

A SCRIPTURAL ANALYSIS OF THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

When two beliefs contradict, they cannot both be true. In the end no one wants to discover he has believed a lie his entire life. Neither does God want men to believe a lie, so He has lovingly imparted His Words to prevent this. Anyone who loves God will eagerly apply Scripture to what he believes to ensure that it truly honors Him. This tract should enable someone to apply Scripture to the charismatic movement.

Who is a charismatic? A charismatic participates in “gifts” of “tongues,” “healing,” or “miracles.” The term *charismatic* comes from the Greek word *charisma*, which essentially means *gift*. As this term relates to the charismatic movement, these (tongues, healing, miracles) are gifts of the Holy Spirit that the New Testament (NT) calls “signs and wonders” (John 4:48). The “sign,” technically and originally, points to a supernatural happening that validates Scripture. Most of the gifts of the Spirit (such as teaching, exhortation, helps, etc.) have the purpose of edifying (building up) the church. In the NT the gifts of validation (signs) and edification were genuine gifts from the Holy Spirit that were received at the moment of one’s faith in Christ for salvation (John 14:16,17; Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12:7-11). The modern charismatic movement claims that the gifts of validation, the sign gifts, continue today. In addition, many charismatics also maintain that God still provides believers special revelation on the level of the Bible. This pamphlet will evaluate with Scripture these foundational charismatic beliefs.

Foundational Principles for a Right Decision

One will not likely make the right decision about the charismatic movement without following certain foundational Scriptural principles. First, *experiences often deceive*. We all tend toward being deceived, since, as Jeremiah 17:9 says, “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” You cannot depend on how you feel because “there is a way which seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Prov 14:12). Satan often deceives by means of experiences. He presents himself as “an angel of light” and “it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness” (2 Cor 11:14, 15). The people said of Simon the sorcerer, “This man is the great power of God ... and to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries” (Acts 8: 10, 11). The Lord Jesus warned, “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (Mt 24:24).

Second, *the Bible is sufficient and reliable for testing truthfulness, but experiences are characteristically unreliable*. The Bible is truth (Jn 17: 17) and is sufficient for every good work (2 Tim 3: 16,17). God is pleased only by faith (Heb 11:6) and faith comes from God’s Word (Rom 10:17; Jn 20:30, 31). Experiences (“sight”) and faith are mutually exclusive (2 Cor 5:7). Seeking experiences is wicked and unfaithful. The Lord Jesus said that those seeking signs—tongues, healings, miracles—commit spiritual adultery, that is, they are unfaithful to God: “An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it” (Mt 12:39). Experiences should be rejected as non-authoritative competition with the evidence of God’s Word. The Bible is complete. No more Bible is being written—Jude 3 says that “the faith . . . was once (and for all) delivered (completed action) unto the saints” and Revelation 22:18-19 promises a curse upon anyone who adds or takes away from that completed revelation. Even good, valid experiences are less sure than the Bible. Peter writes that his experience on the Mount of Transfiguration is less sure than the Word of God (2 Pet 1:16-21). The most

incredible experiences still fall far short of the Bible. According to the Lord Jesus, Abraham said to the rich man in hell, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Lk 16:31). We will be judged based on God's Words, not on experiences: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my [Christ's] words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I [Christ] have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (In 12:48). God rejects unscriptural worship because worship of God must be in truth (John 4:23, 24). Those who would please God will and must test every belief, practice, and experience using the Bible.

A Checklist to Determine Whether You Should Join or Remain in the Charismatic Movement

I. TONGUES

1.) **Are they known languages?** Yes: ____ No: ____

The word "tongues" (*glossa*-Acts 2:11) means "languages." The tongues or languages spoken on the Day of Pentecost were Parthian, Mede, Cappadocian, etc. (Acts 2:9-11). Each person in that multinational gathering heard the Word of God in his own tongue or language. Likewise, the word "tongue" in 1 Corinthians refers to specific known languages (cf. 1 Cor 14:21 + Isa 28:11-12—Babylonian). Mere gibberish (unintelligible nonlanguage) violates Scripture. Some might call it a "heavenly language" or "tongues of angels," but every time God speaks personally or by means of angels, He speaks in an already known language.

