

SPEAKING AS GOD'S ORACLES

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First Peter 4:11 says, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." When the Lord says, "If *any man*," He is certainly speaking to all of us. Even in the Old Testament, Moses said, "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets" (Num 11:29). In the New Testament, the Hebrew Christians were admonished because they ought to have been teachers, but were not ready (Heb 5:12). God gives the goal to all of His servants to be able to teach His word to teach others: "And *the servant of the Lord* must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, *apt to teach*, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves" (2 Tim 2:24-25). At the very least, we need to be able to answer questions that non-Christians ask us. "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet 3:15). But when we do teach others, it is essential that we use the right message. Therefore, all Christians should only use the word of God when we teach and preach.

Speaking God's word faithfully

Jeremiah 23:38 says, "The prophet that has a dream, let him tell a dream; and *he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully*. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord." We no longer receive prophetic dreams today as men no longer are inspired by God to speak and write His word. The apostles were guided into all spiritual truth (John 16:12-13), and all scripture is sufficient to make the "man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim 3:16-17). Therefore, nothing else is needed. The New Testament faith was delivered "once for all" (Jude 3). It contains "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (2 Pet 1:3), and "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). The miraculous gift of direct revelation from God (prophecy) was done away when the New Testament was completely revealed because no further revelation was necessary (1 Cor 13:8-10). But we do have God's word in written form. Since we do have His word in that sense, we should still do as God says and speak His word faithfully, not adding our own words or the words of any man to it. The New Testament teaches the same thing in 1 Peter 4:11 and several other passages. As Christ's sheep, we are warned to listen only to the voice of our Shepherd, and to flee from the voice of strangers (John 10:1-5).

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(continued)

We must withdraw from any teacher who does not consent to the very words of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Tim 6:3-5). As a teacher, we must use only God's word. That is the word that we should speak faithfully (Jer 23:28), in its entirety (Acts 20:20,27), without additions or subtractions (Deut 4:2; 12:32; Pr 30:5-6; Rev 22:18-19). Otherwise, we simply should not speak at all (1 Pet 4:11).

The power of God's word

In Jeremiah 23:28-29, the Lord said, "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?" Only God's word is like wheat, spiritually nourishing (Heb 5:11-14; 1 Pet 1:22-25; 2:1-3), able to turn men from their sins (Jer 23:22; Rom 10:17; Eph 6:16; 1 Jn 2:1), and perfect God's love in them (2 Tim 3:16-17; 1 Jn 2:5). Only God's word has such power, like a fire, a rock (Jer 23:29), and a sword (Heb 4:12). In contrast, man's word is like chaff. It has no nourishment for men's souls and is utterly useless for accomplishing anything good. In fact, the word of men does much harm, as it strengthens men in their evil, prevents their repentance (Jer 23:14-22), and prevents them from knowing God (1 Cor 1:19-21; 2:13-14). Jeremiah 23:31 says, "Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that use their tongues, and say, He saith." Many men speak their own words (i.e. use *their* tongues), yet they claim what they are saying is God's own word. They say, "This is what God says," but then they speak their own words. False prophets have always used this lying technique, and false teachers continue to use their own tongues and say, "God says" (2 Pet 2:1-3). God is against these kinds of "prophets" and teachers. We need to follow the example of Haggai the prophet. Haggai 1:13 says, "Then spake Haggai the Lord's messenger in the Lord's message unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith the Lord. He spoke *the Lord's message*, which was God's word, saying only what God had spoken ("thus saith the Lord"). God's word is the seed of His kingdom (Luke 8:11). Our job is to plant and water that seed, so that God can give the increase to it (1 Cor 3:6-7).