

## Walter Martin's 1988 Warning to the Church

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[Background - Kenneth Copeland claims that Jesus said in conversation with Copeland that he never claimed to be God; he only claimed he walked with God.] Dr. Martin had contacted Copeland by mail confronting him on this issue, but unfortunately his responses to Dr. Martin *"were not kind or receptive."*

Talking to the elders in the church of Ephesus, as he is preparing to go to Jerusalem where he will be bound by the Jews, and later to die, the apostle writes these words or speaks these words and Luke records them.

Acts 20:26-27 CSB

Therefore I declare to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all of you, because I did not avoid declaring to you the whole plan of God.

That is a direct quote from Ezekiel 34...

## Ezekiel 34 CSB

The word of the LORD came to me: “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy, and say to them, ‘This is what the Lord GOD says to the shepherds: Woe to the shepherds of Israel, who have been feeding themselves! Shouldn’t the shepherds feed their flock? You eat the fat, wear the wool, and butcher the fattened animals, but you do not tend the flock. You have not strengthened the weak, healed the sick, bandaged the injured, brought back the strays, or sought the lost. Instead, you have ruled them with violence and cruelty. They were scattered for lack of a shepherd; they became food for all the wild animals when they were scattered. My flock went astray on all the mountains and every high hill. My flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and there was no one searching or seeking for them.

“ ‘Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD. As I live—this is the declaration of the Lord GOD—because my flock, lacking a shepherd, has become prey and food for every wild animal, and because my shepherds do not search for my flock, and because the shepherds feed themselves rather than my flock, therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD!

“ ‘This is what the Lord GOD says: Look, I am against the shepherds. I will demand my flock from them and prevent them from shepherding the flock. The shepherds will no longer feed themselves, for I will rescue my flock from their mouths so that they will not be food for them.

“ ‘For this is what the Lord GOD says: See, I myself will search for my flock and look for them. As a shepherd looks for his sheep on the day he is among his scattered flock, so I will look for my flock. I will rescue them from all the places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and total darkness. I will bring them out from the peoples, gather them from the countries, and bring them to their own soil. I will shepherd them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the land. I will tend them in good

pasture, and their grazing place will be on Israel's lofty mountains. There they will lie down in a good grazing place; they will feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I will tend my flock and let them lie down. This is the declaration of the Lord GOD. I will seek the lost, bring back the strays, bandage the injured, and strengthen the weak, but I will destroy the fat and the strong. I will shepherd them with justice.

“ ‘As for you, my flock, the Lord GOD says this: Look, I am going to judge between one sheep and another, between the rams and goats. Isn't it enough for you to feed on the good pasture? Must you also trample the rest of the pasture with your feet? Or isn't it enough that you drink the clear water? Must you also muddy the rest with your feet? Yet my flock has to feed on what your feet have trampled, and drink what your feet have muddied.

“ ‘Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says to them: See, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Since you have pushed with flank and shoulder and butted all the weak ones with your horns until you scattered them all over, I will save my flock. They will no longer be prey, and I will judge between one sheep and another. I will establish over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will shepherd them. He will tend them himself and will be their shepherd. I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David will be a prince among them. I, the LORD, have spoken.

“ ‘I will make a covenant of peace with them and eliminate dangerous creatures from the land, so that they may live securely in the wilderness and sleep in the forest. I will make them and the area around my hill a blessing: I will send down showers in their season; they will be showers of blessing. The trees of the field will yield their fruit, and the land will yield its produce; my flock will be secure in their land. They will know that I am the LORD when I break the bars of their yoke and rescue them from the power of those who enslave them. They will no longer be prey for the nations, and the wild creatures of the earth will not consume

them. They will live securely, and no one will frighten them. I will establish for them a place renowned for its agriculture, and they will no longer be victims of famine in the land. They will no longer endure the insults of the nations. Then they will know that I, the LORD their God, am with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are my people. This is the declaration of the Lord GOD. You are my flock, the human flock of my pasture, and I am your God. This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.’ ”

The scripture says if you do not warn the wicked man of his wicked way and he dies in his sin, I will hold you accountable for it. So we are supposed to warn the wicked of the wickedness they perform, and also of the judgment of God upon them. If we don't, we become 'accessories after the fact' of their sins. So, Ezekiel 34 is what Paul is definitely referring to.

#### **Acts 20:26–31 CSB**

Therefore I declare to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all of you, because I did not avoid declaring to you the whole plan of God. Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Men will rise up even from your own number and distort the truth to lure the disciples into following them. Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for three years I never stopped warning each one of you with tears.

Now, there is a twofold warning to the Christian Church. This passage tells you that after the apostles would leave the Church there would be savage wolves; they are characterized as wolves - ravenous wolves - who will enter in, and they will not spare the flock: which means they will attack the flock from without, they will penetrate the sheepfold, and they will chew up the sheep. We have those savage wolves today. We have theologians in Theological Seminaries and departments of religions of schools who literally chew up the flock. They chew up the people who are studying for the ministry and then they spit them out into our pulpits where they can chew us up. These are the savage wolves who come in not sparing the flock: apostates in positions of authority in the Christian Church; apostates who allow the ordination of homosexuals, forbidden and cursed of God; apostates who deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ; apostates who will ordain you if you deny the Trinity, the deity of Christ, the virgin birth, the bodily resurrection, and the second coming; apostates who dominate our denominational structures and our educational institutions; apostates who have come in and are chewing up the Church. That is very clearly stated here that we are to lookout for these people.

**Acts 20:29–31 CSB**

I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Men will rise up even from your own number and distort the truth to lure the disciples into following them. Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for three years I never stopped warning each one of you with tears.

Very important! Now there is a second part of this that is seldom preached on, because when you preach on it people get upset in my ministry. What else is new! It's an occupational hazard because you have to tell them the whole counsel of God.

**Acts 20:27 CSB**

because I did not avoid declaring to you the whole plan of God.

Notice Paul's emphasis here: The whole counsel of God is to warn against the savage wolves, cultists, occultists, non-Christian religionists, atheistic and skeptical philosophers, psychologists - whatever they may be - who have attacked the church from without; and some have penetrated and chewed up the Church! Now there's a second warning from God. This warning is one the Church has paid very little attention to, and, because we have paid so little attention to

it, it has thrived and become lethal. Why? Because what's close to you, you don't see: it does you far more harm than something you can get in perspective and easily identify. So let's take a good look at what he's saying here.

Acts 20:30 CSB

Men will rise up even from your own number and distort the truth to lure the disciples into following them.

It does not say "*possibly could*"; he said, "*will arise*". "*They will speak contrary*" (the meaning of the word in the Greek says perversion. "*They will speak contrary things for the purpose of drawing disciples after themselves.*") So the warning of God is against people in the Church in positions of leadership and respect, who will draw disciples surrounding themselves, whose allegiance is not to Christ, but to that person. And they will draw the disciples after themselves from within the Church so that there is no accountability for what they say. Now this isn't my message; this is the Pauline counsel to the Church at Ephesus. Warnings from the Holy Spirit. Look out for the wolves and look out for the divisive schismatic leaders who will split and fragment and divide the church by attracting disciples to

follow them. Now the Scripture has many statements about false teachings and false prophets.

**Matthew 7:15–16 CSB**

“Be on your guard against false prophets who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravaging wolves. You’ll recognize them by their fruit. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes or figs from thistles?

Now Jesus has said something else that the Church has forgotten today.

**Matthew 7:22 CSB**

On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, didn’t we prophesy in your name, drive out demons in your name, and do many miracles in your name?’

When you say, *"Stop in the name of the Law!"* to a criminal fleeing, you are saying *"Stop!"* by the authority of what? The law! The law says you can't do that. Stop! When a King pronounced judgment in Old Testament times and recent times (until kings went out of fashion in the world), a ruler person would say, *"Open the door in the name of the King"*. Alright, once you get that concept in your mind, Jesus said there will come men who will speak, claiming their authority is from me. Now get that in your head carefully. There will



come men who will speak *"in my name"*; that is, I am supposedly saying this to you. That is a very important phrase. They're going to come and say, *"I'm speaking to you in Jesus 'name."* *"In my name they will work miracles. In my name they will cast out devils. They will prophesy and preach. But when I meet them I will say, 'Leave me - I never knew you, workers of iniquity.'"* Why? Because they use his authority and his name, because the power was in Jesus' name (Jesus' authority), not in themselves. And God honored the name of his Son. And they took that as a means of teaching their own false doctrines and false prophecies, and because of that they corrupted the faith of the church. But inwardly, spiritually, they really roooaaar! And if you don't know fleece from fur, you're dinner, dum dum! And the only way you can know fleece from fur is to know how to test them. You don't test them by Walter Martin, or by Norman Geisler, as good as the apologist and defenders of Christianity might be and as much as you trust them. You don't test them by other people; you test them by Scripture. Then if your fidelity is to the Scripture, and your allegiance is to the Scripture, you reject them! But, says Paul, in the last days, men are going to be drawn away by false teachers and prophets in the church speaking in the name of Jesus. And you're not going to test them, you're going to go along with

them. And they're going to fragment and divide the Church because you won't test them.

