

A BIBLICAL EXAMINATION OF THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT¹

I. THE “BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT”

A. The Phrase “baptism of the Spirit” does not occur anywhere in the Bible!

B. The phrase “baptism with (by) the Spirit” is a biblical phrase (e.g. Mk. 1:8; Jn. 1:33; Acts 1:5 cf. 11:16) and occurs in the life of every believer **at the moment of their salvation** -I Cor. 12:13

C. The Bible teaches that it is impossible for a person to belong to Christ and yet not have the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. -Rom. 8:9

D. Charismatic advocates of “the baptism of the Spirit” as an alleged subsequent action or “2nd blessing,” can’t even agree on how to supposedly obtain it! “*Why all the confusion and contradiction? ...The reason...is the Bible never tells how to get the baptism of the Spirit; it only tells believers that they are already baptized with the Spirit.*” (MacArthur, *Charismatic Chaos*, p.193) cf. Col. 2:10 & II Pet. 1:3! Sadly, many sincere believers are trying to obtain what they already have! (Illustration: Aesop’s fable about the dog with the bone who saw his reflection).

E. **Summary:** “If we are born by the Spirit, can we ever be any less born into God’s family? *No!* If we are baptized into the body of Christ which is the church, can we ever become more baptized? *No!* **The baptism of the Spirit occurs ONE time, and that is at the moment we repent and receive Christ, becoming part of the body of Christ!** If the Holy Spirit dwells within us, would He ever leave us (Heb. 13:5; Mt. 28:20)? *No!* However a Christian who is filled with the Spirit can be less filled at times!” (MacArthur, *The Charismatics*). So let us consider what the filling of the Spirit is, & what it will produce.

II. THE “FILLING OF THE SPIRIT.” The Bible commands believers “to be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18).

A. “What is it?” & “How are we filled? ANSWER: “When we yield to the Spirit, who is already there, we have access to the Spirit’s power and fullness... Christians are admonished to keep being filled with the Spirit, but that is not the same thing as waiting to be baptized by the Spirit. There is one simple key to knowing the fullness and power of the Holy Spirit in your life: obeying the Lord” (MacArthur, CC, pp. 192-193). It has been well said, that *the filling of the Spirit is not a matter of you getting more of the Holy Spirit, but rather of the Holy Spirit getting more of you* - i.e. We always have “all” of Him, but He doesn’t always have “all” (i.e. complete control) of us.

“It is important to get the precise meaning of the word ‘filled’ as Paul used it. When we think of ‘filling’ we usually picture a container into which something is poured or shoveled until it is full. **That is not what Paul had in mind here.** Paul was not speaking of being filled *up*; he had in mind the idea of being filled *through*, or permeated by the Holy Spirit’s influence... Scripture uses the word ‘filled’ in that sense. For example, when Jesus told his disciples he was going to have to leave them, they were ‘*filled*’ with *sorrow* (John 16:6). Sorrow dominated and consumed them at that moment... Jesus healed a man (and)... They were ‘filled with fear’ (Lk. 5:26)... In (Luke 6:11)... Jesus argued with the Pharisees about their legalism...The result was that the Pharisees were ‘filled with madness’ (rage-NASV). In other words, the Pharisees were furious... The word *filled*, then, is used in Scripture of those who are totally **controlled** by an emotion or influence. Scripture means exactly the same thing when it talks about being filled with the Holy Spirit.” (Ibid, pp. 255-256-emphasis added)

B. “What will the filling or control of the Holy Spirit produce?” ANSWER: A holy, Christ-like life! The test of whether we are Spirit-filled is NOT whether we laugh uncontrollably for hours, fall over backwards, or speak in tongues. **The fruit of being filled with the Holy Spirit will be seen in a godly lifestyle.** Note the context of the command in Ephesians 5:18. The verses that follow (5:19-6:9) show what a Spirit-filled believer looks like. A Spirit-filled believer will be mediating on God’s word, singing spiritual songs, being thankful in all things, & manifest a servant attitude. Spirit-filled wives will be submissive to their husbands, Spirit -filled husbands will love their wives. Spirit filled workers will work hard. Spirit filled employers will treat their workers fairly. In short, people who are filled with the Spirit are godly people who are obedient to God’s precepts in every area of life!

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III. IS THE CURRENT CHARISMATIC RESURGENCE A “SECOND PENTECOST” i.e. A FULFILLMENT OF THE “LATTER RAIN” & DREAMS AND VISIONS PROPHESED IN JOEL 2 AND QUOTED BY PETER ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST? ANSWER: NO!

A. A careful reading of Joel 2:19-3:3 will clearly show that Joel was not referring to our present era at all! Rather his prophecy describes events that will occur at the end of the tribulation & the beginning of the millennium. Note the following:

- 1) There would be “...wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood...” (2:29-31) “That is obviously a prophecy of the coming millennial kingdom and cannot refer to anything earlier.” (Ibid, p. 236)
- 2) It would be at the time of the “...day of the Lord” which is a broad term which refers to Christ’s second coming of course, but also in other contexts generally to the tribulation period &/or millennial period.
- 3) The **defeat of the “northern army** which is prophesied for the end of the Tribulation is mentioned in 2:20.
- 4) “Verse 27 of Joel 2 speaks of the **great revival that will bring Israel back to God**. That is another feature of the Great Tribulation and is not yet fulfilled.” (Ibid) Obviously Israel is not currently in the midst of a great revival!
- 5) The **judgment of the nations**, which occurs after the battle of Armageddon (Rev. 19: 11-21) is mentioned in the context in Joel 3:2,12,14.
- 6) The latter part of Joel 3 “...gives a **beautiful description of the millennial kingdom** (v.18).” (Ibid)

B. Joel’s prophecy never mentions tongues at all. Thus it’s surprising that the passage is often quoted as support for tongues speaking today by tongues advocates!

