

THE FALLACY OF THE PENTECOSTAL & CHARISMATIC MOVEMENTS, #2

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I will repeat again: There was a true and necessary Day of Pentecost, but what we are witnessing today among these movements is a complete hoax, and there's nothing Christian about them. There are several disturbing aspects concerning these movements. They are fanatics, concocting false heretical prophecies which Scripture doesn't support in any way. One group of charismatics based in Kansas City, Missouri demonstrates just how far they will go to abuse the prophet's divine office. A book promoting this group, *Some Said It Thundered* by David Pytches (Nashville: Oliver Nelson, 1991), became a best seller. Hundreds, if not thousands, of churches worldwide are patterning their prophetic ministries after the "Kansas City Prophets". All associated with a single church (formerly Kansas City Fellowship, later renamed Metro Vineyard Fellowship), these men assert they would rather not be labeled "prophets". They rather prefer to be styled "prophetically gifted". Thus, they distance themselves from the Old Testament prophets, and neither do they claim infallibility.

Here I am paraphrasing from the book *Charismatic Chaos* by John F. MacArthur, Jr., pp. 78-79; 367. MacArthur explains all these Kansas City prophets admit they have prophesied falsely. In spite of this, the prophecies delivered by these men are received by thousands as revealed truth from God. Vineyard's pastor, Mike Bickle, encourages his followers to embrace modern prophecy as God's means of revealing fresh truth to his church rather than the antiquated prophecies of the Old Testament. Bob Jones, one of the church's more colorful seers, claims that God speaks to him annually on the Jewish Day of Atonement. Bickle and Jones consider it satisfactory if two-thirds of their prophecies come true. Thus, these so-called prophets claim that they have a word from "the Lord", but the odds are one-in-three, at the very best, that it will be false. Poor old God, can't get anything a hundred percent. Yet, in spite of their poor track record, the Kansas City prophets continue to garner exalting accolades, and are often featured in John Wimber's international conference ministry.

Bickle no longer defends Jones so staunchly as he once did. In November 1991, John Wimber distributed a letter to Vineyard churches and constituents notifying them that Jones was undergoing a process of "restoration", after having confessed to sexual misconduct and abuses of his prophetic gift. Wimber offered to take the Kansas City prophets into the Vineyard in order to correct their excesses and discipline them,

holding them accountable. Instead, he immediately, without chastising them, began using them to teach so that they could repeat those same sexual improprieties all over again.

Now this kind of sexual impropriety is not an isolated situation among the pentecostal and charismatic groups. I knew of a man right here in Fostoria, and I will use him as an example. I think the name of the church was Four Square, of which I had never had an occasion to attend. Shortly after he and his wife arrived, he started to chase another woman in his congregation. It wasn't very long until there was a divorce and a remarriage. With this new marriage, children were born. Like many marriages, he and his new wife needed the services of a baby-sitter, and it wasn't very long until he had this baby-sitter pregnant. So if you plan on attending a pentecostal or charismatic meeting, you'd better prepare yourself to stave off any advances toward your wife from sex predators or from any rattlesnakes crawling all over the floor. I'm not kidding! If you've observed the news over the last 20 years, you'll know what I mean! So stay away from the Kansas City prophets, as they have sex predators among them!

MacArthur, relates on pp. 25-26 just how obnoxious these people can become: "A woman wrote to me, seething. 'You resort to Greek translations and fancy words to explain away what the Holy Spirit is doing in the church today. Let me give you a piece of advice that might just save you from the wrath of almighty God: *put away your Bible and your books and stop studying*. Ask the Holy Ghost to come upon you and give you the gift of tongues. You have no right to question something you have never experienced.'

"A radio listener, after hearing my teaching on 1 Corinthians 11 – 14, wrote, 'You people, and especially ministers of the Gospel, who claim that speaking in tongues is not for today are, in my opinion and all those who do, grieving the Holy Spirit and missing a blessing from God. To me – it is as ridiculous as if an unsaved person tried to persuade you that you absolutely cannot be sure that you will enter heaven. ... If you haven't experienced it you can NOT tell someone who HAS that it doesn't exist.'

"Both of those letters reflect the tendency to gauge truth by personal experience rather than Scripture. There is little doubt that most charismatics, if they are honest with themselves, would have to acknowledge that personal experience – and not Scripture – is the foundation of their belief system. As much as some charismatics might want to give the Bible a high place of authority in their lives, the Scriptures too often rank second to experience in defining what they believe. As one writer puts it, 'Experiences with God provide a basis for their faith'. That is exactly backward from how it should be!"

From these two examples, it should be obvious that one cannot reason with them. It would be better just to tell them "I just remembered, I have something important to do" and get away from them; go home and start working on that project that you've been neglecting for the last five years! And if that doesn't work, just reply that you believe today's tongue-wagging is from the devil. In that case, they will reply that they have something important to do. Now back to *Charismatic Chaos*, pp. 27-29:

"Sometimes a self-styled prophet develops a whole new set of teachings based wholly on experience – or pure whimsy. Dr. Percy Collett, for example, a charismatic

medical missionary, devised an extensive series of detailed messages on heaven, all drawn from his extraordinary personal experience. Collett claims that in 1982 he was transported to heaven for five-and-a-half days. He says he saw Jesus, who is supervising the building of mansions there, and he claims he was able to speak face-to-face with the Holy Spirit.

“A newsletter rhapsodically detailing Dr. Collett’s journey to heaven began, incredibly, with these words: ‘While Christianity abounds with accounts of glimpses of the ‘other’ dimension from those who’ve had ‘out of body’ experiences, Dr. Collett’s is unlike these. Obviously he was ‘caught up in the third heaven’ even as Paul was. The difference being, Paul was not allowed to utter the things he saw and heard, while Dr. Collett, almost 2000 years later, was commanded to do so.

“Collett offers videotapes detailing his sojourn in heaven, and his accounts are peculiar indeed: ‘Everything God created upon the earth is in heaven – horses, cats, dogs. Everything that He created upon earth is in heaven – in the way of animals, only these are perfect. For example, the dogs do not bark. ... You don’t need plumbing. You can go to the Banqueting House and eat all you want and no plumbing is needed.’

“Collett describes ‘the Pity Department, the place [where] the souls of aborted babies go, and also some severely retarded babies, and it is here that these little souls are trained for a period of time before they go before the Throne of God.’ He claims he also saw the Record Room, ‘an immense area where all the ‘idle’ words spoken by Christians are being retained until after Christians give an account of them, or are judged, at which time these will be emptied into the Sea of Forgetfulness.’ Collett describes a ‘Garment Room,’ where angels are sewing our robes, mansions under construction, a ‘Holy Ghost elevator,’ and many other astonishing sights. He adds one macabre detail: ‘When I was traveling back to earth, I saw two girls, one brunette and one a red-head. We stopped to talk to them – their soul bodies – on the way back. We asked them what had happened to them. They indicated they had gotten killed in a car accident on a California highway. Their bodies (physical) were in a funeral home. They said their mother was weeping over them, so would I please tell her ...’

“Dr. Collett feels he has conclusive proof to verify that tale: ‘About a year later I went to that area where the mother lived, and was giving this testimony. A mother jumped up in the congregation and said, that’s a description of my daughters. I told her she shouldn’t fret, that her daughters are in that wonderful place. She said that she would never cry again.

“After Dr. Collett lectured on heaven to his third straight standing-room-only audience in Montgomery, Alabama, he offered to take questions from the floor. The first question was something I admit I had never contemplated: ‘I am a cowboy. Are there rodeos in heaven?’

“But Dr. Collett was ready with an answer. ‘There are horses in heaven, beautiful horses. These are all praising God. There is no foolishness in heaven. I am not saying that a rodeo is foolish, but there is no Will Rogers style acting up there.’

“Charismatics have no way to judge or stop testimonies like that because in their system *experience validates itself*. Instead of checking such experiences against the Bible for validity, typically charismatics try to get the Bible to fit the experience or, failing

that, they just ignore the Bible. How many charismatics, taught to believe that God is giving them or their leaders fresh revelation, simply put their Bibles permanently on the shelf?" This is very appalling, and we must seek a reasonable answer. The problem arises because many simply don't understand that the Book of Acts is a record of a transition from the Old Testament to the New. Comparatively, what might be true at the beginning of Acts may not be at its end, and it's a great mistake to build doctrine on such discrepancy. Now returning to *Charismatic Chaos* in a chapter entitled "What Was Happening in the Early Church?" and subtitled "A Closer Look at Acts 19", pp. 224-229:

"Acts 19 continues to show the church in transition. Here again is another basic charismatic proof text that shows people being baptized by the Spirit and speaking in tongues. Again there is no subsequence, no interval between salvation and Spirit baptism. Some charismatics and Pentecostals would like to claim that these people had been believers in Christ prior to the encounter recorded here, but a study of the text shows clearly that they were not.

"Acts 19 records Paul's arrival at Ephesus on one of his missionary journeys, and that there, he found 'some disciples' (19:1). 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' Paul wanted to know (v. 2).

"The reply by the disciples from Ephesus is peculiar: 'No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.' 'Into what then were you baptized?' was Paul's next question (v. 3). They replied, 'Into John's baptism.'

"Then Paul understood their problem. And so he said, 'John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus [sic Yahshua]' (v. 4).

"The disciples, at Ephesus were not Christians. They were believers in the Old Testament sense. The sum of their spiritual knowledge stopped with John the Baptist, and somehow they were not familiar with the ministry of Christ. Once they heard about Jesus, they believed and were baptized in his [sic] name. When Paul laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying (vv. 5-6).

"Obviously, these disciples were not seeking the Holy Spirit or tongues. Paul initiated the conversation about the Holy Spirit. They had not heard about any of the phenomena associated with the coming of the Spirit. Most translations of Acts 19:2 do not fully capture the implications of the Ephesian believers' reply to Paul's question. In essence they said, 'We did not so much as hear whether the Holy Spirit was given.' It is likely that they knew of the Holy Spirit. If they were followers of John's baptism, they had heard him talk about the Spirit (for example, see Luke 3:16). But they had not heard whether or not the Holy Spirit had ever been given. Why? Because they had not yet heard anything about Jesus Christ. ["was given" not in the Greek, but rather "to be"]

"As soon as Paul heard their response, he began to probe. He soon realized they were disciples, not of Jesus Christ, but of John the Baptist. They were people in transition, remnants of the Old Testament saints, still hanging on, still looking for their Messiah twenty years after John the Baptist had died. Paul's next move was quite

predictable. He said, in effect, ‘You people are to be commended. You repented as John taught, but now you’ve got to take the next step: believe in the One who came after John – Jesus Christ.’

“Note that after Paul realized who these disciples were, he spoke about Jesus Christ, not the Holy Spirit. Paul knew that all they had was the baptism of John. If they had confessed faith in Christ and been baptized, they would have had the Holy Spirit. Paul implied that when he asked, ‘Well, if you haven’t received the Spirit, what kind of baptism have you had?’ Paul knew that receiving the Spirit at the moment of belief in Christ was the normal pattern for the church after Pentecost.

“Paul was not trying to teach the Ephesian disciples how to press on to a second level or get something more than salvation through Christ! He realized that what was missing for the people at Ephesus was not information about the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but information about Jesus Christ. [emphasis mine]

“So Paul presented Christ to the Ephesian disciples, they believed, and they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul laid hands on them, they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

“Why did Paul lay hands on them? It seems he did it to demonstrate that they were no longer to follow John the Baptist’s teaching, but that of the apostles. And why were the Ephesian believers given tongues? The tongues demonstrated that although they had first come into their relationship with God under the Old Covenant, they were now part of the church with everyone else. Like those who had experienced Pentecost, they were now living under the New Covenant.

“Actually the whole theme of the book of Acts is to show how Jesus’ prayer in John 17:21 was being answered. There Jesus [sic Yahshua] prayed ‘that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me.’ As all believers were becoming one, a transition was taking place between the two covenants. Pentecost illustrated what was happening. Samaria illustrated it. The salvation of Cornelius and the other Gentiles [sic *ethnê*, pl. of #1484] illustrated it. And here in Acts 19 we find a unique group of followers of John at Ephesus. They all became one in the Spirit through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and their oneness was demonstrated graphically by the same miraculous phenomena witnessed three times before. These events were not supposed to be a pattern for the church as a whole; they did not even reflect the normal experience of Christians in the first-century church. They were exceptional, one-time signs, involving only a limited number of believers, and showing brilliantly the process that was taking place as all believers became one in Christ.

“To claim that the norm is for people to believe in Christ and at a later time get the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of tongues is to force the book of Acts through a theological grid of one’s own making. [emphasis mine] The events in Acts simply do not back up the Pentecostal and charismatic view. Joseph Dillow summarized our responsibility when he said :

“‘We must not make the tragic mistake of teaching the experience of the apostles, but rather we must experience the teaching of the apostles. The experience of the apostles is found in the transitional book of Acts, while the teaching of the apostles

is set forth clearly in the epistles, which are our guide for our Christian experience today.’

“Acts reveals how a new epoch began – the church age, the era of the Holy Spirit. We Christians who live in that age receive the Spirit when we believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The Spirit is a gift from God for every believer. That is taught again and again in the New Testament epistles. **Yet nowhere do they substantiate the Pentecostal and charismatic doctrine of a second work of grace that is sought by the believer and evidenced by speaking in tongues.** [emphasis mine]

“Paul wrote about the Holy Spirit many times. He dealt at length with the subject of spiritual gifts. Strangely enough, at no time did he even hint that the normative Christian experience is to be similar to what is described in the second, eighth, tenth, and nineteenth chapters of Acts.

“Paul, by the way, had his own experience, recorded for us in Acts. He met the Lord Jesus [sic Yahshua] Christ on the road to Damascus and was immediately changed from a murderer of Christians to a servant of the Lord [sic Yahweh]. Paul was blind for three days, after which Ananias came to him and laid hands on him that he might receive his sight and ‘be filled with the Holy Spirit’ (Acts 9:17). Interestingly, Acts 9 does not mention that Paul spoke in tongues at that time. Yet later he told the Corinthians that he spoke in languages more than all of them (1 Cor. 14:18).

“Paul was well aware of the varieties of experiences that had happened to people as recorded in Acts. He was right in the middle of them. **But in none of his epistles did he ever hint that one must be saved first and then experience the baptism of the Spirit sometime down the road.** The same is true in the writings of Jude, James, and Peter. No apostolic writer taught the charismatic and Pentecostal doctrine of subsequence. ... [emphasis mine]

“*Seek the Power or Release It?*’ Acts 8:19 records Simon’s seeking to buy the power of the Holy Spirit. Peter said in reply, ‘May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!’ (Acts 8:20).

“Simon wanted power, but he sought it in the wrong way ... Yet as this incident with Peter and Simon shows, some people seek spiritual power out of wrong or impure motives. Simon presumed to seek by human effort the spiritual power that God gives freely – and that revealed his sinful heart. Many charismatics appear to be seeking spiritual power for the same selfish reasons that Simon displayed – and often by similar kinds of human effort.” (end of MacArthur’s 27 ¶ commentary)

While I do not entirely agree with MacArthur, yet it is glaringly apparent that today’s pentecostal and charismatic movements are nothing more than a revival of Simon Magus of Acts 8:9-24, or shades of Elymas Bar-jesus (Acts 13:6-12). They are little more than circus sideshows such as Kathryn Kuhlman and Benny Hinn. While in the two churches I used to belong, I never observed a tongue-wagging session, but I am now ashamed of their “doctrine of subsequence”. They called it “being saved” and “entire sanctification”. Even some of the hymns we used to sing were infected with subsequence doctrine. Even the old hymn “Rock of Ages” has a phrase “Be of sin the double cure”. Does that mean that Christ was crucified twice? Didn’t His death on the cross pay the price once and for all?