

CULTS AND FALSE RELIGIONS

The Charismatic Movement

REVIEW:

- According to the JW's, divine guidance comes only through the _____ Society. (Watchtower)
- What is the goal of Mormons? (To attain godhood on the basis of good works)
- What did we learn about Allah, the god of the Koran? (he is really Allah, the pagan moon god)
- What is the key belief of Buddhism? (Reincarnation, or the circle of life)
- What is the major problem of the Roman Catholic religion? (Human tradition is elevated above the Bible)
- Hinduism takes the bold step of proclaiming that we are _____. (God)
- Scientology is a voyage of _____. (self-discovery)
- Seventh Day Adventists treat whose writings as authoritative? (Ellen White)
- What are the roots of the New Age movement? (Eastern mysticism)

READING:

1 Corinthians 14:21-23 ²¹In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. ²²Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. ²³If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?"

INTRODUCTION:

Many Christians would be upset at a pastor or teacher including the Charismatic movement in a series on cults and false religions. Let us examine again the **six key doctrines** that we mentioned earlier:

1. **The inspiration of Scripture.** OK.
2. **Biblical authority.** They **add** the authorities of personal **experience** and special divine **revelations**.
3. **The virgin birth, sinless life and substitutionary death of Christ.** OK.
4. **The deity of Christ.** OK.
5. **Salvation by grace through faith.** Many Charismatic churches do not preach this **clearly**, and some teach that we work and "follow Christ" to **stay** saved.
6. **The nature of God.** OK.

Yes, there are many sincere Christians in the Charismatic movement. However, there is also a lot of unscriptural teaching and practice being promoted by this dangerous group.

ILLUSTRATION – The Charismatics Sam met at Hyde Park – "You are not saved if you do not speak in tongues."

I. FOUNDER: No single founder.

II. HISTORY / ORGANISATION:

- 1) Charles Parham was a member of the **Holiness movement**, a group that taught the doctrine that **sinless perfection** in this life may be achieved through the experience of a "**second blessing**." Parham ran a small Bible college in Kansas.

- 2) Parham was interested in the **baptism of the Holy Spirit**, or the “second blessing.”
- 3) New Years Day, 1901, was chosen as the day that the entire student body would **seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit** and the accompanying evidence of **speaking in tongues**. They commenced their prayer meeting early in the morning, but nothing happened for several hours. Then Agnes Ozman came forward and requested the laying on of hands so that she might receive the Holy Spirit with the Apostolic sign of speaking in tongues. She testified that she had spoken in several languages that she had not previously studied. After that, other students reported receiving the baptism, and most testified that they could not help speaking in tongues, which were believed to be recognizable human languages.
- 4) However, neither Parham, the other teachers, nor the students **examined** these experiences in the total context of **Scripture**. No one took the time to **study** and **exegete** the biblical passages about tongues to see if the experience of the students was **valid** and **Scriptural**.
- 5) The verdict was as follows: “This experience confirmed Parham’s testimony and teaching that tongues were indeed the initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.”
- 6) **And thus was Pentecostalism was born!**
- 7) **Sixty years later the Charismatic movement was launched** with the experiences of David Bennett, rector at St. Marks’ Episcopal Church in Van Nuys, California.
- 8) **Both the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements are based on experience, emotion, phenomena and feelings.** Frederick Dale Bruner wrote, “Pentecostalism wishes to be understood as experiential Christianity, with its experience culminating in the baptism in the Holy Spirit. . .It is important to notice that it is **not the doctrine**, it is the **experience** of the Holy Spirit which Pentecostals repeatedly assert that they wish to stress.”

III. PURPOSE:

- 1) To preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- 2) To be baptised in the Holy Spirit and speak in “tongues”.
- 3) To promote health, wealth & prosperity. “We believe that God wants to heal and transform us so that we can live healthy and prosperous lives in order to help others more effectively.” (Hillsong web site)

Eg. **Hillsong’s mission statement:** “To reach and influence the world by building a large Bible-based church, changing mindsets and empowering people to lead and impact in every sphere of life.” ???

Compare this with our stated purposes, as mentioned in our constitution, especially:

- 1) The edification and instruction of church members.
- 2) To fulfil the great commission of Christ in preaching the gospel to every creature at home and abroad.
- 3) To earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

IV. SOURCE OF AUTHORITY:

- 1) The Bible.
- 2) Personal experience.
- 3) Special divine revelations – visions, words of knowledge, etc.

V. CLAIM: To be a rediscovery of true, apostolic Christianity.

VI. KEY LITERATURE: The Bible.

VII. ATTITUDE TOWARDS FUNDAMENTAL CHRISTIANITY: Those who do not speak in tongues are looked down upon as missing a “second blessing”.

VIII. DOCTRINAL SUMMARY:

1) **THE CHURCH:**

- i) **A worship centre.** Charismatics have a weak emphasis on Bible **teaching**, and a strong emphasis on **praise** and **worship**. Thus they teach that the church is a worship centre. This is **unscriptural** because a church is a body of believers who purpose is to **grow** in the Lord & become strong in **doctrine** so that they can do the **work** of the ministry (The Great Commission). **Ephesians 4:11-16.**

ii) Many Charismatics promote the false doctrine of the **Universal**, or **invisible**, church; that makes it easy for them to encourage people to send their tithes and offerings to televangelists, rather than to the local church. **1 Corinthians 12:14-27**.

2) SALVATION:

i) “We believe that in order to receive forgiveness and the 'new birth' we must repent of our sins, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and **submit to His will for our lives**.” (Hillsong web site) Compare this with **Acts 16:31**, “...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”

ii) After talking to many Charismatics, I have found that most have a **weak** understanding of the Gospel. Their churches often teach **Lordship salvation**, and their presentation is often wishy-washy.

iii) **ILLUSTRATION** – The Hillsong female youth worker / pastor trainee who couldn't answer the question: “If God asked you ‘why should I let you into Heaven, what would you say?’” (Sam)

iv) **ILLUSTRATION** – Derek from CLC (Pastor)

v) Many Charismatics are **confused** concerning **faith** and **works**. A good number believe that continuing in good works is necessary for assurance of salvation. **Ephesians 2:8-10**.

3) THE HOLY SPIRIT:

i) Baptism of Holy Spirit:

- (a) Charismatics teach that this experience is a “**second blessing**” for the Christian, received after salvation. It results in greater joy and power, so they say, and is evidenced by **speaking in tongues**.
- (b) You do **not** see the phrase, “**Baptism of the Holy Ghost**” anywhere in Scripture. **Nowhere** in Scripture are we commanded to be baptised in or with the Holy Spirit.
- (c) The phrase, “**baptised with the Holy Ghost**” refers to the N.T. doctrine of being **indwelt** and **sealed** with the Holy Spirit. This phrase is found only in reference to the events of the Book of Acts. It was predicted by John the Baptist, and was primarily fulfilled in Acts 2, and also in Acts 10. **Matthew 3:11; Acts 1:5, 8**.
- (d) The phrase “**baptised by the Holy Ghost**” has a different meaning altogether. Every Christian has been placed in the church by the Holy Spirit. We have been baptised into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit - He has plunged us into the church, and made us an integral part of a local congregation. He has also equipped us with unique gifts for the purpose of edifying the church. **1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 18, 27**.
- (e) Some Christians use the term “baptism of the Holy Spirit” as being synonymous with being filled with the Holy Spirit. However, these are two entirely different terms:
 - In Ephesians 5:18, “be **filled**” is the “*plerousthe*” in the Greek language. The tense indicates a **continuous** command to keep being filled with the Holy Spirit.
 - However, the **baptism** of the Holy Spirit, in 1 Corinthians 12:13, is in the **aorist** tense, meaning an action which takes place **once and for all**.

ii) Spiritual gifts:

- (a) Charismatics often have a more **selfish** emphasis on spiritual gifts. However, the Bible clearly teaches that the permanent, present-day spiritual gifts are given **solely** for the **edification** of the **church**. **1 Corinthians 14:12**.
- (b) Charismatics have a strong emphasis on the **apostolic** gifts of the Spirit, those that are more **spectacular** and visible. These include the gifts of tongues, healing & prophecy.

iii) Speaking in tongues:

- (a) “...in order to live the holy and fruitful lives that God intends for us, we need to be baptised in water and be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit enables us to use spiritual gifts, including **speaking in tongues**.” (Hillsong web site)
- (b) A key element of the Charismatic movement is the belief that **all** Christians should seek the gift of speaking in tongues, and that this gift is the sign of being filled with the Holy Spirit (and, to some, the evidence of **salvation**).

- (c) Most Charismatics have never studied what the **Bible** says about speaking in tongues. They do not understand the **purpose** of the gift, the **characteristics** of the gift, or the **rules** concerning the **use** of the gift. They rely upon **personal experience**.
- (d) **ILLUSTRATION:** “How to Receive the Baptism with the Holy Spirit” by Bill Subritzky. In order for us to speak in tongues, we must:
 - Renounce ancestral involvement in witchcraft to open the door for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
 - Ask for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
 - Be like a little child and speak out words which we make up.
 - Let go of the control of our tongue and making baby-like sounds.
 - Practise the gift each day until we become fluent with our new language.
- (e) The **Bible** that teaches that the gift of tongues is the miraculous use of a **human** language that has not been previously known or studied. **Acts 2:1-11**.
- (f) **The 4 main purposes of the gift of tongues were:**
 - Warning unbelieving Jews to repent. **Isaiah 28:11, 12; 1 Corinthians 14:20-22**.
 - Proving that God was sending the Gospel to the Gentiles. **Acts 10:44-48**.
 - Confirming the New Testament message. **Acts 2:22, 43; 14:3**.
 - Confirming the Apostles as God’s messengers. **Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3, 4**.

