

Keeping the Spirit Pure



Protection from Deception (Part 2)
by Derek Prince

Jeremiah 17:9 the prophet says:

> "The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?"

The word deceitful in the Hebrew is a very interesting word. In 1946 I was attending the Hebrew University in Jerusalem as a guest student, studying the nature or the law of the Hebrew language. I was listening to the head professor in this field at that time, talking about this verse, Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart is deceitful above all things." He gave reason which I cannot carry over from Hebrew to show that this form of the word deceitful is active, not passive. It doesn't mean that your heart is deceived—it means that your heart deceives you, so you cannot trust your own heart.

The professor gave a very vivid picture of what it means to find out the truth about your own heart. He said, "It's like someone peeling an onion. You peel off skin after skin, but you never know when you've reached the last skin. And all the time your eyes are watering." So that has remained with me now for fifty years. Such a vivid Scriptural warning against relying on my own heart to tell me the truth. There is only one source of truth and that is the Scripture.

Now, I would like to give briefly my summation of this whole phenomenon, or movement, or whatever you want to call it. Based partly on personal observation and partly on what I believe to be reliable reports. My summation is very simple, it's a mixture of spirits—both the Holy Spirit and unholy spirits. They are mixed together. In Leviticus 19:19 God warns us against mixture. He is opposed to mixture. God says this:

> "You shall keep My statutes. You shall not let your livestock breed with another kind. You shall not sow your field with mixed seed. Nor shall a garment of mixed linen and wool come upon you."

So, God warns against three things—breeding mixed livestock, sowing with mixed seed, and wearing a mixed garment. We could say that sowing with mixed seed represents the message that we bring when it is partly truth and partly error. Wearing a mixed garment would be like a lifestyle that is partly Scriptural and partly of this world. Letting livestock breed with livestock of an incompatible kind

would be equivalent to a Christian ministry or group aligning itself with a group or ministry that is non-Christian.

It's an interesting thing about such breeding—its product is always sterile. For instance you can mate a horse with a donkey, and the product is a mule. But a mule is always sterile. It cannot reproduce. I think that's one reason why there are so many sterile operations in Christendom. They are being bred with the wrong mate.

Now I've observed this carefully and I've had grievous experience of this condition of a mixture of spirits. I find that it is something which the Scripture warns us against. For instance, there is a character in the Bible, King Saul, who had a mixture of spirits. At one time he prophesied in the Holy Spirit, at another time he prophesied in a demon. His career is really a warning. He was a king who ruled for forty years. He was a successful military commander. He had a lot of successes, but mixture was his undoing, and his life closed with tragedy. On the last night of his life he went to consult a witch. The next day he committed suicide on the battlefield. Surely that offers no encouragement to any of us to cultivate any kind of spiritual mixture in our lives.

I've observed that a result of mixture is two things; first of all confusion, and then division. For instance, we have this mixed message; part of which is true, part is which is false. People can respond in two ways: some will see the good and focus on it, and therefore accept the bad; some will focus on the bad, and therefore reject the good. In either case it does not accomplish God's purposes.

Once upon a time I was a pastor, a long time ago, but I remember that the most difficult kind of people to deal with were people who were a mixture. I'll give you a little imaginary example. We have Sister Jones in our congregation. One Sunday she gives a beautiful prophetic message, and everyone is uplifted and excited. But two Sundays later she stands up and gives a revelation which she had in a dream. The further she goes with this revelation, the more confused and confusing it becomes. Eventually, as pastor, I have to say to her, "Sister Jones, I thank you, but I really don't believe that is from the Lord." And she sits down. But that is not the end.

After the meeting Sister White comes to me and says, "Brother Prince, how could you talk to Sister Jones like that? Don't you remember that beautiful prophecy she gave two Sundays ago?" And when Sister White is gone Brother Black comes to me and he says, "If that's the kind of revelation she has, I won't listen to any more of her prophecies."

So you see what we have? Confusion. And out of confusion, division. I believe that's exactly what is happening in the church; confusion resulting in division. Certainly there is tremendous division. I believe confusion will always produce division.

The Bible gives us no liberty to tolerate the incursion if evil into the church. We are not to be passive, we are not to be neutral. Proverbs 8:13 says:

> "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil..."

