

Gifted, but Rejected!

“Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’” – Matthew 7:22-23.

These verses can answer many questions. Jesus spoke about ministers who have thought that God’s blessing on their ministry or gift could justify their having an ungodly lifestyle. Perhaps Samson would serve as a good illustration of this. He was a man who spent an evening with a harlot, then came out (under the anointing) and carried off the city gates! Samson thought that his anointed ministry justified his immoral lifestyle.

We know that God mercifully redeemed Samson, though it was at the cost of his eyes and finally his life. However, this is not the case with all ministers who backslide. Often they retain their ministry or giftings for a while, but eventually another spirit overtakes them. Sometimes leaders can even be functioning from two different anointings, as King Saul did. Saul could prophesy under the anointing of the Holy Spirit and at other times function by an evil spirit. (Study 1 Samuel 10:10, 18:10-11, 19:23-24, & 28:6-7.)

We can wonder, “How can this be? Here are men doing these mighty works, and yet their lives are not righteous.” Let us remember that Jesus said, *“By their fruit you shall know them”* (Mt.7:16). In the last days there shall be great revival and there will be many miracle workers. But if we judge ministers on their giftings alone, we could be deceived! (Study 2 Thess.2:9-10, Mt.24:24, and Rev.13:13-14.)

There is a story about a backslidden evangelist. One day as this evangelist was walking toward the tent where he was about to preach, the wind began shaking the tent. As the breeze bent the cloth of the tent he saw in it the angry face of God. He was quite disturbed for a while, but when he preached that night, people were saved and healed. Afterwards he sat down and was thinking to himself, “Well God couldn’t be too angry with me...” Then God spoke to this man: “I was not honoring you – I was honoring My Word that was preached!”

Remember that Judas was gifted along with the other disciples. He did miracles as well. *“And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”* No – having a ministry, having spiritual gifts, even leading people to Christ does not get us into heaven. Even the Apostle Paul said this: *“But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway”* (1 Cor. 9:27).

Christ’s words, *“I never knew you,”* can be interpreted several ways. It can mean “I never really got to know you,” or “You never resembled me.” As the Lord said to backslidden Israel through the prophet Hosea, *“You are not My people, and I am not your God”* (Hos.1:9).

There can also be the thought of being “blotted out of the book of life” (Rev. 3:5). When one’s name is blotted out of the book of life, it is as though it was never there. *“I never knew you!”* (Study Ezek.18:24.)

May the Lord spare us from the deception of thinking that God approves of our misconduct if He anoints our ministry and spiritual gifts! Workers of iniquity will spend their eternity in hell – and this includes ministers! Yes, we desire to see miracles, but above all, may we always desire to be faithful and true to the Lord Jesus.

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