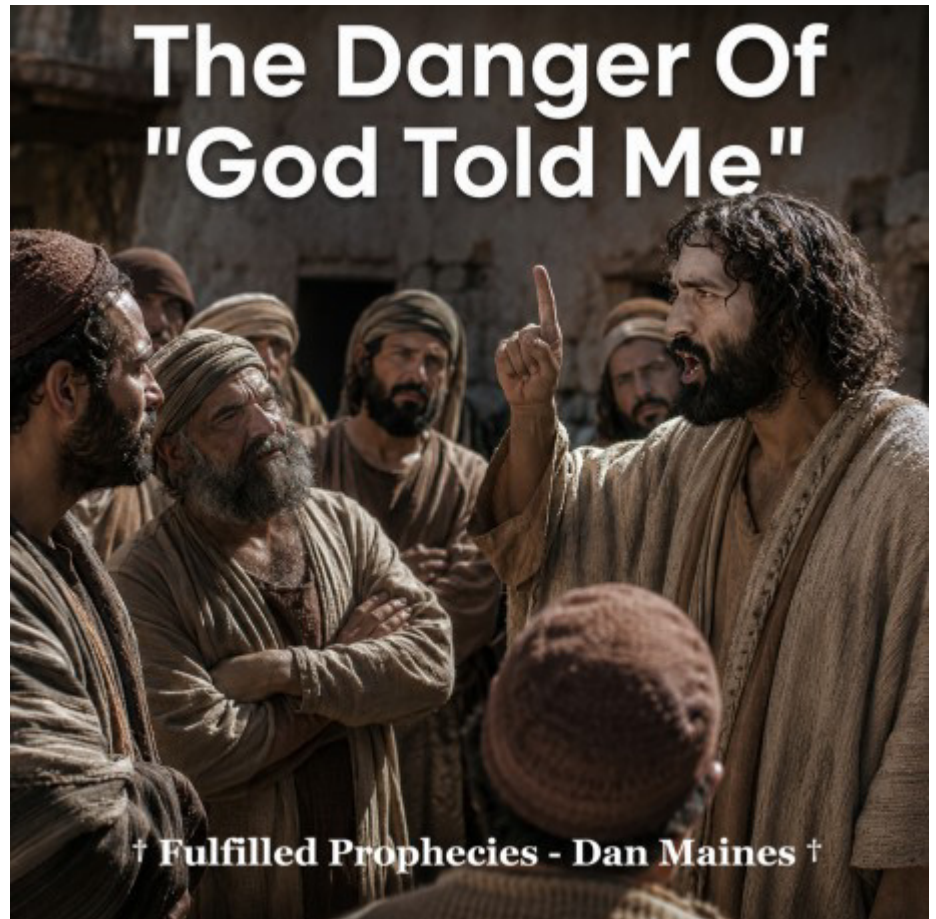


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The Danger Of "God Told Me"



By Dan Maines

The Danger Of "God Told Me"

Introduction

† One of the most dangerous phrases in Christianity today can be one of the most spiritual sounding, "God told me."

† That's exactly the danger. "God told me" isn't the biblical test, God's revealed truth is.

† A person claiming God told them something doesn't make that claim true. Scripture gives us no reason to accept someone's supposed divine authority simply because that person claims it.

† The Bible doesn't tell Christians to believe every spiritual

claim. It tells us to test those claims against what God has already revealed.

† There is no more revelation from God being added today. The faith was delivered, the prophetic message reached its fulfillment, and Scripture gives us the standard by which teaching is tested (Jude 3; Revelation 22:6-10).

† If you feel God told you something, then prove it with Scripture. If it contradicts Scripture, adds revelation to Scripture, or requires us to accept your personal experience as divine authority, we have no biblical obligation to believe it.

1 John 4:1-3

Beloved, 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. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming, and now it is already in the world.