4) **THE BIBLE:**

- i) Most Charismatic churches use **perverted modern Bible versions**, especially the NIV.
- ii) **Many Charismatic groups accept divine revelation outside of the Bible.**
 - (a) Members and teachers may use the phrase “thus saith the Lord” for the supposed revelation that God gave them.
 - (b) Visions are accepted as being from God without testing them by Scripture.
 - (c) People will claim to have a “word of knowledge” directly from God Himself.
- iii) **The Bible is sadly NOT accepted by many Charismatics as being all-sufficient for the Christian to become all that God wants him to become. 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; Psalm 19:7-11.**

5) **ETERNAL SECURITY:**

- i) I have **never** met a Charismatic who firmly believed in the doctrine of eternal security.
- ii) This is largely due to a poor understanding of **salvation, & confusion** concerning faith and works.
- iii) **Jude 1:1** “Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and **preserved** in Jesus Christ, and called:”
- iv) **John 5:24** “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, **hath** everlasting life, and shall **not** come into condemnation; but **is** passed from death unto life.”
- v) Because of this, many Charismatics have a **weak assurance** of salvation, especially as they are afraid that they may “fall away” from Christ.
- vi) **Philippians 1:6** “Being **confident** of this very thing, that he which hath **begun** a good work in you **will perform it** until the day of Jesus Christ:”

IX. ERRORS OF THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT:

- 1) A weak understanding and poor presentation of the plan of salvation.
- 2) A belief in loss of salvation.
- 3) Worldliness in dress and lifestyle.
- 4) Use of Contemporary Christian music. (**CCM = Carnal** Christian music!)

- 5) Overemphasis on Praise & Worship / lack of emphasis on teaching and preaching.
- 6) Women pastors, leaders and teachers. Eg. Brian and Bobbie Houston (Hillsong).
 - i) **1 Timothy 2:12**
 - ii) **1 Corinthians 14:34, 35**
- 7) Slaying in the Spirit – unscriptural, and based in ancient pagan rituals.
- 8) Weak doctrine and Bible knowledge among members and leaders.
- 9) Unscriptural emphasis on speaking in “tongues”.
- 10) Misunderstanding and misuse of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.
- 11) Absolute confusion concerning spiritual gifts.
- 12) A weak view of God. Eg. Kenneth Copeland:
 - i) **“I was shocked when I found out who the biggest failure in the Bible actually is....The biggest one is God...Now, the reason you don't think of God as a failure is He never said He's a failure.”** (“Praise-a-Thon” program on TBN [April 1988].)
 - ii) **“God had no avenue of lasting faith or moving in the earth...He had to be invited in, in other words, or He couldn't come. God is on the outside looking in. In order to have any say so in the earth, He's gonna have to be in agreement with a man here.”** (“God's Covenants With Man II” [Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1985], audiotape #01-4404, side 1.)
 - iii) **“Adam is as much like God as you could get, just the same as Jesus. . . . Adam, in the Garden of Eden, was God manifested in the flesh.”** (“Following the Faith of Abraham I,” side 1.)

X. **TALKING WITH MEMBERS:** There are two types of people involved in this movement:

- 1) **Those who are saved but confused.** We should seek to help these sincere people to leave the charismatic movement and join a good fundamental Baptist church.
- 2) **Those who are depending upon following Christ and exhibiting spiritual gifts for their salvation and security:**
 - i) Ascertain whether they are open, or whether they just want to argue. **Titus 3:9-11; Prov. 23:9.**
 - ii) Focus on proving that they are sinners. **Rom 3:10, 19-24; Isaiah 64:6; Eccl 7:20.**
 - iii) Refute salvation by works. **Eph 2:8-10; Titus 3:5; Romans 4:5.**
 - iv) Explain eternal security. **John 10:27-30; John 5:24.**

CONCLUSION:

You do not test *doctrine* by *experience*; you test *experience* by *doctrine*.

1 Timothy 4:16 “**Take heed** unto thyself, and unto the **doctrine**; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”

1 Timothy 6:3-5 “If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the **doctrine** which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and **destitute of the truth, supposing that GAIN is GODLINESS: from such withdraw thyself.**”

REVIEW / QUESTIONS: