
Charismatic Confusion

INTRODUCTION: If there is one word that describes the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement it is confusion, spelled with a capital **K**. We are told in SCRIPTURE “GOD IS NOT THE AUTHOR OF CONFUSION,” and yet the very heart of this movement, which is speaking in tongues, is nothing but confusion, for it is all a matter of gibberish. They say that this is of the Holy Spirit and, of course, they love to magnify the Spirit and His ministry rather than Jesus. But listen to what the Word of God has to say in John 16:13-14: “HOWBEIT WHEN HE, THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH, IS COME, HE WILL GUIDE YOU INTO ALL TRUTH: FOR HE SHALL NOT SPEAK OF HIMSELF; BUT WHATSOEVER HE SHALL HEAR, THAT SHALL HE SPEAK: AND HE WILL SHEW YOU THINGS TO COME. HE SHALL GLORIFY ME: FOR HE SHALL RECEIVE OF MINE, AND SHALL SHEW IT UNTO YOU.” The Spirit of God is not in the world to speak of Himself, nor to glorify Himself, but the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. CONFUSED ABOUT TONGUES. Tongues are at the heart of this whole movement, but the tongues which are being used today have nothing to do with the tongues in the Bible. In the Bible, the word tongues means “a language.” It was not some so-called heavenly gibberish but real languages, and it was a gift; that is, God gave certain individuals the ability to speak a language they had never learned. You have this on the day of Pentecost and in Acts 2:4 we read, “AND THEY WERE ALL FILLED WITH THE HOLY GHOST, AND BEGAN TO SPEAK WITH OTHER TONGUES, AS THE SPIRIT GAVE THEM UTTERANCE.” The word for tongue there, as throughout, is language. Now if you read verses 8-11, you will have listed for you the languages of the people who were in the audience to whom the apostles spoke. In fact, in verse 8 it says, “AND HOW HEAR WE EVERY MAN IN OUR OWN TONGUE, WHEREIN WE WERE BORN?” On the day of Pentecost, all of the 120 apparently spoke in tongues. It is very obvious by any reading of the Book of Acts that not all believers thereafter spoke with tongues. It was a gift given to some, just as there were other gifts given to others. Something else that is quite clear and that is tongues were never taught to anyone. It was a gift of God, a miracle. And yet, today, the Charismatics have teachers who instruct others on how to roll their tongues and get their minds out of joint so they can speak this so-called “heavenly language” which certainly did not come from heaven. If you have heard any tongue speaking, you would certainly know that it is confusion; and having heard it on a couple of occasions, it is scary, since certainly is not of the Spirit of God.

In I Corinthians 13:8 it SAYS “WHETHER THERE BE TONGUES, THEY SHALL CEASE ...” Charismatics have a long explanation concerning this verse because they must explain it away. However, it is very clear to anyone who can rightly divide the Word of Truth that it is talking about the gift of tongues. This context starts in chapter 12 and goes on through chapter 14. The misuse of tongues was a great

problem at Corinth. They thought it was, as do the Charismatics today, the greatest of gifts. However, God says that tongues will cease, just as He says in that same verse that prophecies shall fail. Now no prophecy of God can fail in its fulfillment, but God is saying that there will be a time when prophecies are no longer needed and that was when the Word of God was completed. It is the same with tongues. Tongues were a sign to the Jew, to them that believe not, is what the Scripture says. If God was still administering the gift of tongues, how is it that Pentecostal missionaries, when they go to a foreign land, still have to study the language, as does any other missionary?

II. CONFUSED ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT. Now the first instance of tongues occurred when God sent the Holy Spirit to the believers on the day of Pentecost. These people automatically say, therefore, that if you get the baptism of the Holy Spirit, you will speak in tongues; that, in fact, it is a sign that you have been filled with the Holy Spirit. Generally, they all teach that salvation is one experience, when you believe and get saved, and then you must seek the baptism, and an evidence that you have it will be your ability to speak in tongues. There is nothing in the Word of God concerning this. The Bible is very clear that when one is truly saved, at the same moment he is converted, he receives the Holy Spirit and that all true believers have the Spirit of God. We read in Romans 8:9: “BUT YE ARE NOT IN THE FLESH, BUT IN THE SPIRIT, IF SO BE THAT THE SPIRIT OF GOD DWELL IN YOU. NOW IF ANY MAN HAVE NOT THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST, HE IS NONE OF HIS.” You can’t be saved without having the Holy Spirit. However, Charismatics generally pay no attention to Bible doctrine that contradicts what they want to do. They are like the fellow who said, “Don’t confuse me with the facts, my mind is made up.”