2.) **Are they translated into a known language?** Yes: ____ No: ____

1 Corinthians 14:27, 28: "If any man speak in an unknown tongue . . . let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church[.]" "Interpreting" is "translating," that is, giving a word-for-word, phrase-for-phrase translation in the known tongue identical in meaning to the word in the unknown tongue. Unless someone translates the unknown language, speaking in one is unscriptural.

3.) **Are there Jews are present to witness the foreign languages (tongues) being spoken?** Yes: ____ No: ____

1 Corinthians 1:22: "For the Jews require a sign." God designed the signs for the Jews. Every time people spoke in tongues in the book of Acts, Jews were present. How many Jews are present when tongues are employed?

4.) **Are unbelievers understanding the tongues, that is, are the tongues a miracle to validate the Word of God for unbelievers?** Yes: ____ No: ____

1 Corinthians 14:22: "Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not." When someone can speak in a real language that he has never learned (such as someone speaking Arabic who only knows English), that is a miracle. Unintelligible gibberish is not a miracle, and, therefore, does not validate anything. This also invalidates the practice of private praying to God in "tongues" (cf. 1 Cor 14:15).

5.) **Are the tongues spoken one person at a time, and, at the most, by three people?** Yes: ____ No: ____

1 Corinthians 14:27: "If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course."

6.) Is someone in attendance who understands the foreign language being spoken?

Yes: ____ No: ____

1 Corinthians 14:19: “I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.” Unless someone needs to hear in that language, there is no need for that tongue.

The modern “tongues” movement contradicts Scripture because tongues have ceased (1 Cor 13:8b). The purpose of sign gifts was to authenticate God’s Word. Since confirmation of the New Testament was completed with the completion of the canon of Scripture, the miraculous gift of tongues has ceased. Tongues did not reappear (and then only in a fraudulent form) until the charismatic movement began at the beginning of the 20th Century. Tongues could not have disappeared if they were a permanent gift to the church (a total apostasy is impossible-Mt 16:18; 28:20), so they only could have stopped because God had accomplished His purpose for them.

II. HEALINGS

If someone has the Biblical gift of healing from God, then his gift will mirror what the Lord Jesus and the apostles did in the Gospels and Acts.

1.) Is everyone healed regardless of faith? Yes: ____ No: ____

Nowhere does the NT say that healing requires faith by the recipient. The few times that Jesus says, “Thy faith hath made thee whole” (Mt 9:22; Mk 5:34; 10:52; Lk 8:48, 50; 17:19), the Lord is specifically referring to the faith that saved them from their sin (“whole” comes from the same Greek word translated “saved,” and means “salvation from sin”; the same Greek is translated “thy faith hath saved thee,” Lu 7:50; 18:42). In no instance did the Lord Jesus Christ require faith as a basis for healing. He healed without discrimination as to person or affliction. The vast majority in Galilee did not believe in Christ, but He healed all that came to Him (Mt 4:23-25).

2.) Are people healed everywhere (hospitals, streets, homes, etc.)?

Yes: ____ No: ____

The Lord healed throughout “Syria” (Mt 4:24), at the bottom of a mountain (Mt 8:8), in a desert place outside of the cities (Mt 14:14), on a mountain by the Sea of Galilee (Mt 15:30), and in the coasts of Judaea beyond Jordan (Mt 19:1). Luke 9:6 explicitly says that He healed “everywhere.” There were no “healing meetings” in the Bible.

3.) Are people healed completely? Yes: ____ No: ____

The Lord Jesus had no relapses or failed healings.

4.) Are people immediately healed? Yes: ____ No: ____

No one had to wait for Jesus’ healing to take effect. He took care of their sickness or injury immediately. He immediately cleansed lepers (Mt 8:3; Lk 17:14). He immediately restored the hand of a withered man (Mt 12:10-13).

5.) Is everything healed, including organic diseases (replacing missing limbs)?