C. What about “the former rain and the latter rain”? “Some charismatics spiritualize ‘the former rain and the latter rain’ of Joel 2:23. They argue that the former rain refers to Pentecost, when the Spirit came, and the latter rain to his outpouring in the twentieth century. (However) Throughout the Old Testament, ‘the former rain’ refers to the autumn rains and ‘the latter rain’ to the spring rains. Joel was actually saying that in the millennial kingdom both rains will come ‘as before’ (v. 23). His point was that God will make crops grow profusely in the kingdom. Joel 2:24-26 makes that abundantly clear... **The ‘former and latter rain,’ then, have nothing to do with Pentecost, the twentieth century, or the Holy Spirit.**” (Ibid, p. 237)

D. So why did Peter quote the Joel passage on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17-21). **ANSWER:** Basically, what Peter was saying is that the supernatural things seen on the day of Pentecost were a brief glimpse, *a sneak preview if you please*, of the kind of power and amazing things that will occur at the end of the tribulation and start of the millennium. The sun did not go dark on the day of Pentecost, nor did the moon turn to blood. There was no blood, or fire or vapor of smoke that occurred then! It was like the Transfiguration, which was another time where a few individuals received a *preliminary glimpse of future things*. In that instance, the glory of Christ that will be seen during the millennium and onward was seen by Peter, James and John. Peter remembered it well (II Pet. 1:16-19). “Pentecost was not the ultimate fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy. Thomas Edgar makes this significant observation: **‘There is no biblical evidence that there will be a reoccurrence in the church of the sign gifts or that believers will work miracles near the end of the Church age. However, there is ample evidence that near the end of the age there will be false prophets who perform miracles, prophesy, and cast out demons in Jesus’ name** (cf. Matt. 7:22-23; 24:11, 24; II Thess. 2:9-12).” (Ibid)

IV. THE WORD-FAITH MOVEMENT (i.e. **“POSITIVE CONFESSION,” “NAME IT - CLAIM IT” ADVOCATES**). Charismatics have completely reinterpreted (incorrectly!) what faith is, and how it operates. Faith is basically belief in something or someone. Unfortunately, *many in the charismatic movement have completely redefined the meaning of faith*. Today many charismatics believe and teach that faith is not belief in God, but rather a tool (or power source) to be directed at God-in order to get Him to do what they want ,and give them whatever they wish! **That is false!** Sadly, it has gotten to the point that many leaders in the Word-Faith Movement teach and act as though God is their servant, rather than their master! (This error is thoroughly documented and dealt with in Dave Hunt’s book: *“The Seduction of Christianity”* as well as other books cited in this paper).

REFUTATION:

A. This unbiblical teaching (e.g. “visualizing your reality,” “speaking your world into existence,” “speaking results (such as health) into existence by the words of your mouth,” etc.) has been imported from occultic & unbiblical sources (see Dave Hunt). Paul Yonggi (David) Cho is one key popularizer of this heresy, and openly admits he got the idea from Buddhist priests.

B. The Bible teaches that faith is belief in an object/person (i.e. God). Jesus Himself declared: “Have faith IN GOD!” (Mk. 11:22). And faith by itself, even when understood within its true meaning, is not enough to carry one to heaven, **unless it has the right object!** Muslims have faith! Buddhists have faith! Mormons have faith! A person must have faith *in the RIGHT object or person*. In regard to salvation, faith must be in God the Father & His Son Jesus Christ, as found in the Bible—or a person will be lost for all eternity! The “Positive Thinking” that Norman Vincent Peale promoted and the “Positive Mental Attitude” that Robert Schuller promotes, are totally insufficient to enable a person to go to heaven. Faith in “faith,” is *not* biblical, saving faith!

C. Charismatic leaders misunderstand and have drawn a false dichotomy between two NT Greek words for “word”, to try and support their unbiblical view. The terms are “*Rhema*” & “*Logos*.” Charismatics either teach a) That “*logos*” is the written word of God and “*rhema*” is the word of God that becomes “alive” to you when you read or claim it (cf. Neo-Orthodox belief); or more commonly they teach that, b) “*Logos*” is the written Word of God but “*rhema*” refers to the “spoken” word of believers that produces amazing miracles and answers to prayer as believers “speak their reality into existence.” This idea is taken straight from occult & false religious sources, and is totally unbiblical. While the two words *logos* & *rhema* sometimes have slightly different nuances or connotations in the New Testament, they are also used interchangeably &/or synonymously (e.g. Acts 10:36 cf. 37; 22:22 cf. 28:25; Eph. 6:17 cf. Col. 1:25; I Pet. 1:23 cf. 25; Acts 11:1 cf. 16; etc.). The words do not carry the dramatically different meanings that charismatics like Kenneth Hagin try to infuse into them.

V. ARE MIRACLES PROOF THAT SOMEONE IS OF GOD? ANSWER: NO!

A. Miracles alone prove nothing in regard to whether something is “of God” or not! False prophets & teachers can do miracles! For instance:

- 1) False prophets & religious leaders have performed (or have appeared to have performed) miracles in the past (e.g. Ex. 7:11-12, 22; 8:7)
- 2) Jesus warned that false prophets would do, & have done, miracles (Mt. 7:15 cf. vv. 21-22);
- 3) The Bible states that the Antichrist & his false prophet will perform apparent miracles during the Tribulation period (II Thess. 2:9-10; Rev. 13:2-4, 12-15; 16:14; 19:20)
- 4) Satan can apparently do signs and miracles &/or energize his subordinates to do them (Rev. 13:2).

B. Miracles are NOT a guarantee of greater spiritual results. Jesus performed more & greater miracles than anyone in all history—yet many of the places where he performed His most prolific miracles were the LEAST responsive to His message (e.g. Mt. 11:20-24; Jn. 12:37-ff)! When Jesus sent forth the twelve with power to perform similar miracles, He warned them in advance that they could expect a similarly negative response as well (Mt. 10:1,8 cf. vv. 14-20)!

C. Miracles do not prove that someone is superior “spiritually”! It is interesting to note that Scripture says that John the Baptist *never performed a single miracle* (Jn. 10:41), yet Jesus declared that *no one had ever been greater* (Mt. 11:11)!

VI. BEING “SLAIN IN THE SPIRIT.” (i.e. being knocked down, unconscious, or into a trance, by a touch or wave of the hand).

A. The phrase “slain in the spirit” is not found anywhere in Scripture!

B. The concept of being “slain in the spirit” to obtain fresh, additional spiritual power is nowhere taught in Scripture.

C. A few people fell over backwards in the NT, but they were the unsaved Roman soldiers who came with Judas to arrest Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane. They didn’t fall because they had received a “fresh anointing” (Jn. 18:5-6)!

D. “The practice has more in common with occultism than with anything biblical...” Nowhere in Scripture do we see real gifts of the Spirit operating when someone is out of control or under some sort of supernatural seizure. Nowhere does the New Testament teach that the Spirit of God causes Christians to fall into a trance, faint, or lapse into frenzied behaviour. On the contrary, ‘The fruit of the Spirit is... self-control’ (Gal. 5:22-23).” (MacArthur, CC, p. 168)

E. The practice can be positively dangerous—even lethal! An 85 year old woman died from injuries sustained when another person fell on her at a Benny Hinn crusade. Another woman at a crusade conducted by Charles & Frances Hunter fractured her back and was in the hospital for 2 months after falling down.

F. Many people who fall down or are slain in the Spirit fake it. This is a documented fact, with even leaders in the movement having admitted to falling down simply because they knew they were expected to do so.

G. Historically speaking, the practice originated with Maria Beulah Woodworth-Etter (1844-1924) who used to sometimes go into a trance while speaking. Aimee Semple McPherson (d.1944) popularized the phenomenon. Later still Kathryn Kuhlman continued it. Benny Hinn, among others learned it from Kuhlman and has taken the practice to new heights (or depths?).

H. Possible sources & explanations for the practice: Some are pushed over, others fall under the “power of suggestion,” & one charismatic proponent (Francis McNutt) admits that some have been “knocked down by evil spirits.” “He goes on to point out that the phenomenon is externally similar to ‘manifestations of voodoo and other magic rites’ and is ‘found today among different sects in the Orient as well as among primitive tribes of Africa and Latin America (Hanegraff, *Counterfeit Revival*, p. 172)!

I. Specifically, how do charismatic leaders like Benny Hinn cause people, sometimes crowds of people, to fall down? (NOTE: All of the following points are taken directly from Hank Hanegraff, *Counterfeit Revival*, pp. 221-242. He uses the acrostic “APES” to aid in remembering them. For a fuller treatment of this subject, consult that source). **ANSWER:**

1) These meetings often are patterned to produce “‘A’ltered states of consciousness. This is “‘a transition to a new state of consciousness’...there are a wide variety of techniques used by leaders...to work followers into altered states of consciousness. **One of the most disarming methods used is to sing one song over and over until participants finally lose touch with reality...** Rick Joyner confessed that at one of his conferences participants sang one song ‘for over three hours.’ As a result, he said, ‘the gulf between heaven and earth had somehow been bridged... when that one song finally ended, some of the musicians were lying on the floor.’ ...Thus, *like Eastern gurus*, they work their devotees into altered states of consciousness... In stark contrast Dr. Elizabeth Hillstrom warns that altered states of consciousness can be an open invitation for demonic deception: ‘Having largely set aside their ability to think rationally and critically or to exercise their will, they have become hyper-suggestible, which means that they are likely to accept any “spiritual truth” that enters their minds.’... (In Eastern mysticism, devotees)... Mindlessly... chant in unison until the hushed moaning of their mantras fills the ashram. Sanskrit songs of praise are sung to the accompaniment of rhythmic clapping. At the subtle suggestions of the ‘Master,’ they engage in repetitive physical motions to complete the process of becoming mindless... As shocking as it may seem...

“WHAT WAS ONCE RELEGATED TO THE ASHRAMS OF CULTS IS NOW REPLICATED AT THE ALTARS OF CHURCHES... Tragically, many...are dangerously ignorant of the striking parallels between their experiences and those of Eastern meditators who achieve altered states of consciousness through occult practices... counterparts in the world of the occult testify to experiencing a variety of troubling physical manifestations... In addition to pain, meditators may sense energy flows coursing through their bodies...Meditators may experience extreme heat or cold, and find their bodies making strange involuntary movements-muscle twitches, prolonged trembling or sinuous writhing...**The automatic movements of the body may be accompanied by spontaneous crying, laughing, screaming or whistling. Other common involuntary behaviours include speaking in tongues, singing unknown songs and making a variety of animal sounds and movements’(!)**...Hillstrom warns of profound psychological disturbances: ‘Emotions swing wildly from ecstasy, bliss and peace to intense fear, depression, anxiety and anger. Thoughts become strange and irrational, and experiencers may slip into dissociative or prolonged trance states.’” (Hanegraff, pp. 227-228)

2) ‘P’eer pressure is employed to produce “results.” “A classic case in point involves a well-known charismatic leader who participated in a Benny Hinn television extravaganza. Hinn...moved in this man’s direction. (Hinn) stretched forth his hand and shouted, ‘*In the mighty name of Jesus!*’ Immediately the man fell backward into the hands of a designated ‘catcher.’ Later he confessed that his experience had nothing to do with the power of God. Peer pressure had caused him to fake his fall. *Ironically, when he asked a cameraman to edit out the faked fall, the cameraman merely chuckled and told him it was common for people to fake it.*” (Ibid, p. 230)

Charismatic leaders “...use peer pressure to conform their prospects to predictable patterns. They urge them to follow the crowd rather than consider the consequences. John Arnott, for example, tells his

prospects that the greatest deception is not false doctrine but being among those who fail to recognize a move of God... Arnott and his associates have carefully crafted their services to enhance the likelihood that Christians will cave in to the power of peer pressure.

(a) They kick off their meetings with the testimonies of those who allegedly once feared deception but now embrace the exotic experiences... During the '*time of testimony*,' pastors and participants routinely testify that once they were blinded by the devil but now their eyes have been opened...

(b) The '*time of testimony*' is followed by a '*time of teaching*' designed to further pressure people to work themselves into an altered state of consciousness...(e.g.) a Vineyard pastor began reciting his rendition of Paul's experience on the road to Damascus. He hammered home the notion that there were two categories of believers: the initiated and the uninitiated. Before God knocked Paul off his horse, he was an uninitiated Pharisee. Thereafter he joined the ranks of those who had experienced the power of God firsthand. The pastor's message is cleverly designed to pressure people into becoming initiated like Paul rather than remaining uninitiated like the Pharisees...

