

Perry Stone: Corrupt or Legit?

There is much speculation these days about false prophets and teachers. The only way to know for sure who aligns with the Word of God is by listening to the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it is often easy to spot opinions that are not spawned by the Holy Spirit—assuming you are in tune yourself. One of the preachers that receives many attacks about his teachings is Perry Stone in Cleveland, Tennessee (“About VOE”). He is a charismatic Pentecostal evangelist who, despite having little formal education in the matter, is widely sought-after as a Bible expert (“About International”). There are many reasons why Perry Stone is considered a true man of God and a legit teacher, but there are several issues that suggest otherwise. Today, I would like to debunk those positions. May I say first that it is very hard to dig up dirt on this man, and the only sources I could find were individual sites like blogs, not legit sources. 1 Peter says you should live what you preach, act out what you believe, so you are an example for non-believers (*Spiritual*, 1 Pet 2.12).

The first issue is the idea that Perry Stone is one of those preachers that only cares about money, not ministry. Most of these complaints come from bloggers like David J. Stewart, who says that Perry Stone sells books and other materials to “make a buck” (Stewart). This is not an uncommon accusation against preachers, as there are some who really are just in it for the money. However, Voice of Evangelism and several other sources claim that Stone does not receive a dime of what is donated to the ministry (“About International”; Bradbury; “Resolution”). In fact, it is stated that Stone does not even ask for donations when he preaches (“About International”). His salary “‘isn’t the income of a CEO but more like that of his ministry department heads’” (“About International”). He doesn’t earn royalties or commissions on his product sales, like most authors do, and the ministry is

extremely “frugal” with their funds (Bradbury). The money isn’t used for investments, either (“Resolution”). Unless you feel the need to look at Stone’s paystubs, I think it’s safe to say that he is not “in it for the money”.

It seems that the most popular issue is with Perry Stone’s book, “The Meal That Heals”. Unfortunately, there seems to be a lot of misunderstanding surrounding this teaching of daily communion, and I hope to shed some light on it. Perry Stone is tragically misquoted by many; “Perry Stone said that when you give money to the church that God sees that as the exact same equal sacrifice as His only Son Jesus Christ spilling his blood on the cross” and that “taking daily communion will save your soul, forgive you your sins, it will heal you, and he implies that it will give you financial riches as well” (“Satan Led”). I have not read the book, but I will tell you what I did find that Stone **actually** said. The first part was a misunderstanding; the video that was included on one of these blog sites was of Stone and John Miller explaining and demonstrating communion. In it, Miller said, “When you sit down to take communion, you should be spiritually healed, mentally healed, and physically healed” (“How to”). He says this after referencing three parts of the Atonement, which are the healing of the body, soul, and spirit (Perry Stone). Notice the word “should”; it doesn’t necessarily mean you **will** be healed, but perhaps that you **can** be healed, or, most likely, that you are supposed to be healed. Stone even emphasized that communion is a reflection of “what He **can** do for you” (“Perry Stone ‘The Meal’”, emphasis not added). Miller explains why you should be healed later in the video when he talks about the bread being Christ’s body and the cup being Christ’s blood (“Perry Stone ‘The Meal’”). As born-again Christians, the body of Christ is in us, and we are in the body of Christ. Miller says that communion helps ignite that bond, thus opening the door for healing in our

bodies (“Perry Stone ‘The Meal’”). The blood represents the Spirit of God, which can heal our souls and minds (“Perry Stone ‘The Meal’”). This is what they meant by daily communion healing you. And yes, this is true because of what Isaiah says, that by His stripes we are healed (*Spiritual*, Isa 53.5). Leviticus even says that blood is life (*Spiritual*, Lev 17.11); the word used is the Hebrew word “chai”, which literally means meat or flesh (*A Hebrew*). John says Jesus is the bread of life (*Spiritual*, John 6.48) and that the Spirit [the blood, the cup] gives life (6.63); the word here is the Greek word “zoe”, which means eternal life, spiritual life, and occasionally physical life (*The Online*). Miller referenced all three of these passages (Perry Stone). Here is a summary given by Stone of the book: “Through receiving daily communion, it is **possible** for a person to receive the threefold atoning work that Jesus did on the cross. It included physical healing for the body, the healing of course of the human spirit removing sin and the iniquity that’s in a person’s life, but also the healing of the emotions and the soul and the mind. So the atoning work of Jesus was body, soul, and spirit, and we talk about how by receiving the Lord’s supper you **can** actually receive healing in every area of your life” (“Perry Stone ‘The Meal’”, emphasis added). As you can see, there is nothing Stone says that suggests that *The Meal That Heals* will guarantee healing. Instead, he discusses what daily communion **can** do. Not everyone who reads the book or practices daily communion is healed, but Terry Lamunyon in fact was healed after doing both (Admin2). The summary of the book is this: daily communion can help open the way for healing. If your heart is right when you do it, and it brings God glory to heal you, then He will heal you. Something I learned recently is that God only heals when it is time, when it will bring Him the most glory. Many people go years without healing. Communion doesn’t guarantee immediate, or even long term, healing.