Well it's about time that we test them. Kenneth Copeland delivered the following prophecy during a three day victory campaign held in Dallas, Texas. It is reproduced in the Voice of Victory 20th anniversary of his ministry. Found on page 9, his prophecy came from Jesus Christ, Copeland says. He quotes Jesus as saying, *"You remember in my word I said to my disciples, 'this kind comes not out by prayer and fasting' ."*He's talking now about the power of prayer. He goes on *"Don't be disturbed (this is Jesus) when people accuse you of being God. They crucified Me for claiming I was God. But I didn't claim I was God; I just claimed I walked with Him and that He was in Me. Hallelujah."*That is a lying spirit. Look at me! Read my lips! "That is a lying spirit." That is not the Holy Spirit. Now for ten years I have warned, and I'm on tape and in print on this: that we were heading into the kingdom of the cults with the faith teachers. You are no longer heading there, baby! You are there! Just so you are not mistaken let me give it to you again. Jesus speaking- *"The more you get to be like me (Jesus) the more they're going to think that way of you. They crucified Me for claiming that I was God.*

*But I didn't claim I was God; I just claimed I walked with Him and that He was in Me. Hallelujah." "That's what you're doing."* Now this was on TBN - this on Christian Television and Radio stations. This is tolerated by the Christian Church, particularly the charismatic wing because they will not obey the Lord Jesus Christ and they will not obey what the Scripture says. They are taken by people and ministries. And by large crowds, and jet airplanes, and by affluence as supposedly the seal of success. If you're big and you're powerful and you're rich and people come to hear you, automatically it must be from God. No! Automatically it isn't from God. You're supposed to test what the person says by Scripture. And if you don't test it by Scripture you can be taking in spiritual arsenic or cyanide, and it can ruin your Christian life and take your eyes off Christ. The Scripture says it will overturn the faith in the Church.

...Charismatic differences. This is far beyond doctrinal disputes: he speaks it in the name of Jesus. He's a liar, and the truth is not in him.

**Isaiah 8:20 CSB**

Go to God's instruction and testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, there will be no dawn for them.

What deceives people about these false prophets is that out of one side of their mouth they preach the gospel, and out of the other side of their mouth they deny Him who is the core of the gospel. And if you don't put the two sides together you think you're hearing Christianity. But you're not! The false prophets know that to get crowds they have to preach Christianity. The false prophets know that in order to have financial support they have got to get the Church to contribute to them. So they will sound like the Church and they will prophesy in Jesus' name, they will heal in Jesus' name, they will work miracles in Jesus name', and then as they prosper, they will deny him.

How do you know he's a false prophet? It's easy: he said so! I wonder if people who read this thought, thought, *"They crucified me for claiming I was God, but I didn't claim I was God."* He didn't?! That's strange language.

#### John 8:56–59 CSB

Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; he saw it and was glad.” The Jews replied, “You aren’t fifty years old yet, and you’ve seen Abraham?” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, before Abraham was, I am.” So they picked up stones to throw at him. But Jesus was hidden and went out of the temple.

Who'd they think he was? Obviously, God!

John 10:33 CSB

“We aren’t stoning you for a good work,” the Jews answered, “but for blasphemy, because you—being a man—make yourself God.”

Now we are dealing here with the doctrine of antichrist. And it's not coming from an apostate Professor of a Theological Seminary. It's not coming from a Jehovah's Witness that knocks on your door. It's not coming from the Mormon missionary that peddles up. It's coming from Kenneth Copeland on your television set, on your radio, and in print, and if you resist the false doctrines of antichrist elsewhere, why will you not resist here? The answer is very simple: because people hear the gospel being preached and they automatically assume that the person preaching is a true prophet of God. No. Jesus said the false prophets can do it. The only way you can find out is test them. I've not avoided declaring to you the whole counsel of God for the space of ten years. I have told you day and night to the point of rage.

Now it's come full circle; there it is. Quote on TBN, *"Dogs beget dogs, cats beget cats, and God beget Gods. You are little Gods."* Close quote. That's Kenneth Copeland on your television set. You are Gods! No you're not. You're sinners saved by grace. And he's not a God, he's a sinner professing to be a Christian, and denying - in prophecy, in the name of Jesus - what Jesus said. That's a false prophet; I don't care how you spell it. If you say, *"But look at the healings, look at the meetings, look at the miracles."* READ Matthew Chapter 7.

**Matthew 7:13–23 CSB**

“Enter through the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the road broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who go through it. How narrow is the gate and difficult the road that leads to life, and few find it.

“Be on your guard against false prophets who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravaging wolves. You’ll recognize them by their fruit. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes or figs from thistles? In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a bad tree produces bad fruit. A good tree can’t produce bad fruit; neither can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that doesn’t produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So you’ll recognize them by their fruit.

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, didn’t we prophesy in your name, drive out demons

in your name, and do many miracles in your name?' Then I will announce to them, 'I never knew you. **Depart from me, you lawbreakers!**'

Use your brains! Jesus said that's exactly what's going to happen: *"They're going to preach and prophesy in my name."* They do! *"In my name they're going to work miracles."* They do! *"In my name they will cast out devils."* They do! And then they deny Him! Jesus said , *"Look out for them, because they're here!"* And they are here now. They are on our Television sets, our radios, and in print. Now the question is : will you tolerate it? We should be bombarding TBN and every Christian channel that produces and distributes this stuff. And we should be telling them we will not support the doctrine of the Anti-Christ. You may not do this with my money, and furthermore I'm not going to send any money. And then in addition to that I'm going to actively discourage everybody I know from sending you any money. And when you withhold financial support they listen, but not until. So I'm suggesting over the Bible Answer Man program that we start withholding support to people and ministries that do this. And I'm going to get a lot of flak. You're going to hear a lot of people coming after me, and I want you to know, I couldn't care less. This is the TRUTH. What I'm telling you is the truth, and if it is a voice crying in the wilderness,

it's the truth. And the Holy Spirit will see to it that they will listen. Because I am a prophetic voice in this and have been for a decade - of course I don't for a moment believe I am a prophet, anymore than I believe I am an apostle. I'm a teacher, but you can speak with a prophetic voice; you can exercise apostolic office in given situations.

Believe me we're in trouble, and if we don't do something about it really quickly, you're going to be in more trouble than you know what to do with. Because people keep accepting these as Christian representatives. What we're getting is the doctrine of antichrist. If you deny that, you don't know your Bible. Jesus says through Copeland, "*never claimed to be God.*" That is not the Jesus of the Bible. You want me to tell you who it is? Turn in your Bible to 2 Corinthians 11 I will tell you who it is.

#### **2 Corinthians 11:3-4 CSB**

But I fear that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your minds may be seduced from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if a person comes and preaches another Jesus, whom we did not preach, or you receive a different spirit, which you had not received, or a different gospel, which you had not accepted, you put up with it splendidly!



A different spirit, a different gospel, then he goes on to say...

**2 Corinthians 11:13–15 CSB**

For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no great surprise if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will be according to their works.

I don't bring judgment or play God - that is not my role or yours. But if Jesus Christ said it, and the New Testament teaches it, and it is Biblical theology, and we reiterate what the text says, we are not playing God; we are being faithful to what God said. Is Kenneth Copeland a Christian? If he is a Christian, let him repent! Let him apologize to the Church! Let him forsake these false doctrines. He is not a God; he lies when he says anyone in the Church is a God. He lies when he says Jesus Christ gave him this prophecy; this did not come from the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul calls Jesus, *"Our great God and Savior"*.

**Titus 2:13 CSB**

while we wait for the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Acts chapter 20, which I just read, says...

Acts 20:28 CSB

Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood.

Well, who died on the cross? God in human flesh - and purchased the Church with his own blood. The whole New Testament declares the deity of Jesus Christ.

John 1:1 CSB

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

And Kenneth Copeland knows it as well as I do! But he's denying it. When you take your eyes off Scripture as the criterion for authority and you place it on experience, and on people, and on revelations, and on messages that allegedly come from God, you are a set up for deception. You're made for it, because you don't have any way to check it. But you must check it. The title of his article is *"Take Time to Pray."* That's the title: *"Take Time to Pray."* No *"take time to obey"*.

Take time to obey Christ and to obey him is to proclaim him Lord of all.

**Revelation 1:7–8 CSB**

Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn over him. So it is to be. Amen. “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “the one who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Who is He? *"He is coming with clouds and every eye shall see him,"* and he is *"the Almighty"*. Well, that's what Christ said about himself.

**John 20:24–29 CSB**

But Thomas (called “Twin”), one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples were telling him, “We’ve seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “If I don’t see the mark of the nails in his hands, put my finger into the mark of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will never believe.” A week later his disciples were indoors again, and Thomas was with them. Even though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and look at my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Don’t be faithless, but believe.” Thomas responded to him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said, “Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.”

Kenneth Copeland quoted every one of these verses, and then, in a prophecy originating with Jesus Christ, he can deny the identity of Jesus Christ. You are now dealing with false prophets. I don't presume to judge the eternal destiny of men; that is not our task. But I will tell you one thing: biblically speaking, if you say you are Christ's property then you have Christ's Spirit.

**Romans 8:9 CSB**

You, however, are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him.

Christ's Spirit does not deny Jesus Christ: Christ's Spirit exalts Him. This is a denial of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is Jesus speaking? *"I never said I was God, never claimed to be God."* No - that's a lie, *"Let God be true and every man a liar."* I want a repudiation of this. And a removal of these men from the Trinity Broadcasting Network Station until they apologize to the Christian Church and repent of this evil. And if they won't, then it must be the task of the Christian Church to oppose them vigorously, publicly. And tell it to the whole Church. And read this until people can't stand to hear it anymore - until they will act on it. Don't you dare talk about

fidelity to Jesus Christ, and love to Jesus Christ, and allegiance to Jesus Christ, and sit by while men deny him! You're going to be consistent? Then be consistent in obedience.

You may sit here and say, *"You sound very angry!"* I am! I may be one of God's last angry men, but I'm angry for the right reason. I'm in the presence of the doctrines of the Anti-Christ and I plan to be angry that way the rest of my life. And if you don't hear me angry about those kinds of doctrines, please come and tell me as quickly as possible, because I have defected from the ministry. So I'm going to ask you to covenant with me in prayer that God will bring Kenneth Copeland to repentance for this blasphemy, and there may be an open apology and repudiation of it in the Christian Church. And then - until this is done - we will remain constant in prayer, and we will not support what we know to be evil doctrine. If we do that, God will bless us and honor us. If we don't do it, we're going to reap an awful harvest. This morning was a very difficult message to preach - 'The Warnings of God', because whenever you talk this way, you're bound to be misinterpreted, and people are bound to think somehow or another you've got some ax to grind and

you're after somebody's neck. I'm not, but if I sit still in the presence of the doctrine of antichrist, I'm an accessory to those doctrines, and I fall under the condemnation of Acts chapter 20.

If you go further into Revelation chapter 2 later on, you will find that the Holy Spirit commends the Church in Ephesus above all the seven Churches because they tested these people, just as Paul told them to, and they found out they were liars. And the Spirit says, *"Good job! You did what you were suppose to do!"* and he commends the Ephesians for it.

#### Revelation 2:1-7 CSB

"Write to the angel of the church in Ephesus: Thus says the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand and who walks among the seven golden lampstands: I know your works, your labor, and your endurance, and that you cannot tolerate evil people. You have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and you have found them to be liars. I know that you have persevered and endured hardships for the sake of my name, and you have not grown weary. But I have this against you: You have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember then how far you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. Otherwise, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. Yet you do have this: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

"Let anyone who has ears to hear listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.

To the one who conquers, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

May God make us faithful in the tradition of the Ephesians! The Lord Jesus Christ paid the price for all sin on the cross. The Lord Jesus Christ rose victoriously from the dead for our redemption: we are saved by His life. The Lord Jesus Christ has given us His Spirit so we can walk with him. He has also given us His Spirit so we might discern evil, as well as good.

### Closing Note:

*Dr. Martin is no longer just a lone voice crying in the wilderness. Looking back, we can now recognize that he was truly a prophetic figure—one whose warnings, sadly, were largely ignored by the church. And now, we're seeing the consequences. It's a haunting realization. Yet, Martin's legacy lives on. He inspired many, myself included, to continue the work he started.*

*Of course, there will always be those who parrot what they've been told: "Martin died because he spoke against God's anointed." He was 60, and although the cause of death was not disclosed, he suffered from diabetes and arterial ailments. However, if they truly believe divine healing guarantees health and longevity, they'll need to explain the many faith healers who have died despite preaching the same message. It's certainly something worth thinking about.*

—Chuck