

SNAKE OIL FOR SALE!

Misquoting Scripture.

One of the more frequent mistakes Joel Osteen makes is in misquoting Scripture on TV and in his books. With his misquotation often comes misinterpretation.

A case in point would be his use of Hebrews 12. “Stop dwelling on everything that’s wrong with you and taking an inventory of what you’re not. The Scripture says in Hebrews, ‘To [sic] look away from everything that distracts’ (104). Hebrews 12:1-2a does not say that we should look away from what is wrong with us. It states, “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith....” Hebrews tells us to do something about our sins. It then tells us something Osteen never tells his readers here—to get our eyes off of ourselves and to fix them on Jesus Christ.

Osteen then says, “The Scripture tells us that we are to ‘call the things that are not as if they already were’” (112). Romans 4:17, however, says that it is “God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were,” not we mere mortals.

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Joyce Meyer teaches that: “The power of life and death is in our tongue, and God wants you to begin calling those things that don’t currently exist as if they already did. In time, you will see them come to pass.”^[6]

These modern “prosperity” teachings in churches are rooted in the original New Thought practice of “decreeing,” which was established by Emma Curtis Hopkins (1853-1925), who learned her trade in Mary Baker Eddy’s Christian Science Movement,^[9] itself influenced by Hinduism.^[10]

Creflo A. Dollar says: “*God is limited by man’s faith to be able to act on Earth,*”^[14] and David (formerly Paul) Yonggi Cho says that “God never works by Himself, but only through you,”^[15] they are mimicking, almost to the letter, the parallel New Thought occult principle which says: “[*God’s*] *Power can work for you only as it works through you.*”^[16]

The Big Daddy of the modern “prosperity”

movement in the Christian scene was Kenneth Hagin (1917-2003), founder of Rhema Bible Churches and Training Centres, who wrote:

“Our confession is the key to receiving God’s blessings and it is the key to holding on to God’s blessings... . The confessions of your faith in God’s Word will bring the desired realities into your life.”^[18]

Copeland, Hinn, Arnott and Howard-Browne are all regulars in “God TV” programming. But Paul Cain, the former so-called “Kansas City Prophet,” is in there too. Cain wrote the commendatory foreword for the book “*Journal of the Unknown Prophet*” by God TV” founder, Wendy Alec.^[20]

Kenneth Hagin put it like this: “*First...decide what you want from God and find Scriptures which cover your case... [then] let every thought and desire affirm that you have what you’ve asked for.*”^[22]

Florence Scovel-Shinn, a New Thought occultist highly regarded in the new Age Movement, states: “Owing to the vibratory power of words, whatever man voices, he begins to attract.”^[26]

Morris Cerullo, a regular on “God TV,” maintains that “*If [Christians] will only confess it out of their mouth and claim it,*” they could have anything they want—worldly riches and success, even complete immunity to colds and influenza!^[27]

Joyce Meyer, said, “*I tell you when somebody comes to me and says, ‘Oh, this stuff don’t work,’ I’d like to black both their eyes.*”^[32]

Apostle Paul wrote: “But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. **For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil**, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (I Tim. 6:9-10) [emphasis added]

One occult publication, in which the channeled words of the “Ascended Master” Kuthumi are recorded, shows clearly the origin of this evil practice of word-power and what happens when we attempt to invoke it:

When we contemplate methods of God realization, we dare not exclude the *power of the spoken Word* [in which] the body of your letter is

composed of *statements phrasing your desires...* and the supplications that would be involved even in ordinary prayer. Having released the power of the spoken Word through your outer consciousness, your subconscious mind, and your superconscious or Higher Self, you can rest assured that *the supreme consciousness of the Ascended Masters whom you have invoked is also concerned with the manifestation of that which you have called forth.*”^[33] [emphasis added]

The occultist son of Plymouth Brethren parents, Aleister Crowley (1875-1947), wrote a famous treatise, entitled “*Do What Thou Wilt Shall be the Whole of the Law.*” This should not surprise us.

The well-known Christian teacher, Richard Foster—whose books are long-running Wesley-Owen best-sellers—tells us that:

Perhaps the most astonishing characteristic of Jesus’ praying is that when He prayed for others He never concluded by saying ‘*if it be Thy will.*’ Nor did the apostles or prophets when they were praying for others. They obviously believed that they knew what the will of God was before they prayed the prayer of faith...I saw that when praying for others there was evidently no room for indecisive, tentative, half-hoping, ‘*if it be Thy will*’ prayers.”^[34]

Kenneth Copeland sums up this “my will” philosophy when he writes:

“Your will determines everything you do. It determines your success or failure. It opens or closes the door to your financial success. It determines everything you are, everything you have been, and everything you ever will be. No one can determine your life and its outcome but you.”^[36]