† John didn't tell believers to accept someone's spiritual claim because it sounded sincere. He commanded them to test it (1 John 4:1).

† The test wasn't someone's feelings, dreams, impressions, or personal testimony. The test centered on the truth concerning Jesus Christ (1 John 4:2-3).

† If a teaching denies who Jesus truly is, we've already crossed far beyond a minor doctrinal disagreement. That's why being grounded in Scripture is so important today (John 20:30-31).

† Notice also John's first-century setting. He said the spirit of antichrist was "now" already in the world. John was addressing a present problem among those believers, not predicting modern prophets receiving new revelation (1 John 2:18).

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is inspired by God and beneficial for teaching, for rebuke, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man or woman of God may be fully capable, equipped for every

good work.

† Scripture gives us God's revealed truth for teaching, correction, and instruction. Paul didn't direct believers to wait for private revelations to determine truth (2 Timothy 3:16).

† Scripture equips the person of God completely for every good work. We don't need someone else's claim that "God told me" to complete what Scripture supposedly left unfinished (2 Timothy 3:17).

† When someone says, "God told me," the question shouldn't be how strongly they felt it. The question should be, "Where is that in Scripture?" (Acts 17:11).

† Our confidence must rest in what God has revealed, not in someone's claim about what God privately whispered to them (Romans 10:17).

Acts 17:10-11

The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. Now these people were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.

† The Bereans didn't accept teaching merely because an apostle delivered it. They examined the Scriptures to determine whether the message was true (Acts 17:11).

† Think about that. If Paul's preaching was examined against Scripture, how much more should someone's modern claim that "God told me" be examined?

† Biblical faith doesn't fear examination. Truth welcomes examination because truth agrees with God's revealed Word (John 17:17).

† If someone becomes angry when you ask for Scripture supporting what they claim God told them, that's another reason to be cautious. Biblical authority rests on God's Word, not the speaker's confidence.

Deuteronomy 18:20-22

But the prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in My name, a word which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.' And if you say in your heart, 'How will we recognize the word which the Lord has not spoken?' When the prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, and the thing does not happen or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you are not to be afraid of him.

† God treated speaking falsely in His name as an extremely serious matter. Claiming that God said something He didn't say wasn't harmless spiritual language (Deuteronomy 18:20).

† The important question wasn't whether the prophet sounded sincere, confident, or spiritual. The question was whether God had actually spoken (Deuteronomy 18:20-22).

† This principle should make us extremely careful about casually saying, "God told me." When we use those words, we're claiming divine authority for what follows.

† We shouldn't put God's name behind our personal thoughts, feelings, desires, impressions, or opinions. If God hasn't revealed it, we shouldn't claim that He said it.

† Today we have God's revealed Word as our standard. If someone claims God told them something, we have every right to ask, "Where is that in Scripture?" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Jeremiah 23:25-32

"I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy falsely in My name, saying, 'I had a dream, I had a dream!' How long? Is there anything in the hearts of the prophets who prophesy falsehood, these prophets of the deceitfulness of their own heart, who intend to make My people forget My name by their dreams which they report to one another, just as their fathers forgot My name because of Baal? The prophet who has a dream may report his dream, but let him who has My word speak My word truthfully. What does straw have in common with grain?" declares the Lord. "Is My word not like fire?"

declares the Lord, "and like a hammer which shatters a rock? Therefore behold, I am against the prophets," declares the Lord, "who steal My words from each other. Behold, I am against the prophets," declares the Lord, "who use their tongues and declare, 'The Lord declares!' Behold, I am against those who have prophesied false dreams," declares the Lord, "and reported them and led My people astray by their lies and reckless boasting; yet I did not send them nor command them, nor do they provide this people the slightest benefit," declares the Lord.

† Jeremiah exposes exactly the danger we're discussing. People were claiming divine authority for messages that came from their own hearts (Jeremiah 23:25-26).