It has also been said that Perry Stone equalizes money to the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross (“Perry Stone says”; “Satan Led”). One video states that God views the sacrifice of money as the equal to the sacrifice of Jesus’ blood being spilt (“Satan Led”). I was unable to find the video or sermon where he states this; it is possible that it was removed. Many would condemn Stone for this, but there are two appropriate reasons his ministry may have removed it. Firstly, I have noticed that when Stone makes a mistake and realizes it, he apologizes as soon as he is next on television, or he does a YouTube video with his apology. Secondly, even when you admit to a mistake, you don’t want to leave the false teaching on the internet for people to be misled. I don’t even know if this statement was real or not; no one complaining about it ever posted the name of the video or sermon that Stone supposedly said this in. I think, like usual, Stone might have been misunderstood. I believe He is talking about money as a sacrifice; giving up our money is a difficult sacrifice, just like Jesus’ life was a hard sacrifice for himself and for the Father. Therefore, I don’t believe that Stone stated that money is as important as Jesus’ sacrifice, but rather our sacrifice is as important as His. This would make sense, especially when comparing it to the confusion of 1 Corinthians 6:9, which states that the love of money is the root of all evil (*Spiritual*). Money itself is not the subject in either circumstance. It is the love of money, i.e. greed, and the sacrifice of money, i.e. sacrifice, that is the focus of these statements.

Of course, there are those who are anti-pretribulation rapture, anti-Charismatic, etc. These seem to be the majority of complaints against Stone. In this case, the target is not Stone, but rather the individual theories of pre-tribulation rapture, charismatic Pentecostalism, etc. Stone preaches that the Bible shows evidence of a pre-tribulation rapture, and Roger Stronstad says that even anti-

charismatics should see that parts of the Bible are written as charismatic theology, such as Luke (Stronstad, 97).

There is also the question by many of whether Stone is sincere in his walk with God and in his ministry. Stone treats his audiences with a respect that is essential to ministry (“Some Inquiries”, 83). He is very committed, something that his job could not be done without (Zondag). There are countless friends, subordinates, coworkers, partners, viewers, and even mere acquaintances who can attest to his sincerity. Here are some of the things that such people say about him: “He and Pam are faithful servants of the Lord and walk according to the Word. They are people of integrity and love the Lord. Their heart is to reach the lost for the Kingdom of God. They take the ministry and calling very seriously” –Denise Wright (Admin2). “Perry insisted on helping my family and gave me a check each month to use for my sister’s necessities... I know that he is a man after God’s own heart!” – Darla Prater (Admin2). Chattanooga Rick Towe said the following: “He’s a great guy. And what you see on stage is what you see all the time. He’s pretty steady. He doesn’t have any agenda, it’s just to preach the gospel” (Bradbury). When asked if he “had ever had any past scandals, [T.L] Lowery’s quick reply was a telling endorsement: ‘Never. He’s lily, lily white—and then bleached out’” (“About VOE”). Prayer is the basis of his ministry (“About VOE”). And since we’ve already established that Stone isn’t “in it for the money”, I think it’s safe to say that Stone, however right or wrong, is sincere.

On a final note, I would like to remind everyone that every preacher, every person, makes mistakes; these accusations, however true or false, will not stop his ministry from reaching others for Christ, and it does not stop the healing and the deliverance. God will always achieve what He wants, even if His servant leaders

mess up. The fact of the matter is that every church leader, lead pastors especially, will always be under scrutiny (“Dear Future”). Some scrutiny is often good, and occasionally welcomed, for pastors and churches, as it enlightens them on their mistakes so they can remedy them. Stone always remedies his mistakes. Despite the scrutiny, he faces his mistakes with honesty, sincerity, and dignity. It is difficult to see how he might suffer from them, as most pastors do (McMinn). That said, Stone is not a bad teacher or bad Christian. He’s just doing his best.

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Appendix

This has been a personal issue to me because I am a fan of Perry Stone, and I hate it when pastors are wrongly scrutinized. However, this research has taught me something. I hope to be a pastor someday, and I need to remember that I will be reprimanded, rebuked, and scrutinized just like Stone. It is something that comes with the job, and even with being Christian. Steven Furtick says that the birthmark of a believer is a bullseye. I need to learn how to get comfortable with this bullseye, as I am sure to face many attacks in the future. I admire Stone because of his integrity in admitting his mistakes and correcting them. The word is humility, and I aim to be like that even now. Integrity and humility are probably two of the most difficult aspects of Christianity because they are the opposite of humanity's natural tendency: pride. Pride is something I struggle with, often daily. It is something that should not be a problem for a pastor. Sadly, it is, and that is why I think it is assumed by so many that Stone ministers for the fame or the money. I have no doubt that what he has done was orchestrated by God to touch thousands of lives. I know Voice of Evangelism has touched me more than once, especially when I was in high school. Truth be told, Stone was the reason I became a stronger Christian and started yearning to learn more about God. When I was a high school student, I would sit on the floor, do a puzzle, and listen to Stone's teachings and sermons. The anointing is in his teachings. The most fascinating thing about Stone is that he has Asperger's Syndrome, a form of autism. Most people just think he's weird! But it's his disability that enables him to focus so passionately on the Bible and on God. Stone opened my mind to the fact that there is an infinite amount of knowledge to be gleaned from the Bible. I noticed recently that the Bible is what I call "four-dimensional"; no matter what passage or verse you choose to study, there is

seemingly no end to that study! There are always more “nuggets”, as Stone calls them, to be gleaned. There is always more to learn. As a pastor, or in my case, pastor-in-training, I need to always be learning. You cannot teach if you do not learn. So, there are the things that I must learn to do, at least to start out with: be humble, have integrity, and never stop learning.