

Where is the Council of God, as mentioned in Jeremiah 23:18?

Let's first look at the passage:

Jeremiah 23:18 (KJV):

"For who has stood in the counsel of the Lord to perceive and hear His word? Who has marked His word and heard it?"

To understand this verse, let's continue reading a few more verses:

Jeremiah 23:19-22 (KJV):

“19 Behold, a whirlwind of the Lord has gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind; it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked.

20 The anger of the Lord shall not return, until He has executed and performed the thoughts of His heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly.

21 I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.

22 But if they had stood in My counsel, and caused My people to hear My words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.”

In these verses, God is referring to the false prophets of Israel. These prophets did not sit in God’s counsel to hear His true message, but instead, they made up their own prophecies. They did not call the people to repentance but gave them false assurances, telling them there was peace when, in reality, God’s anger was upon them due to their sin. God condemns these false prophets for not hearing His word, and He makes it clear that had they sat in His counsel, they would have preached repentance.

Theological Insight:

The “counsel of the Lord” refers to the divine interaction between God and His representatives. In the Old Testament, this counsel was often experienced by the prophets, who would receive God’s guidance, instructions, and warnings for the people. The counsel of God is a place of revelation, where God’s will is made known, and His truth is imparted. False prophets did not have this access because they did not seek God’s will but instead relied on their own understanding or false inspiration.

Examples of those who sat in God’s counsel:

One clear example of someone who received God’s counsel is the prophet Isaiah:

Isaiah 6:1-9 (KJV):

"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple.

2 Above it stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he did fly.

6 Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar,

7 And he touched my mouth with it, saying, 'This has touched your lips; your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged.'

8 Also, I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Then I said, 'Here am I, send me.'

9 And He said, 'Go, and tell this people: "Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive."'"

Theological Insight:

Isaiah's experience is a powerful illustration of what it means to sit in the counsel of God. He had a direct vision of God on His throne and heard God's voice calling him to be a prophet. In this instance, Isaiah received purification (symbolized by the coal touching his lips) and was then entrusted with God's message for the people. This moment represents the divine calling to hear and deliver God's words.

Other examples of prophets who received God's counsel include **Ezekiel, Daniel, and Moses**. God communicated with Moses directly, giving him the law and instructions for the Israelites, further emphasizing the importance of God's counsel in the lives of His chosen servants.

The Role of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament:

In the Old Testament, only a few were called into God's counsel, namely the prophets. However, in the New Testament, the access to God's counsel is broadened to all believers through the Holy Spirit. Every believer who has received the Holy Spirit now has access to God's counsel and can hear His voice.

We no longer need a prophet to ascend to heaven and come back with a message. The Holy Spirit, who dwells in us, reveals God's will directly to us.

John 16:13-14 (KJV):

“But when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come.

14 He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you.”

Theological Insight:

The Holy Spirit, also referred to as the Spirit of truth, acts as the divine communicator between God and His people. He guides believers into all truth and reveals things to come, just as God’s prophets once did in the Old Testament. The Holy Spirit continues to carry out the work of revelation, giving us access to God’s counsel and truth without needing an intermediary.

Romans 8:9 (KJV):

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.”

Theological Insight:

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is what distinguishes believers from non-believers. It is the presence of the Holy Spirit in a person's life that enables them to hear God's voice and understand His will. Without the Holy Spirit, it is impossible to have true fellowship with God.

Access to the Counsel of God Today:

In today's New Covenant, all believers have direct access to God's counsel through the Holy Spirit. We don't need to wait for a prophet to ascend to heaven and bring back God's message for us. We can hear God's voice through the Spirit who dwells within us.

Romans 10:6-8 (KJV):

*"But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above;)
8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach."*

Theological Insight:

Paul is emphasizing that the word of faith, which is the gospel message, is accessible to all believers through the Holy Spirit. We don't need to seek some heavenly experience to hear from God. The Spirit is close to us, guiding us in our daily lives and helping us understand God's will through the Scriptures.

Conclusion:

The council of God in the Old Testament was a place of divine revelation where prophets received God's guidance. Today, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, all believers have direct access to God's counsel. We are no longer dependent on prophets alone to hear from God, but can hear directly from the Holy Spirit, who reveals God's truth to us and leads us in His will.

This is why receiving the Holy Spirit is so crucial in the life of a believer. He is the one who communicates God's will, imparts wisdom, and guides us into all truth.

Maranatha!

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