† They had dreams and then presented those dreams as messages from God. Having a powerful dream didn't prove that God had spoken (Jeremiah 23:25-28).

† God's distinction is powerful. The person who has God's Word must speak God's Word faithfully. The answer to false revelation was God's true revealed Word (Jeremiah 23:28).

† God specifically condemned those who claimed to speak for Him when He hadn't spoken. In modern language, the problem is remarkably similar to someone declaring, "God told me," when God hasn't spoken (Jeremiah 23:31).

† God said, "I sent them not, nor commanded them." Sincerity doesn't transform our thoughts, dreams, feelings, or impressions into revelation from God (Jeremiah 23:32).

† Saying "God told me" doesn't make your words God's words. Scripture itself warns us about people who attached God's authority to messages God never gave.

Jude 3

Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith that was once for all time handed down to the saints.

† Jude describes "the faith" as something delivered to the saints, not something that would require endless new

revelations throughout history (Jude 3).

† Christians are told to contend for that faith, not continually expand it whenever someone announces that God gave them a new message.

† New revelation would mean new divine information carrying God's authority. That's an extraordinary claim that can't be established by feelings, impressions, dreams, or personal experiences (Galatians 1:8-9).

† God's truth isn't waiting for modern Christians to complete it. Our responsibility is to believe, teach, defend, and live according to what God has revealed.

Hebrews 1:1-2

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom He also made the world.

† Hebrews shows progression in God's revelation. God spoke through the prophets, then in those last days He spoke through His Son (Hebrews 1:1-2).

† Those "last days" belonged to the first-century covenant transition, when God's redemptive revelation was reaching its promised goal in Christ (Hebrews 9:26).

† Jesus wasn't merely another prophet carrying another fragment of revelation. He was God's climactic revelation, the One to whom the Law and the Prophets pointed (Luke 24:27, 44).

† We shouldn't move backward from Christ and the completed apostolic witness into a system where everyone can claim private messages from God.

1 Corinthians 13:8-10

Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away with; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away with. For we know in part and prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away with.

† Paul plainly taught that prophecy, tongues, and partial revelatory knowledge wouldn't continue forever. They belonged to a temporary period (1 Corinthians 13:8-9).

† During the apostolic transition, revelation was being given in parts while God's covenant purpose moved toward completion (1 Corinthians 13:9-10).

† From the fulfilled perspective, those revelatory gifts served their purpose during the first-century transition and ceased when that covenant age reached its completion (Ephesians 4:11-13).

† Therefore, Christians today shouldn't claim the authority of first-century prophets by saying God is giving them new divine revelation.

Revelation 22:6-10

And he said to me, "These words are faithful and true"; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show His bond-servants the things which must soon take place. "And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book." I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. And he said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brothers the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God!" And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.

† Revelation wasn't an open-ended promise that God would continue giving prophetic revelation for thousands of years. Its own time statements said its events "must shortly come to pass" (Revelation 22:6).

† John was told not to seal the prophecy because "the time is at hand." The revelation concerned events approaching John's original audience (Revelation 22:10).

† The prophetic program was reaching fulfillment, not beginning an endless age of people claiming new messages from God (Revelation 1:1-3).

† We now stand on revealed and fulfilled truth. We don't need another prophet, another vision, another revelation, or another "God told me" to complete Christ's finished work.

Historical References

† The Didache warned early Christians about false prophets and provided tests rather than teaching believers to accept every person claiming spiritual authority (Didache 11).

† Irenaeus repeatedly appealed to the apostolic teaching preserved and handed down in the churches when confronting false doctrines, emphasizing received truth rather than unrestricted private revelation (Against Heresies 3.3-4).

† Eusebius preserved accounts of controversies involving people who claimed prophetic inspiration, showing that claims of divine revelation were disputed and tested rather than automatically accepted (Ecclesiastical History 5.16-18).

† These historical examples don't establish doctrine, Scripture does. They simply demonstrate how seriously early Christians treated claims of prophetic authority.

