

**"THE CHARISMATICS AND THE WORD  
FAITH MOVEMENT"  
# 3**

**III. SOME OF THE ANTI-SCRIPTURAL THINGS OF THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT**

A. The Matter of Continuous Revelation

Are Christians today still receiving, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, direct revelations from God? Charismatic leaders would say yes and affirm that God speaks to them in a variety of ways. The revelations they receive come through either an audible voice, a vision, a dream, an internal impression or by inspiring them to write a song, compose a poem or to utter some words of prophecy.

It is not uncommon today to hear charismatic preachers say, "God told me", or "God spoke to me and said..." Some of these revelations are no doubt ludicrous while others border on blasphemy itself. Many remember back in 1987 when Oral Roberts told a nation-wide audience that God had spoken to him and threatened to kill him if he couldn't raise eight million dollars by a certain time to satisfy his creditors. Roberts' audience didn't find out if this revelation were true because he received a last-minute reprieve when a Florida dog-track owner sent him a large check.

Kenneth Hagin claimed that God spoke to him when he was single about ending a relationship with a woman because she was immoral. He recounted that God miraculously transported him out of a church one Sunday while he was preaching:

Suddenly I was gone! Right in the middle of my sermon, I found myself standing along a street in a little town fifteen miles away - and I knew it was Saturday night. I was leaning against a building, and I saw this young lady come walking down the street. About the time she got to where I was standing, a car came down the street. The driver pulled up to the curb, sounded the horn, and she got into his car. He backed out, turned the other direction, and started out of town - and suddenly I was sitting in the back seat. They went out in the country and committed adultery. And I watched them. I was still in the cloud. Suddenly I heard the sound of my voice, and the cloud lifted. I was standing behind my pulpit. I didn't know what to say, so I just said, "everyone bow your head," and we prayed. I looked at my watch, and... I'd been gone about fifteen minutes in the cloud. While I was shaking hands with people as they went out the door, this young lady came by. I said, "we missed you last night." She said, "yes, I was over in \_\_\_\_\_" (and she named the little town). I said, "yes, I know" (Hagin, 14,15).

It should be noted that charismatics have abandoned the authority of the Scriptures as the only Word of God and this had led to all kinds of assertions which are no more than

the subjective words of men substituted for the objective truth of God's Word.

John MacArthur argues that God's Word is the only basis for divine authority. He has stated:

Once a congregation sees Scripture as less than the final, complete, infallible authority for faith and practice, it has opened the doors to theological chaos. Anyone can claim to be speaking God's revelation- and almost anything can be passed off as divinely revealed truth. Make no mistake, some of the best-known charismatic leaders have abused their people's trust by claiming they are receiving new truth from God, when they really teach lies and fabrications (66).

Edward Gross has also affirmed that God's revelation is complete in itself and that God is not now giving new revelations. He said:

The orthodox teaching of Christianity has always affirmed that God's special, saving revelation to mankind is restricted to the teachings of the Scriptures... This is the issue. If the Bible is complete, then it represents a closed system of truth. If it entails a fixed and absolute standard of truth, then the teachings of Scripture may be ascertained and dogmatically asserted. If God is still quoting new revelation, then the truth of God is still being progressively revealed, and if this were the case, our duty would be to faithfully listen to today's prophets as they unravel God's truth in new and clearer representations than we find in Scripture. Few Christians really consider the subtleties of today's "prophets" as an improvement upon the sanctifying truths given in the Word. I certainly do not (150-152).

Present-day charismatic preachers have not only abandoned the authority of God's Word their supposed new revelations often contradict what the Scriptures clearly assert. Note an example of this is in a new revelation given to Kenneth Copeland. Jesus supposedly gave him a message during a three-day victory campaign held in Dallas, Texas. Jesus reportedly said:

It's time for these things to happen, saith the Lord. It's time for spiritual activity to increase. Oh, yes, demonic activity will increase. along at the same time. But don't let that disturb you.

Don't be disturbed when people accuse you of thinking you're God. Don't be disturbed when people accuse you of a fanatical way of life. Don't be disturbed when people put you down and speak harshly and roughly of you. They spoke that way of me, should they not speak that way of you?

The more you get to be like me, 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 (9).

The student of Scripture knows that Copeland's revelation is false. The real Jesus did claim to be God. He repeatedly made this assertion (Jn. 8:38; Mk. 14:61-64; Jn. 5:16-18; 30-33) and the apostle John repeatedly substantiated this truth in his gospel record (Jn. 1:1, 14).