III. CONFUSED ABOUT THE GOSPEL. I wonder how many of these Charismatics really know the Gospel? I am sure the liberal ones and the Roman Catholics know nothing about it. Many of the others seem to have little regard for it. The Gospel is: Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day. The Gospel brings eternal life. Jesus said, “I GIVE UNTO THEM ETERNAL LIFE; AND THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH.” Charismatics do not believe that. They believe that Christ died only for the sins you committed up until you got saved. After that, you have to keep the sate clean or if you do sin, you must confess it and turn away from it before you die or else you will be lost. I think it is safe to say that all of them believe that it is possible for a Christian to lose his salvation. They teach that God has given it to you but you must hold on to it. Little do they know of their own inability nor the power of God and the Gospel. I have not found any who did not strongly denounce the doctrine of eternal security. I have met quite a few who really hate that doctrine, even though it is taught in the Word of God. The verse mentioned above and many, many others

Charismatic Confusion

- 2 -

are clear that if one is saved, he has already received eternal life and Jesus Christ has paid for his sins—all of them—the past ones as well as any he may commit in the future. One of the worlds leading Charismatics is Pat Robertson. In an interview with U.S. News and World Report he was asked, “Who goes to heaven? Do Jews go to heaven?” This is Pat Robertson’s response: “We all go essentially on the same basis. The Jews have a set of laws in the Old Testament that are very precise. If they keep all of those commandments and never break one during their lives, they go to heaven.” Now isn’t that a wonderful gospel? It is impossible for anyone to keep the Ten Commandments. Salvation is not of works as the Scriptures clearly declare.

III. THE CONFUSED LIVES OF CHARISMATICS.

The first area I would mention is that of morality. Not only are many of the leaders immoral, but very few Charismatics seem at all interested in living a holy life. I am sure you are familiar with the cases of Jim Bakker of PTL and Jimmy Swaggart. Many other Pentecostal preachers are mixed up in the same things. To be sure, all cannot be characterized like them, but it is rather wide spread. I remember many years ago when a famous Pentecostal faith healer, A. A. Allen, died in a San Francisco hotel and the autopsy revealed that the cause of death was alcoholism. That man claimed to be filled with the Holy Ghost and preached tongues and faith healing up and down this land.

Another serious fallacy of the Charismatic movement is its ecumenism. They boast that it crosses all lines from Pentecostal to Roman Catholic and every kind of Protestant in between. How could people who believe such diverse things truly be born of God and interested in the truth. Nothing has done more to bring Protestants and Roman Catholics together than the Charismatic movement, for they all rally around that one supposed gift. Everything else is not considered. And yet, listen to a statement from a leading Roman Catholic Charismatic, Cardinal Suenens. He said, “the secret is our unity with Mary.” And yet, most Charismatics believe that Roman Catholics are really saved. This movement has crossed into all mainline denominations and is well entrenched in the Evangelical movement. James Robison, who is a Southern Baptist, became a Charismatic several years ago. He said, “I tell you what. One of the finest moral representatives of morality in this earth right now is the Pope. People who know it really believe he is a born again man. I mean born again of the Spirit.” From the very beginning of the National Association of Evangelicals, they accepted Charismatics who were then turned Pentecostals. Seven Pentecostal denominations were a part of the original organization. Fuller Seminary is riddled with Charismatic teachers and influence. Gordon College has a

Pentecostal president. Jerry Falwell calls himself a Fundamentalist but in reality is not. You are aware of his deep involvement in taking over the PTL Charismatic ministry. Not long ago he said concerning that experience, “As time went on, we came to love and respect one another. I’ll never again be as tough on Pentecostal issues as I have been in the past.” That was in Christianity Today and the interviewer said, “Perhaps Falwell’s greatest accomplishment was getting Protestants, Catholics, and Jews to work together.”

One of the greatest errors of the Charismatics is they are completely experience oriented. As I said, they rarely have any knowledge of the Word of God but are given to dreams, visions, revelations, etc. These are equated with the Bible. In fact, because they know very little of the Bible, these are elevated above the Word of God. In reality, they have no real authority, but each man is his own authority according to his dream, vision, etc. Doctrine means nothing to them. A Baptist missionary who was formerly a Charismatic wrote the following: “During those years I started watching the Pentecostal movement and then the Charismatic movement that started. I met many people in the Charismatic movement over the years. One thing was always apparent: Tongues were more important to them than anything including God’s Word.” If you ever listen to them, you will know it is true. I remember one man saying, “I don’t care if it’s in the Bible or not. It makes me feel good.” I remember hearing a story many years ago concerning a Bible class of fourth graders. The teacher asked them, “What is false doctrine?” At first no one answered. Finally one of the lads, whose father was a doctor, spoke up. He said, False doctrine is when the doctor gives sick people the wrong stuff.” That may not be couched in theological terms, but it certainly does describe the Charismatic movement. It is giving sick people the wrong stuff because it is not giving them the clear, unadulterated Word of God. These people fail to recognize two things. The first is that the Word of God is our final authority in all things, not someone’s experience. The second thing is that there is another spirit in the world besides the Spirit of God. It is the spirit of the devil. In II Cor. 11:4 we read, “FOR IF HE THAT COMETH PREACHETH ANOTHER JESUS, WHOM WE HAVE NOT PREACHED, OR IF YE RECEIVE ANOTHER SPIRIT, WHICH YE HAVE NOT RECEIVED, OR ANOTHER GOSPEL, WHICH YE HAVE NOT ACCEPTED, YE MIGHT WELL BEAR WITH HIM.” The devil is the great counterfeiter and he has instituted this movement to deceive people in these last days. Later on in that same passage he is spoken of as an angel of light. We are warned by God in I John 4:1, “BELOVED, BELIEVE NOT EVERY SPIRIT, BUT TRY THE SPIRITS WHETHER THEY ARE OF GOD: BECAUSE MANY FALSE PROPHETS ARE GONE OUT INTO THE WORLD.”

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