Kenneth Copeland—in a televised service on a “God TV” program—asked the congregation/TV audience to imagine themselves pulling the lever of a one-armed bandit (as seen in casinos and amusement arcades), and he then urged them to scream at the top of their voices: “*MONEY... Come out to me NOW!*” Three times he told the ecstatic audience to yell these words, then he told them to rejoice about it.^[38]

Pastor Steve Munsey, in a fund-raising drive (What they misleadingly call “Missions Week”) for “God TV” in 2004, said to the world on the program: “*You*

can speak anything you want into existence,” and “*we have the right to speak those things that are not as though they were.*” In the same broadcast, he said that we have the power to “remove mountains” and uproot trees and hurl them into the sea. Elsewhere, Munsey says: “*If you want prosperity, you must speak it.... It’s not up to God or the Devil, it’s up to you!*”^[39]

Kenneth Hagin says:

“God used words to bring the universe into existence. When God says something, it happens! God spoke irresistible words that could not be refuted, that could not be denied, that could not be opposed, and what He declared came into being. God’s Word has undeniable, irrefutable, incontestable power! It can create, affect, change, dismantle, and solve any problem in your life too! You see, the words God speaks contain something. They contain power, strength, ability, might and all dominion! Therefore, we need to learn to speak God’s Word!”^[42]

Here’s what Benny Hinn says (in part, parroting Kenneth Copeland):

Christians are ‘little messiahs’ and ‘little gods’ on the earth. Thus [encouraging the audience] ...say ‘*I am a God-man..... This spirit-man within me is a God-man*’ Say ‘*I’m born of heaven a God-man. I’m a God-man. I am a sample of Jesus. I’m a super being.*’ Say it! Say it! Who’s a super being? ‘*I walk in the realm of the supernatural.*’ Say it!.... You want to prosper? Money will be falling on you from left, right and center. God will begin to prosper you; for money always follows righteousness...Say after me, “*everything I ever want is in me already.*”^[43]

The disgraced Bishop Earl P. Paulk, who was named a Bishop in the International Communion of Charismatic Churches in 1982, and who now runs the ministry known as CathedralOnline.tv, has written:

“*Just as dogs have puppies...so God has little gods. Until we comprehend that we are little gods and we begin to act like little gods, we cannot manifest the Kingdom of God.*”^[46]

Similarly, Methodist faith-healer John G. Lake (1870-1935) said, “*Man is not a separate creation detached from God, he is part of God Himself... God intends us to be gods.*”^[47] Kenneth Copeland says, “*You don’t have a God in you. You are one.*”^[48] Note that the above three quotations are taken from

the authoritative Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, published by Zondervan.

Selwyn Hughes has written:

“Just as Jesus spoke the WORD of rebuke to the fig tree so you as a child of God can speak the withering word of rebuke to that disease or sickness upon your body. When Jesus spoke, his WORD was with power. When you speak, your WORD can have just as much power.”^[50]

Yonggi Cho is the same “Christian” pastor who wrote: “*Before you give the word, the Holy Spirit does not have the proper material with which to create.*”^[52]

Michael Scott Horton, professor Historical Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary in Escondido, California, has said:

“Some of these people are charlatans, others are honestly dedicated to one of the most abhorrent errors in religious theology. I often think of these folks as the religious equivalent to a combination of a National Enquirer ad and professional wrestling. It’s part entertainment and very large part scam.”^[58]

Teacher Joyce Meyer says this:

“Why would God want all of His people poverty stricken while all of the people who aren’t living for God have everything? I think it’s old religious thinking, and I believe the devil uses it to keep people from wanting to serve God.”^[60]

“Righteous are You, O Lord, when I plead with You; yet let me talk with You about Your judgments. Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why are those happy who deal so treacherously?” (Jer. 12:1).

“As for me, my feet had almost stumbled; my steps had nearly slipped. For I was envious of the boastful, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked”(Psa. 73:2-3)

“Behold, these are the ungodly, who are always at ease; they increase in riches. Surely I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocence” (Psa. 73:12-13)

“When I thought how to understand this, it was too painful for me—until I went into the sanctuary of God: then I understood their end. Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction. Oh, how they are brought to desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors” (Psa. 73:16-19)

“Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass....For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more; indeed, you will look carefully for his place, but it shall be no more. But the meek shall inherit the earth” (Psa. 37:7,10-11).

Paul speaks of “*false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ*” (2 Cor. 11:13) then he speaks of how

“Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness” (2 Cor. 11:14).

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

“God TV” televangelists declare that they are chosen by the Lord as His instruments to Christianize the world with an “endtime move of the Spirit” and usher in the return of Christ. Wendy Alec puts it like this:

“We believe as we enter the second [sic] millennium, that God Digital as a network, has been ordained by the Father, as one of His tools to usher in His endtime move generationally across the earth. That television, the very tool used by Satan to control the minds and hearts of this last generation, would be used by the Father to deal the devil his death blow and to usher in the endtime move of His Spirit, presenting Him with a bride that was to be without spot, wrinkle or blemish and to bring Him souls.”^[65]

Sources

- 6 “Sweet Satisfaction of Contentment,” *Enjoying Everyday Life Magazine*, May 2004
- 9 You can read all about the New Thought Movement at <http://www.brob.com/history.htm>, where you’ll see how it came to be associated with churches. You’ll also notice there that even Mary Baker Eddy called Emma Curtis Hopkins a “Mind-Quack!”
- 10 See evidence of this at http://www.atributetohinduism.com/quotes301_320.htm
- 14 This quotation was sent to me by a horrified correspondent who had been to the USA and watched a Creflo A. Dollar TV programme.
- 15 Paul (now David) Yonggi Cho, *The Fourth Dimension: The Key to Putting Your Faith to Work for a Successful*

- Life* (Logos International/Valley Books Trust, 1979), p.18.
- 16 John Randolph Price, *The Superbeings* (Quartus Books, 1981), p.xxi.
- 18 *Word of Faith Magazine*, September 1990.
- 20 Details can be seen at <http://www.unknownprophet.com/>. How this book has achieved such popularity among so many pastors is one of the mysteries. Masquerading as prophecy, it is really a stream of consciousness ramble—often written in the first person, as if God Himself was writing it.
- 22 Kenneth Hagin, *Word of Faith Magazine*, Kenneth Hagin Ministries, January 1990, pp.4-5
- 26 Florence Scovel-Shinn, *The Game of Life and How to Play It* (Fowler, 1925), p.25.
- 27 Morris Cerullo, *A Guide to Total Health and Prosperity: God Wants to Bless You* (World Evangelism Inc., 1978), p.42.
- 32 Joyce Meyer, PFO Quarterly Journal, April-June 2002, page 10.
- 33 Elizabeth Clare *Prophet, Prayer and meditation: Jesus and Kuthumi* (Summit University, 1963), pp.138-139. For an explanation of the “Ascended Masters” and where they fit into the scheme of things today, please see our article on this subject on the Articles & Analysis” page of the Diakrisis website at <http://www.diakrisis.org>.
- 34 Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1980), p.33.
- 36 Kenneth Copeland, *Walking in the Realm of the Miraculous* (KCP,n.d.), p.101.
- 38 Originally, this was broadcast on a Kenneth Copeland Ministries “Voice of Victory” program on Dec. 4, 1999, and it was subsequently televised on “God TV.”
- 39 For a mountain of revealing quotes from Steve Munsey, see <http://www.myfortress.org/stevemunsey.html>. this guy is the ultimate “prosperity” teaching salesman. It is easy to see why “God TV” called him in to do the fundraising. He has one of the best lines in coercion and high pressure sales that we have ever seen. Just read those quotes to see what we mean.
- 42 Kenneth Hagin, *The Word of Faith*, April 2004, available at <http://www.rhema.org/media/wof/wof404.pdf>
- 43 Benny Hinn in a broadcast on Sunday, October 20, 1990 on TBN.
- 46 Stanley M. Burgess & Gary B. McGee, *Dictionary of Pentecostal & Charismatic Movements* (Zondervan, 1978), p.719.
- 47 *Ibid.*
- 48 *Ibid.*
- 50 Selwyn Hughes, “Lord Heal Me Now” (Crusade for World Revival, n.d.), p.39.
- 52 Paul (David) Yonggi Cho, op. cit., p.75
- 58 Extract from an article entitled “TV Evangelists Thriving Once Again after Scandals of the 1980s” in the *Akron-Beacon Journal*, January 3rd 2004, which can be found at <http://www.ohio.com/mld/beaconjournal/living/religion/7625050.htm>. You may need to sign up in order to access the article; but it is free and it only takes a few seconds.
- 60 *Akron-Beacon Journal*, January 3rd 2004, op.cit.
- 65 Wendy Alec, *Against All Odds: The Story of Europe's First Daily Christian Television Network* (Warboy's Media, 2001), p.9 Incidentally, Paul Crouch owns the Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN)—The world's largest Christian television network with about 21 satellites, 3,100 outlets, revenues of about \$200,000,000 in 2003, and creeping up to a billion dollars in assets. It broadcasts globally very similar material to God TV. There is currently a donor alert from <http://www.ministrywatch.org> to withhold contributions from TBN, for an independent commission to take over governance and call for new leadership.

Excerpts from *SCP Journal*/Volume 29:4-30:1 2006 The Spirits of the Age, pp.8-14, 17-20, 24-25, 27.

These are only a few quotes from a very long article “*God TV - A Probing Perspective on American Tele-Evangelists Coming to England and Europe by Satellite TV*” which was published two years ago by S.C.P. People would not continue being deceived by Todd Bentley, C. Peter Wagner “Apostles and Prophets” and the resurrection of the false Kansas City Prophets, and other religious con-men if they knew the facts. Be informed, send \$25 to Spiritual Counterfeits Project, P.O. 4308, Berkeley, CA 94704 and get a years subscription to their journals and newsletters.

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J.P. Editor