Is God still speaking today and giving new revelations? The answer is no. The Christian faith rests on the historical, objective revelation of God's Word. It alone is sufficient to equip the believer for every good work (II Tim. 3:16,17). When the apostle John was led to write the final book of the Bible the canon of Scripture was closed. Rene Pache has cited the prohibition which Jesus gave concerning His word and made the following observation:

Let each remind himself of the prohibition of taking anything away from Scripture or adding anything to it (Deut. 4:2; Lev. 22:18-19). Almost every heresy and sect has originated in a supposed revelation or new experience on the part of its founder, something outside the strictly biblical frame work (319).

According to the doctrine of divine inspiration God supernaturally moved upon the writers of Scripture to record His words with perfect accuracy in the original manuscripts. No one is inspired of the Holy Spirit in this way in our day.

John MacArthur has stated the importance of sticking to the Word of God in contrast to the supposed, "God told me" utterances of men. He said:

It has always been important to be able to separate God's Word from that which is false. God worked through a historical process to establish the authenticity of the canon so that the whole church might have a clear standard. If we now throw out that historical standard and redefine inspiration and revelation, we undermine our own ability to receive God's truth. If we subvert the uniqueness of the Bible, we will have no way of distinguishing God's voice from man's. Eventually, anyone could say anything and claim it is God's Word, and no one would have the right to deny it, we are perilously close to that situation even now (76).

## B. The Revival of the Sign Gifts

Following their roots of Pentecostalism, the charismatics propagate that the sign gifts are operative today, and are not only evidences of the Spirit's workings, but they are being used to produce faith and bring people to salvation.

### 1. Speaking in tongues

The charismatics believe that the baptism of the Holy Spirit comes subsequent to salvation and sanctification and it is evidenced by speaking in tongues.

It must be seen however, according to the Scriptures, the baptism of the Holy Spirit takes place at the moment of salvation and not subsequent to it (Rom. 8:9; Eph. 1:13). The baptism of the Holy Spirit places the believer into the body of Christ and this included all those carnal and unsanctified Christians in the Church of Corinth to whom Paul wrote (I Cor. 1:2; 12:13; Gal. 3:26,27).

As for the speaking in tongues as an evidence of Holy Spirit baptism it must be seen that tongues served a particular purpose in the beginning of the church program but they are not for the present day.

Notice Paul said all the Corinthians had been baptized by the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12:13), but all didn't speak in tongues (I Cor. 12:30). The Bible says that tongues were given as a sign to the unbelieving Jews (I Cor. 14:21,22). Tongues also confirmed the authenticity of the apostles' message and involved known languages (Acts 2:6-11; Mk 16:17,18; Heb. 2:3,4). God speaking to Israel in other tongues as a sign to them had been prophesied (Isa. 28:11,12; Dt. 28:49) and when this purpose was fulfilled the gift of tongues ceased (I Cor. 13:8). For a further refutation of the tongues phenomenon the reader is referred to Evidences Which Defy the Present-Day Practice of Tongues-Speaking by the writer.

### 2. Healing

Charismatics teach that all sickness is either the results of some specific sin on the believer's part or it is the result of the devil's assault on the believer. They moreover believe that it is God's will for every believer to be well and that God has made provision for this in Christ's atonement on the cross.

To conclude that every sickness is the result of sin or Satan's attacks is unscriptural. Notice the Lord's answer concerning the blind man (Jn. 9:2,3). To propagate that all disease can be healed by claiming it by faith based upon Christ's atonement is heresy. Notice Paul's thorn in the flesh was not a result of sin and its removal was not predicated upon faith on his part (II Cor. 12:7-9).

The Scriptures cited by charismatics to support their unbiblical teaching of healing in the atonement of Christ (Psa. 103:3; I Pet. 2:24; Isa. 53:4,5) are taken out of context. The Scriptures make it clear as to the time that Christ bore the infirmities and sickness of men - it was fulfilled during His earthly ministry (Matt. 8:16,17) and not on the cross.

The Scriptures teach that some sickness comes from Satan (Lk 13:11-13) and God may allow Satan to afflict someone for some particular reason (Job 1).

Some sickness comes from God (Ex. 4:1) and while we may not understand the reason, God will use it to glorify Himself through it.

The Scriptures also teach us that sickness comes as chastening for sin (Dt. 28:20-22; I Kings 5; Psa. 119:67).

It should be understood that disease and death are universal problems. God still heals today but the gift of healing has ceased. Despite all the claims of the charismatics there is no evidence that the sign of healing is operative today. John MacArthur has asked some alarming questions concerning the gift of healing and confirmed what the Scriptures teach:

Why not assemble all those who say they have gifts of healing and have them go out to minister where the worst needs are? They could start in the hospitals and sanitariums in their own area, and then move beyond to the four corners of the earth. Opportunities to heal the sick are unlimited. And if, as charismatics often claim, such miracles are signs and wonders designed to convince unbelievers, would that kind of ministry not accomplish the purpose best? But strangely, the healers rarely if ever come out of their tents, their tabernacles, or their television studios. They always seem to exercise their gift only in a controlled environment, staged their way, run according to their schedule. Why do we seldom hear of the gift of healing being used in hospital hallways? Why aren't more healers using their gift on the streets in India and Bangladesh? Why aren't they in leper colonies and also aids hospices where masses of people are racked by disease? It is not happening - why? Because those who claim the gift of healing do not really have it. The gift of healing was a temporary sign gift for the authenticating of the Scriptures as the Word of God. Once that authenticity was established, the gift of healing ceased (MacArthur, 247,248).

### 3. Miracles

Charismatics believe and teach that God is giving miraculous signs and wonders in the present day and these are being used to produce faith among unbelievers.

The Scriptures reveal however, that miracles do not produce faith in an unbelieving heart. Numerous examples show that while multitudes witnessed the miracles of Jesus, they did not believe (Matt. 11:20-24). While many witnessed the raising of Lazarus they did not believe on the Lord Jesus (Jn. 11:47-53; 12:37).

It should be noted that the object of genuine saving faith is the Lord Jesus Christ, and not some miracle. Faith does not come by the observance of some miracle but by hearing the gospel message (Rom. 10:17).

The Bible declares that the gospel, not signs and wonders is the power of God for salvation (Rom. 1:16). People who reject God's Word won't believe if they see miracles either (Lk. 16:31).

### C. The Exercise of the Faith Principle

Associated with the Charismatic Movement is the Word Faith Movement. Leaders of this group include Kenneth and Gloria Copeland, Charles Capps, Kenneth Hagin, Fred Price, and Robert Tilton.

According to these proponents every believer is promised financial prosperity and perfect health and anything less is simply not God's will. The Word Faith advocates believe that God is bound by spiritual laws that govern everything. Accordingly, if a believer says the right words and believes without wavering then God is forced to respond to the believer's exercise of the faith principle.

In the Word Faith system of operation God is not sovereign, or Lord over all, He is unable to work until the believer releases Him to do so. Moreover, the Holy Spirit is a power to be put to use for whatever the believer wills.

These teachings put the believer above God and relegate Him to the role of a genie or servant who is at the disposal of the believer to carry out his human will.

"Word Faith teaching sees faith as an immutable, impersonal law that, like gravity or the law of thermodynamics, rules the universe: a principle that works regardless of who is exercising it - or for what" (MacArthur, 342).

Accordingly, anyone, Christian or non-christian can apply this law and gain results. Following this false premise Word Faith teachers see little need to pray and ask God for things on the basis of what He wills. Charles Capps has stated:

In August of 1973, the Word of the Lord came unto me saying, "If men would believe me, long prayers are not necessary. Just speaking the Word will bring you what you desire. My creative power is given to

man in word form. I have ceased for a time from my work and have given man the book of MY CREATIVE POWER. That power is STILL IN MY WORD. For it to be effective, man must speak it in faith... It is equally as powerful today as when I said, "let there be light." But for my Word to be effective, men must speak it, and that creative power will come forth performing that which is spoken in faith (136,137).

Word Faith teachers often refer to John 14:14: "if you ask me anything in my name, I will do it." But they neglect Scriptures like I John 5:14 and James 4:13-16.

The teachings of the Word Faith Movement regarding the exercise of the faith principle are completely contrary to the clear teachings of Scripture and elevate man to the position of deity and dethrone God to a position of subservience to man. John MacArthur has pointed out this heretical contradiction:

In the Word Faith Religion, the believer uses God, whereas the truth of biblical Christianity is just the opposite : God uses the believer (325).

MacArthur further stated:

Word Faith theology denies God's sovereignty, removes the need to pray to God for any relief from burdens or needs, and gives the Christian himself both dominion and creative power (331).