How It Applies To Us Today

† Don't be intimidated when someone begins an argument with, "God told me." Ask them to show you the Scripture.

† If someone says God told them something that contradicts Scripture, God didn't tell them that (Isaiah 8:20).

† If someone says God revealed a doctrine that can't be established from Scripture, you aren't required to accept their claim (Acts 17:11).

† If someone says, "I know what the Bible says, but God told me something different," believe the Bible, not the claim (Galatians 1:8).

† Feelings can be powerful. Impressions can seem convincing. Dreams can seem real. None of those things become divine revelation simply because we attach God's name to them (Jeremiah 17:9).

† We should be especially careful about saying, "God told me," because we're claiming that the Creator of heaven and earth

personally gave us information carrying His authority.

† There's a major difference between saying, "I believe," "I think," "I feel led," or "I've concluded from Scripture," and declaring, "God told me." The last statement claims divine authority.

† There is no more revelation from God today. We have Christ, we have the apostolic witness, and we have God's revealed Word.

† If you feel God told you something, prove it with Scripture. If you can't prove it with Scripture, don't demand that anyone accept it as the voice of God.

Q & A Appendix

Q: Is saying "God told me" proof that God actually spoke?

A: No. Scripture commands us to test spiritual claims rather than automatically believe them (1 John 4:1; Acts 17:11).

Q: What should I say when someone tells me God gave them a message?

A: Ask, "Can you prove that from Scripture?" God's revealed truth is the standard by which teaching must be tested (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Q: Can feelings prove that God is speaking?

A: No. Sincerity and strong feelings don't establish divine revelation. God's Word is truth (John 17:17).

Q: Does God still give new revelation today?

A: No. The revelatory gifts belonged to the first-century period when God's redemptive revelation was moving toward completion, and the faith was delivered to the saints (1 Corinthians 13:8-10; Jude 3).

Q: What if someone says God told them something that contradicts Scripture?

A: Reject the claim. God doesn't contradict His revealed truth

(Isaiah 8:20; Galatians 1:8-9).

Q: What's the safest way to avoid being deceived?

A: Know Scripture, test what you're taught, keep Jesus Christ at the center, and never substitute someone's claimed revelation for God's revealed Word (1 John 4:1-3; Acts 17:11).

Q: If God has no more revelation for us, how does He speak to us?

A: God speaks to us through His revealed Word. When we read and understand Scripture, we're hearing what God has already revealed for us to know. The Holy Spirit works through that truth, but He isn't giving us new doctrines, prophecies, or revelations beyond Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; John 17:17).

Q: Does God plant thoughts in our brain or messages in our heart?

A: Scripture doesn't give us authority to call our thoughts, impressions, feelings, or inner promptings new messages from God. We can have wisdom, conviction, desires, and judgment shaped by Scripture, but we shouldn't turn those experiences into divine revelation by saying, "God told me" (Romans 12:2; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Q: What about when I strongly feel that God is leading me to do something?

A: Pray about it, use wisdom, examine your motives, and test the decision by Scripture. It's perfectly reasonable to say, "I believe this is the right decision," but that's different from saying, "God told me to do this." One expresses our judgment, the other claims direct revelation from God (James 1:5; Romans 12:2; Acts 17:11).

Q: Can the Holy Spirit guide us without giving us new revelation?

A: Yes. The Holy Spirit doesn't need to give new revelation in

order for God's truth to transform our lives. God's revealed Word can renew our minds, correct us, teach us, and equip us for every good work (Romans 12:2; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† 1 John 4:1-3; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Acts 17:10-11; Deuteronomy 18:20-22; Jeremiah 23:25-32; Jude 3; Hebrews 1:1-2; 1 Corinthians 13:8-10; Revelation 22:6-10

† Historical writers: Didache 11; Irenaeus, Against Heresies 3.3-4; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 5.16-18

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