It is sinful to compromise with evil. It is sinful to be neutral toward evil.

In John 10:10 Jesus spoke about the thief, the devil, who comes to steal, to kill, and to destroy. We always need to remember whether it is an individual life or in a congregation, the devil only comes with three objectives—to steal, to kill, and to destroy.

I can remember many times I've been speaking with a person who needed deliverance from an evil spirit. I've said to that person, "Remember, the devil has three reasons for being in your life—to steal, to kill, and to destroy. You need to take a stand against him. Not be neutral. You must drive him out." What is true of an individual is true of a congregation. It is true for the body of Christ worldwide.

Some of these unusual manifestations have been compared with unusual manifestations that accompany the ministry of John Wesley, George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, and Charles Finney. Undoubtedly there were unusual manifestations in the ministries of those four men, and I've studied some of them myself. But I think the differences are greater than the similarities with the present situation.

Let me point out to you three differences. First of all, all those men majored on the strong preaching of God's word. They hardly did anything until they had preached the word of God, or apart from preaching the word of God. Finney himself commented somewhere about his ministry. "I usually spoke an hour or two." I don't know how many contemporary Christians in the West would listen to a two hour sermon. But Finney gave the word in its purity and in its power.

Second difference—all those men made a strong call for repentance. That was their primary demand on the people to whom they ministered. Some people call what we are seeing today a refreshing, but in Acts 3:19 Peter says that refreshing must be preceded by repentance. Any refreshing that bypasses repentance is not Scriptural.

The third difference is that in the ministry of those men, there is no record, so far as I know, that any of them laid hands on people. I'm not saying that it is unscriptural to lay hands on people, but there is a difference. There is a situation in which people received directly for themselves from the preached word, and another situation in which the people had hands laid on them by others. If I could take a simple example, it's like rain. If you're out in the open and the rain falls upon you, you've received your rain direct from heaven. But, on the other hand, if rain is caught and stored in some kind of a cistern, then you are not receiving that rain direct from heaven. You have to take into account the cistern and the pipes through which you receive the rain.

This is very vivid for me, because my first wife, Lydia, and I lived in Kenya for five years in a house where our water came from rain caught on the roof and channeled into concrete cisterns. Although the water came from heaven, we quickly learned by experience that if it stayed for any length of time in the cistern, worms developed in it, and consequently we always had to boil our drinking water. There was nothing wrong with the rain as it came down, but something happened in the channel through which the rain came to us, and it was no longer pure.

I think this can be true of laying on of hands. It is a channel which is not always pure.

Radio Program

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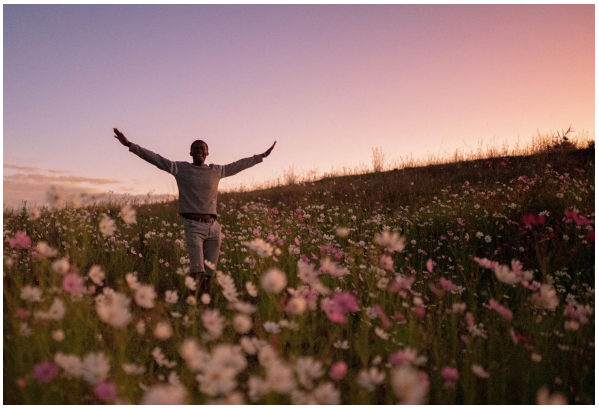

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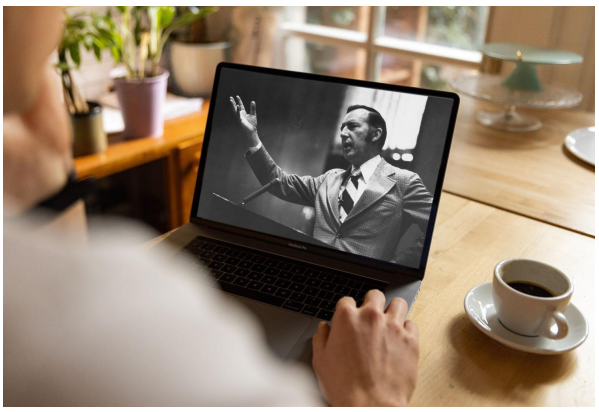

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