Yes: ____ No: ____

The Lord Jesus Christ reattached the ear of Malchus after it had been completely cut off by Peter (Lk. 22:51,52). Matthew 9:35 says that He healed “every sickness and every disease” in Galilee (cf. Mt 4:23). In John 9 He healed a man born blind (also Mt 9:27-30; Mk 8:22-25). Matthew 15:30-31 reads: “And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus’ feet; and he healed them: insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel.” Someone who truly has the gift of healing will be able to reattach the body parts of people who have lost them.

6.) **Are people raised from the dead?** Yes: ____ No: ____

The Lord Jesus Christ raised people from the dead (Mt 9:18, 24; Lk 7:12-15). He had the power to raise those who had been dead for days and were already decomposing (Jn 11). Christ’s apostles also raised people from the dead (Mt 10:8; Acts 9:40; 20:10-12).

God still heals people, but the gift of healing (like the gift of tongues) was for the confirmation of God’s Word (Mk 16:20; Acts 14:3; Rom 15:19; Heb 2:4). Since those who claim to have the gift of healing today do not duplicate the miracles of Jesus Christ and the apostles, their claims are fraudulent. The Lord Jesus Christ was proven to be Messiah by miracles (Mt 11:46; Lk 7:20-22; Jn 5:36; Acts 2:22). Believers accept by faith without signs or wonders that Jesus is the Messiah and that the Bible is already confirmed as God’s Word.

III. OTHER DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES

1.) **Do women preach to or teach men?** Yes: ____ No: ____

1 Corinthians 14:29-35 and 1 Timothy 2:9-15 both plainly command women not to teach or preach to men, which would include not speaking in tongues in a mixed gender gathering.

2.) **Are worldly (rock, pop, jazz, etc.) music or unbiblical words used in the services?**
Yes: ____ No: ____

God will not accept worldly (Rom 12:2; 1 Jn 2:15), sensual (Jam 3:15), or fleshly (1 Pet 2:12; Rom 13:14; Tit 2:12) music as worship. He calls for rational (Rom 12:1-2) worship in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Col 3:16), not “vain repetitions, as the heathen” (Mt 6:7). God does not want the emotions or the will alone, but also the key element of a “sound mind” (2 Tim 1:7; Titus 2:6; Mt 22:37). All “worship” that substitutes emotionalism for the conscious actings of the mind is demonic.

3.) **Is it taught that a Christian can lose his salvation?** Yes: ____ No: ____

Once God saves someone, no man can pluck him out of God’s hand (Jn 10:27-29; Rom 8:28-39) because he is “kept by the power of God” (1 Pet 1:5). If you do the keeping, then you are doing the saving. Any religion that that you can lose your salvation is teaching you salvation by works. Keeping saved by works like being saved by works; both are impossible (Eph 2:8, 9; Rom 4:1-8). Both corrupt the gospel—“a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Rom 3:28).

If, on the first two of sections above, you answered “no” to any of the questions, you

or your church is violating Scripture. On the third section, if you answered “yes” to any of them, you or your church is transgressing God’s Word. Since the tongues, healing, and miracles of the charismatic movement are not from God, they could only be Satanic or humanly faked. In the end, Satan will primarily use miracles as his means of deceiving people (Rev 19:20). People filled with the Holy Spirit will not speak in tongues, or claim the gifts of healing, or miracle-working. They will boldly preach the gospel (Acts 4:31), manifest the fruit of the Spirit in a holy life (Gal 5:22, 23), selflessly relate with others (Eph 5:18-6:9), and manifest their spiritual giftedness (1 Cor 12:7-11). Since the Word of God is the sword of the Holy Spirit (Eph 6:17), a Spirit-filled church will carefully avoid violating Scripture.

A charismatic church undermines Scripture with experience, adds to God’s Word, distorts the Biblical purpose of sign gifts, rejects the teaching of the Bible on tongues and healings, adds to grace, misrepresents true spirituality, and counterfeits NT Christianity. As with any false religion, the Bible teaches complete separation from false belief, teaching, and practice. If you believe in the Lord, you must renounce and separate from the charismatic movement. 2 Corinthians 6:17, 18 commands: “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” Not only will you separate from false religion, but you will also join a truly Spirit-filled church of the living and true God.

For more information, or for a free home Bible study either in person or by mail that explains more about the Bible, salvation, and other Biblical truths, visit, call, or write to: