

Templates of Truth with Rick Smith
Audio Script – May 15, 2009

Did you know that the first man, Adam, could fly? I didn't know that either, but according to the teaching of one very popular television evangelist today, it is quite so. There were similar kinds of theories circulating in Micah's day. We consider their source in today's Templates of Truth.

As a part of Micah's prophecy to the sinfulness of His people, God spoke a word of rebuke and warning to the preachers and evangelists of the day. He accused them of *(leading the) people astray* (3:5), *(twisting) everything that is straight* (3:9), doing their work solely for *a bribe, a price and for money* (3:11), then bragging about how they could live any way they chose to, because they were above the law – *calamity will not come upon us*, they said (3:11). This was not just an issue in Micah's day. Jesus taught that as we near the end of the age, *many false prophets will arise and will mislead many* (Matthew 24:11), including even Bible-believing Christians – *the elect* (Mark 13:11).

How is possible for even God's people to be fooled into the acceptance of false teaching? First of all, the false teacher cannot look or sound false. He or she must have an appearance of legitimacy and speak with words that have a sound of credibility and truthfulness. Indeed, Jesus warned – *beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves* (Matthew 7:15). The sheep's clothing was a symbolic reference to Christianity look-alikes. It also helps when they are extremely popular and are able to do all kinds of good and extraordinary things – *show signs and wonders* (Mark 13:22). This makes their message very convincing.

Unfortunately the "faith movement" of the past few decades has given rise to such personalities and persuasions. These teachers are seen on world-wide satellite, sell millions of books and fill to capacity massive arenas everywhere they appear. Their names are as popular as household brands. Yet when you weigh their message against the strict measure of Scripture, they deliver what the Apostle Peter called *destructive heresies* (II Peter 2:1). We are witnessing the fulfillment of Peter's prophecy, for he went on to declare that, *many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be maligned* (2:2).

One of their methods is what I refer to as "deductive sensationalism." This is when you take a passage of Scripture, break apart its wording and phrasing with a form of legitimacy, but then deduce from that result a sensational, often ludicrous conclusion or application. An example is the Adam flying allegation. Scripture teaches that Adam was given "dominion" over the beasts of the field, fish of the sea and fowls of the air. One very popular television evangelist was heard to explain that the Hebrew word, "dominion" meant that Adam could do everything that anything he had dominion over could do. If not, how could he have dominion. Therefore, Adam could fly as the fowls of the air could fly. Adam was the earth's first "superman," he claims. Applying that line of deductive sensationalism, Adam could also breath under water like fish, hibernate for months like bears, live off a complete diet of worms, and should have feathers all over him rather than skin. How absurd! Yet, when the evangelist made the flying claim, the audience erupted in affirming applause. That's the scary part!

John warns us not to be so gullible – *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* (I John 4:1). When very popular speakers make very convincing claims, it is easy to consider their message with a degree of legitimacy. There is only one standard, however, by which to compare all proclamation – the Word of God. You have to read it, study it, and allow God’s Holy Spirit to give your mind understanding of it in order to be able to effectively apply its litmus test to any message and any messenger.

That’s today’s Templates of Truth. This is your Bible teacher, Rick Smith, reminding you to attend church this Sunday for Bible study and worship, pray for one another, and always strive to abide. Until next time, have a blessed and glorious day in Christ Jesus.

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