(c) ...The grand finale is a '*time of ministry*' in which virtually anything goes. The peer pressure to participate during the ministry time is so potent that even otherwise discerning Christians often end up casting caution to the wind... (Charismatic) Leaders... seem well aware that people in crowds are prone to believe that the behavior of their peers is a standard that should not be questioned. *They further reinforce this proclivity by intimating that to resist these manifestations is tantamount to resisting the Holy Spirit.* According to Larry Randolph, speaking at the Toronto Airport Vineyard... the Holy Spirit is now singing... 'I'm a Steam Roller, Baby. And I'm Going to Roll Right Over You.'"(Ibid, pp. 230-232).

3) Participants 'E'xpectations of what they can and will experience are raised dramatically by leaders and often produce the very experiences desired. (Charismatic leaders) "...are equally expert in elevating the expectations of followers. Subjects are systematically programmed to believe they are poised to take over the socio-political systems of society...(one) leader... suggests that the star status of the leaders of this end time church will be even greater than that of the apostle Paul: 'Paul will be more anxious to talk to the end time apostles and prophets than the end time apostles and prophets will be to talk to Paul, because what the prophets of this generation will do will be far greater than what he had done. The saints in the New Testament will wait in line to greet the apostles of this generation.'[sic]

Subjects are led to believe that if they enlist in 'Joel's end time army' (see III above) these promises will become living reality... (one leader) elevates expectations to fever pitch by telling devotees that they will be 'invincible'...Randy Clark...tells credulous Christians that 'people are being raised from the dead and temples [are] being hit by lightning or fireballs and knocked off their things[sic]. It's all over Germany and Africa. It's everywhere. God's doing it.'...Rick Joyner, for example, elevates expectations by telling the faithful that 'an eight foot by ten to twelve foot size mist' suddenly appeared in one of their meetings. He claims that this experience was so vivid that one of the women present, Christine Potter, not only saw 'this cloud of the Lord' but also felt 'an intense heat, as though her clothes were on fire.' According to Joyner, Potter was so hot, it 'looked like she was trying to remove her clothes in order to escape being burned.' *The evang-elastic stories used to enhance the expectations of believers are now becoming so bizarre that it is a wonder that anyone still takes them seriously.* Charisma magazine, for example, has circulated a story titled 'Holy Water Triggers Healing Revival.'... (Charismatic) Leaders... seem to bank on the fact that expectations aroused by stories such as... 'miracle water' or Clark's 'resurrections' can give birth to a broad range of mystical experiences...

Another classic case of expectations giving birth to experiences can be found in the story of a young Bronx boy named *Joseph Vitolo*... in 1945, nine-year-old Joseph was kneeling on a rock in an empty lot when he saw a vision of the Virgin Mary. Mary promised Joseph that she would appear on successive nights and that on the night of her last appearance, a miraculous spring would emerge from the ground... crowds trekked to the scene...On one night 25,000 people surged to the scene with flowers, candles, and statues of saints. It was automatically assumed that Joseph had a special anointing... While Joseph was not able to accomplish anything out the ordinary, the expectations of the crowd were such that they began to create their own 'miracles.' *On one of the nights, a light rain began to fall, and a woman screamed, 'It's pouring, yet Joseph doesn't get wet.'* *Despite the fact that news reporters standing near Joseph observed that he was as soaked as anyone else, the expectations of the miraculous created the illusion.* Another woman claimed she saw an apparition in white materialize behind Joseph. In reality the apparition was nothing more than another woman protectively covered with a white raincoat... The

expectations of the crowd had been heightened to such an extent that, as Marks says, they were ‘no more capable of resisting the proper hypnotic suggestion than Pavlov’s dog was capable of resisting the stimulus to salivate.’” (Ibid, pp. 233-236)

4. The power of ‘S’uggestion is usually used to charismatic leaders’ advantage. “The power of suggestion is incredibly potent. In an altered state of consciousness, this power is significantly magnified as people become hyper-suggestible...

(a)...First, it should be noted that some people are far more suggestible than others. *Statistically, ‘one out of twelve Americans is susceptible to creating a memory out of thin air, then believing it.’* Such fantasy proneness is typically referred to as the ‘Grade Five Syndrome.’ While Grade Five personalities are generally very intuitive and intelligent, they also have vivid, visual imaginations. Thus they are highly susceptible to the power of suggestion. To begin with: (1) they are very trusting. (2) ...they desire to please (particularly an authority figure). (3) ...they have the capacity to accept contradictory experiences, (4) ...they have a marked propensity for affiliation with new or unusual events. (5) ...they are apt to relate everything they experience to their own self-perception. This complex of characteristics makes Grade Fives particularly susceptible to spiritual fantasies, ‘psychic and out-of-body experiences, and the occasional difficulty in differentiating fantasized events and persons from non-fantasized ones.’...

(b) Furthermore, the subtle power of suggestion can be brought to bear on an individual either directly or indirectly. *An example of the direct approach is Rodney Howard-Browne’s now famous phrase, ‘Fill, Fill, Fill! Let it bubble out your belly!’ or John Arnott’s mantra, ‘More, Lord! More, Lord!’ (Arnott says, ‘I know how to say ‘More, Lord!’ in about fifty languages now.’).* *Indirect suggestions are far more subtle.* They can involve ‘embedded suggestions and commands, para-verbal shifts of tone, voice directionality, enunciation, syntax, and pacing; the use of truisms, binds, double binds, and other semantic variations.’ ...‘performance professionals,’ including a stage hypnotist and an expert on sleight-of-hand / sleight-of-mind... were readily able to identify numerous instances of these indirect suggestion techniques. They also pointed out that *these techniques are not typically learned by formal instruction, but rather by frequent imitation.* (cf. Hinn’s claim to have learned from Kuhlman,)...

(c) Finally... ‘people in crowds are more easily influenced than people taken singly. This fact has been capitalized on by stage hypnotists as well as evangelists, political orators, and dictators... the effect of suggestion on crowds seems virtually without limit...’ ...As noted by Charles Baudouin, ‘In the sphere of movement, suggestion by imitation is common. Immoderate laughter readily spreads through a crowd; yawning is contagious.’ Once epidemic suggestion contaminates a movement, human beings can ‘behave like beasts or idiots and be proud of it.’...No one is immune to the force of mass suggestion. *Once an epidemic of hysteria is in full force it strikes intellectuals as well as morons...* When Rick Joyner’s devotees sensed ‘nuclear fire,’ saw a glorious ‘cloud,’ and smelled the ‘fragrance of flowers,’ they may not have been aware that singing one song over and over for three hours had caused them to become hyper-suggestible... The three-hour repetition of a spiritual song, being slain in the spirit, or even a spiritualistic séance have at least one thing in common--they all cause subjects to become extremely susceptible to spontaneous suggestions... Leaders...capitalize on these expectations to create the illusion that they are endowed with supernatural powers. Rodney Howard-Browne dupes devotees into visualizing that his fingertips come off and a full volume of anointing flows from his hands, (the late) John Wimber conditions constituents to believe a spiritual power emanates from his hands like electricity, and Franz Anton Mesmer promulgated the principle that a magnetic force pulsed from his hands...

Pagan religions and pseudo-Christian cults have long capitalized on the power of suggestion to promote their practices... Dr. William A. Nolen, Chief of Surgery at Meeker County Hospital in Minnesota... concludes that: ‘*When evangelical healers dramatically call on God to transmit His power through them to cure their patients’ diseases, they are using the power of suggestion in the hope that it will so affect the patient’s malfunctioning autonomic nervous system (the system that regulates such functions as digestion, heart rate, blood pressure, etc.) that the disease or symptoms caused by the derangement of that system will be cured.*’...In truth, however, there is nothing supernatural about this kind of ‘healing.’ **Hinn and Howard-Browne can ‘heal’ asthma, allergies and arthritis, but then, so can mesmerists and medicine men.**” (Ibid, pp. 237-242)

J. Desperate attempts by charismatics to find a biblical basis for “slaying in the spirit.” The late John Wimber, a major charismatic leader, admitted that there was no biblical basis for the phenomenon of being “slain in the spirit.” He said: “**There’s no place in the Bible where people were lined up and Jesus or Paul or anyone else**

went along and *bapped* them on the head and watched them go down, one after another, and somebody else ran along behind... And so the model that we're seeing, either on stage or on television, is totally different from anything that's in Scripture." (Hanegraff, CR, pp. 183-184). Nonetheless in 1981 Wimber preached a number of sermons advancing what he felt were biblical examples. Hanegraff in his book *Counterfeit Revival*, critiques and refutes each of them. I'd like to list them here, along with a condensation of the refutations Hanegraff gives for each one:

1) Adam (Gen. 2:21). "Wimber uses what appears to be an elaborate deception to fool followers into believing that Bible translators...incorrectly translate the word sleep in Genesis 2:21. Says Wimber, 'How the interpreter gets "sleep" out of this, I'll never know. The word is *yashen* and it means to be slack. It means to be languid... It does *not* mean sleep. The Hebrew word for sleep is quite explicit. There are three words that are used commonly. This is not any of those three words.' (a) In truth however, Wimber has switched terms. The Hebrew word for 'sleep' used here is not *yashen* as Wimber asserts; rather it is *tardemah*. While Wimber seeks to impugn the translators, in reality he should be impugned. Every Hebrew expert I consulted agreed that *sleep* is the correct translation of the Hebrew word used. It is instructive to note that the word *yashen* is used later in this same verse to reinforce *not* that Adam became *slack* but rather that he did indeed fall in a *deep sleep*.... (b) Furthermore, Wimber's interpretation of Genesis 2:21 does not come from an investigation of Hebrew but rather from interviews with 'hundreds' of followers who have been slain in the spirit. He takes the description of what they experienced and assumes that Adam experienced the same thing... (c) Finally, *even if Wimber were correct in asserting that Adam was the first person in human history to have been slain in the spirit, that would in no way establish a precedent for people today. If it did, one might well expect to arise after being slain in the Spirit lacking a rib and living with a redhead.*" (Ibid, pp. 184-185).

2) Abraham (Gen. 17:3 NASV). "As he did with Adam, Wimber again uses his term switching tactic to fool followers. Says Wimber, 'Now notice this, "And Abram fell on his face." The word there is *radam*. *Radam*, in the Hebrew, and it means he was stunned, as a blow. He was stupefied, is what the word means. That doesn't mean he voluntarily fell on his face. It means he was knocked flat at the presence of God...A blow stupefied him, knocked him senseless, is what the word means.' (a) First, the Hebrew word used for 'fell' is not *radam*, as Wimber asserts, it is *naphal*. (b) Furthermore, the Almighty did not cause Abraham to fall through a blow that stupefied and knocked him senseless; rather Abraham fell of his own accord in response to the majesty of the Almighty. (c) Finally, as he did with Adam, Wimber interprets Scripture in light of experience rather than interpreting experience in light of Scripture. *To explain why his followers fall backward like the foes of God, as opposed to falling forward like the friends of God do in Scripture, Wimber points to his own experience...(he says) 'But leaders invariably fall forward. I've watched it again and again.'*" (Ibid, pp. 185-86)

3) Peter (Acts 10:9-10 NASV). "Wimber uses the apostle Peter's trance...as proof positive that 'God doesn't always use the book'... (Wimber says)... God communicated with the apostle Peter... via a trance. Thus, according to Wimber, he must also be attempting to communicate with people today via trance states...'I have seen hundreds and hundreds of you, over the last three years, go into a state similar to that (of Peter).' (a) First, it should be noted that *biblical trance states like that experienced by Peter are sovereignly initiated, not self-induced or induced through human agency. In contrast, unbiblical trance states can be self-induced, induced through socio-psychological manipulation, or initiated by the touch of a shaman/sorcerer.* (b) Furthermore, Peter's trance cannot be used as a precedent for people today because Peter as an Apostle was foundational to the church (Eph. 2:20)... Peter's revelation was the major event that opened the door for the acceptance of the Gentiles into the church. Far from 'instructing through means other than Scripture,' the revelation God gave to Peter was to become Scripture itself." (Ibid, pp. 186-87)

4) Paul (Acts 9:3-4 NASV). Wimber asserts that Paul was involved in a supernatural encounter with God, yet tries to maintain that such "supernatural" situations occur regularly! " (a) First, it should be pointed out that contrary to Wimber's assertions, Christ's appearance to Paul on the road to Damascus was, indeed, unique (Acts 9:15, 27)...Paul pointed to his Damascus road experience as the basis on which he was counted as an eyewitness to the resurrection. (b) Furthermore, Wimber's claim that the phenomena associated with Christ's appearance to Paul on the road to Damascus are common is patently false... (c) Finally, one wonders how many of Wimber's devotees would line up to experience the slain in the spirit phenomenon if they truly believed that there were a chance that they, like Paul, would end up blinded for three days." (Ibid, pp. 188-89)

5) John (Rev. 1:17 NASV). “According to Wimber ‘the closest thing to the term “slain in the spirit” in the entire Bible’ is found in Revelation 1:17. Wimber suggests that when the apostle John fell at the feet of Jesus, he was ‘falling in an unconscious state.’ Again, however, he makes it clear that what happened to John is painfully common. In one church service alone, he says, ‘probably one hundred and fifty of you fell as a dead man’... While he claims that he would never manipulate anyone’s emotions, he confesses that the slain in the spirit phenomenon is commonly manufactured in the church. (a) First... it appears that Wimber uses socio-psychological manipulation tactics to work his devotees into altered states of consciousness... (b) Furthermore, Wimber again takes the experiences of his subjects and imposes them on Scripture... (c) *Finally, it is crucial to understand that the Almighty appeared to the apostle Peter, the apostle Paul, and the apostle John to directly reveal Scripture, which alone is sufficient for faith and practice* (2 Tim. 3:15-17).” (Ibid, pp. 189-90)

6) The soldiers at the arrest of Jesus (John 18:6). This incident is discussed above. In addition, Hanegraff comments: “**First, it should be noted that what Wimber claims happens frequently in his church never once happened in the ministry of the incarnate Christ...** As the *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (states): ‘There is no mention of the Spirit here... and John portrays no relationship between Spirit, power, and Jesus... Obviously they were not converted, because they proceeded to arrest Jesus... Finally, to say that the Savior comes on like a Sumo wrestler in church services (which Wimber does) is nothing short of blasphemous.” (Ibid, pp. 192-93).

7) Angel (Mt. 28:4). “(Wimber)...paints a picture in which there were ‘several hundred [soldiers] in the garden.’... In his opinion the unbelieving soldiers were so afraid ‘they shook and they died.’... (a) First, once again Wimber is reading his own misunderstandings into the Scripture...Matthew’s statement. (according to the *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*).. is ‘simply a figurative way of saying the guards were petrified.’... (b) Furthermore, *even Wimber admits that it was the foes rather than the friends of Christ who fell...* (c) Finally, it is revealing that after presenting a plethora of biblical pretexts, he has failed to prove his point... The *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* clearly points out:... ‘Scripture plainly offers no support for the phenomenon...It is equally unquestionable that there is no biblical evidence for the experience as normative in Christian life.’” (Ibid, pp. 194-95).

VII. THE “ANNOINTING.”

A. The idea of different levels, kinds or “grades” of anointings is nowhere taught in Scripture (e.g. “*Leper’s anointing,*” “*priestly anointing,*” “*kingly anointing,*”). Benny Hinn and others appeal to lepers, priests, or kings being anointed in the OT and then allegorize or spiritualize those OT occurrences and try to make them symbolic of categories of blessedness that NT believers can obtain, and should seek after (e.g. lepers=salvation, etc.).

B. The individuals who claim to be the most powerfully anointed (e.g. Benny Hinn) have uttered some of the most ridiculous and unbiblical statements imaginable-supposedly while under “the anointing.” (e.g. that women were originally created to give birth out of their sides; that Christ had Satan’s nature; that Christians are little gods; etc)

C. In the NT, the anointing of the Holy Spirit refers to Christ and His ministry while on earth, the vast majority of the time.

D. There are only 2-3 places in the entire NT where the anointing of the Holy Spirit is mentioned with reference to believers (e.g. II Cor. 1:21; I Jn. 2:27), and those verses give absolutely NO SUPPORT to the current charismatic teaching on this subject. Instead, a careful reading of those passages will reveal that a believer’s anointing is:

1) “Past Tense” i.e. it is something that God has already done for every true believer. cf. II Cor. 1:21; I Jn. 2:20,27

2) In the NT context is the Holy Spirit’s supernatural guidance & direction to detect and avoid false teachers. I John 2:19-27. It certainly isn’t teaching us, as many charismatic leaders advocate, that believers that are anointed can become “Lone Rangers” and do whatever they want or teach anything and everything, no matter how unbiblical, and be exempt from accountability for it. “Every Christian should guard carefully against a misunderstanding of I John 2:27... What is the verse saying? Is it telling us that we don’t need any teachers or guides in learning God’s wisdom? That would be inconsistent with Ephesians 4:11-12 which says God gave ‘pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.’ The Holy Spirit has given to many the gift of teaching (Rom. 12:6-7) and has called on all believers to teach one another (II Tim. 2:2). Rather than contradicting those Spirit-given instructions, *John was talking here about heretics-antichrists who lead people astray.* This passage doesn’t give wholesale permission to everyone to do his own thing with the

Bible. Rather, *it is reassuring us that we can know the difference between heresy and the truth regarding the gospel of Christ (cf. I John 2:22) because we possess the Spirit.*" (MacArthur, CC, p. 96).

VIII. "**HOLY LAUGHTER**." Laughing uncontrollably for long periods of time has never been a sign of being filled with the Holy Spirit. Neither has roaring like a lion, barking like a dog, etc. Such behaviors, again, have much more in common with false cults, false religions and occultic practices and beliefs. By contrast, when the Holy Spirit is in control of a person or a meeting, there will be order and decency rather than confusion (I Cor. 14:33,40); self-control rather than a lack of control (Gal. 5:23); & a godly lifestyle and behavior towards a spouse, children, employers, employees (Eph. 5:19-6:9); etc.

IX. **BLOWING INTO MICROPHONES TO GIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT TO SOMEONE**. A number of charismatic evangelists, including Benny Hinn, now blow into microphones, as though they can blow the Holy Spirit on (into?) others! Hinn even throws his coat at people, etc., allegedly giving them the Holy Spirit!. Presumably, such individuals take for their authority for this bizarre practice, John 20:22. **REBUTTAL:**

A. It is the height of presumption for mere men to think that they have the same power and authority as Jesus Christ! Jesus is God! We are not! Jesus did many things that man has no authority or ability to do (e.g. He calmed storms, He walked on water, etc.)

B. Many Bible scholars believe that this statement by Jesus was "...a pledge or promise that would be fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. Chrysostom (A.D. 345-407) and many others have held this view. Ensuing statements in John 20 seem to confirm that the disciples did not receive the Spirit there in the upper room." (MacArthur, p. 176) The following facts appear to support this interpretation:

1) The disciples subsequent behavior. If the disciples were given the Holy Spirit in John 20, they sure had a funny way of manifesting it! They appear to have done little or nothing in the eight days that followed. "Eight days later Jesus came to them where they were hiding-full of fear-in a locked room (20:26). More than a week after Jesus breathed on them and promised the Spirit, the disciples had not gone anywhere or done anything that would manifest the Spirit's power and presence." (Ibid)

2) Subsequent statements by Christ. Christ told these same disciples later (just prior to His ascension) "**SHALL** be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (future tense!), and that they were to wait until that occurred before going out and beginning their ministry (Acts 1:4-5, cf. v.8).

3) Christ's instruction in Acts 1 for the disciples to "wait for the promise of the Father" "...seems to refer back to John 14:16... It was a promise that the Holy Spirit would come. The promise was reiterated by Jesus in John 20:26 but not yet fulfilled. *At this point the disciples were STILL WAITING for the Holy Spirit.*" Ibid, pp. 176-177)

4) Acts 1:8 states that the disciples would receive power to witness when they received the Holy Spirit. "Clearly, the receiving of power was parallel to the receiving of the Holy Spirit. The disciples were still waiting. The promise was yet unfulfilled. If the Spirit had come upon them in John 20, the power would be there already and there would be nothing to wait for." (Ibid)

5) Two other passages demonstrate that the disciples did not receive the Holy Spirit until the day of Pentecost... (In John 7:39)...Jesus was speaking of the Holy Spirit...That passage explicitly states that the Spirit would not come until Jesus had been glorified, and He could not be glorified until He had ascended... Also in John 16:7 Jesus told the disciples...'if I go, I will send Him to you.' Jesus, of course, did not 'go away' until He ascended, as recorded in the early verses of Acts... And so a thorough study of Scripture points convincingly to the conclusion that what Jesus said in John 20:22 was simply a promise of the Holy Spirit; the disciples did not receive the Holy Spirit at that moment." (Ibid, p. 177)

C. Alternatively, if Christ really did give the Holy Spirit to the disciples in John 20 it was, at best temporary , in much the same fashion that the Holy Spirit came upon various individuals in Old Testament times for a specific task or purpose, but could subsequently depart (Ps. 51:11b). The majority of biblical scholars agree that the Holy Spirit's activity & ministry in the Old Testament was quite different than in the New Testament era (i.e. whereas after Christ's resurrection and ascension the Holy Spirit began dwelling permanently in all believers, in the Old Testament it appears that He came upon individuals (esp. political or religious leaders) at particular times for specific purposes. He did not necessarily reside permanently in Old Testament individuals.

X. LESSONS WE CAN LEARN FROM THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT:

A. Local churches should involve their people in ministry. People in most charismatic churches are involved. They are being used. They are not sitting on the sidelines like spectators. Often in fundamental churches the same few people do everything and the majority do nothing. That is a recipe for disaster. Spectators usually become critics!

B. People are attracted to churches that are enthusiastic, friendly and welcoming of outsiders.

C. People are not attracted to dead, lifeless churches & church services. Charismatic services are usually very lively. *Of course we cannot and do not endorse or have any brief for the unbiblical and worldly types of music & practices that many charismatic churches utilize.* But on the other hand, some fundamental church services seem more like funeral services. There is such a thing as solid, enthusiastic music, that is at the same time worshipful, biblical and Christ-honoring! Regarding worship services, they should be well planned and organized. They should not be haphazard and disorganized, with the pastor or song leader trying to pick out the hymns and gospel songs at the last minute, unrehearsed, unprepared special music, etc. cf. Eccl. 9:10a; I Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:23-24; etc.

XI. THE DANGERS OF THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

A. Possible spiritual pride. Many charismatics tend to feel that they “have arrived” and those who have not shared their experiences (e.g. spoken in tongues, slaying in the spirit, the “anointing”, etc.), are “2nd class Christians.”

B. Divisiveness & schism produced within the Body of Christ. Many churches have split over charismatic issues.

C. Strongly anti-intellectual/An overemphasis on feelings & emotions. If we live our life based on emotion, we will be on a roller-coaster ride for the rest of our lives. We thank God for feelings, but we can’t let them rule our life.

D. The practice of determining truth subjectively by experience & feeling, rather than objectively, by the Word of God. cf. Ps. 19:6-10; Ps. 119:105; Isa. 8:20; Jn. 17:17; II Tim. 3:16-17; Heb. 4:12; II Pet. 1:19-21; Jude 3b; etc.

“WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE DEPENDS ON SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE, AND WHEN THE BIBLE ITSELF IS NOT THE FINAL WORD? THERE IS NO BIBLICAL AUTHORITY!

....Are charismatics saying something similar to neo-orthodoxy? I believe many of them are. An article written several years ago for Christian Life magazine by Charles Farah is a good example. Farah wrote, ‘As Christians move more and more into the New Testament world, *they will rely less and less on reason and experience as ultimate ways of knowing, and more and more on pneumatic knowing.*’ And how does Farah define ‘pneumatic knowing’? He says it is ‘a knowing beyond all knowing, a perceiving that is beyond all perceiving, a certainty that is beyond all certainty, an understanding that is beyond all understanding.’ **Farah’s statement sounds like pure mysticism.**” (Ibid, p. 79)

“**“Pentecostals...are...noted for bad hermeneutics.**...*First*, their attitude toward Scripture regularly has included a general disregard for scientific exegesis and carefully thought-out hermeneutics...*Secondly*, it is probably fair--and important--to note that in general the Pentecostals’ experience has preceded their hermeneutics. In a sense, the Pentecostal tends to exegete his experience.’ That is not the appraisal of someone hostile to the Pentecostal and charismatic movement. Gordon Fee is himself a Pentecostal.(!)

“...Watch the typical charismatic television program, and you’ll quickly see evidence of what Fee is talking about. I watched in horror a couple of years ago as a guest on a charismatic television network explained *the ‘biblical basis’ of his ministry of ‘possibility thinking.’* ‘My ministry is based entirely on my life verse, Matthew 19:26, ‘With God all things are possible.’ God gave me that verse because I was born in 1926. Obviously intrigued by that method of obtaining a ‘life verse,’ the talk show host grabbed a Bible and began thumbing through excitedly. ‘I was born in 1934,’ he said. ‘My life verse would be Matthew 19:34. What does it say?’ Then he discovered that Matthew 19 has only thirty verses. Undeterred, he flipped to Luke 19 and read verse 34: ‘And they said, The Lord hath need of him’ (KJV). Thrilled, he exclaimed, ‘Oh, the Lord has NEED of me! The Lord has need of ME! What a wonderful life verse! I’ve never had a life verse before, but now the Lord has given me one! Thank you, Jesus! Hallelujah!’ The studio audience began to applaud. *At that moment, however, the talk show host’s wife, who had also turned to Luke 19, said, ‘Wait a minute! You can’t use this. This verse is talking about a DONKEY!’* That incident says much about the willy-nilly way some charismatics approach Scripture. Looking for ‘a word from the Lord,’ some play a game of ‘Bible roulette,’... That is no way to approach Bible study.” (MacArthur, pp. 85-86).

E. A tremendous emphasis on a completely unbiblical ecumenical unity- with all of its tragic consequences! **This is probably the number one problem and danger of the charismatic movement.** “Many charismatics...(are) willing to embrace anyone and everyone--even if it means overlooking grossly errant doctrinal perspectives--as long as the person has manifested some outward evidence of the charismata... *the charismatic movement has... unwittingly (in some cases) succeeded in becoming the kind of worldwide ecumenical force many liberals originally envisioned the World Council of Churches might one day become...* (But) In some cases... the trend toward ecumenism is not unwitting, but carefully calculated. David du Plessis, for example, was quite candid about his enthusiasm for the ecumenical movement. Many other charismatic leaders, including John Wimber, have taken up the mantle of ecumenical advocacy. I (MacArthur) agree with the assessment of Masters and Whitcomb: ‘The overwhelming majority of charismatic leaders still hope for a world-wide ecumenical church under the leadership of the Pope. The charismatic movement has certainly spread extensively within the Roman Catholic Church. However, while vast numbers of priests now employ charismatic jargon and methods of worship, their Catholic doctrines remain totally unchanged. [Peter Masters and John C. Whitcomb, *The Charismatic Phenomenon* (London: The Wakeman Trust, 1988), 9-10.]...

“One writer (Thomas Edgar) pointed out the irony of the charismatic movement’s marriage with ecumenism: ‘*Is it not inconsistent that a movement which claims to be in direct contact with the Holy Spirit, to have all the gifts...can at the same time include Roman Catholics, conservative and liberal Protestants... those who deny the verbal inspiration of the Bible, and those who reject Christ’s vicarious atonement on the cross?* Apparently the Holy Spirit is not concerned with communicating any information to correct all these differences, many of which are crucial and some of which are incorrect. All this direct communication with the Spirit has apparently done nothing to correct even basic errors... This movement has solved no theological issue, produced no advance in biblical knowledge, and has not produced more spiritual Christians. Would such an effusion of the genuine Spirit of God produce so little?’

“...Charismatic ecumenism is steadily eroding any claim the charismatic movement ever had to biblical orthodoxy. In Asia shocking new charismatic cults are springing up, blending Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and other false teachings with the teachings of Western Charismatics. The charismatic movement as a whole is entirely unequipped to defend against such influences...

“*And so while charismatic doctrine tends to be divisive among groups that are orthodox, it has had the opposite effect among groups that are not. Charismatics are building bridges with groups and individuals whom Christians are commanded to shun* (2 John 9-11). Sadly, many charismatics have thereby become participants in the evil deeds of those who deny the teaching of our Lord (v.11).” (MacArthur, *Charismatic Chaos*, pp. 293-295). cf. Isa. 8:20; Mt. 7:6, 15-23; 23:13-33; II Cor. 6:14-7:1; Gal. 1:8-9; Eph. 5:11; I Thess. 5:21; II Jn. 7-11; etc.

(continued)

THE SPIRITUAL GIFT OF “SPEAKING IN TONGUES”

XII. SPEAKING IN TONGUES

A. ALL THE BIBLICAL ACCOUNTS OF TONGUES SPEAKING. The following biblical references are ALL the places in the New Testament where tongues speaking is mentioned, implied (?), or are actually stated to have occurred (some supplementary notes regarding some of these passages can be found under “I”, “J”, “K”, “L” & “M” below):

- 1) Acts: 2:1-13; 10:44-48; 19:1-6
- 2) Mark 16:17
- 3) I Corinthians 12-14
- 4) Acts 8: 14-17 (This passage does not specifically mention tongues speaking, but it may have occurred there?)
- 5) “Some charismatics point to Romans 8:26-27 as another New Testament reference to tongues...That is a tortured interpretation of the passage and an unscholarly handling of the Greek text. Nothing in the Greek suggests the idea of praying in tongues” (MacArthur, Charismatic Chaos, [hereafter abbreviated as: CC], footnote, p. 224)

B) THE PURPOSES BEHIND THE GIFT OF TONGUES:

1) It was a final sign to the unbelieving Jews. It was a last chance, if you please, for Israel to repent of its rejection of their Messiah and embrace Christ as Messiah-otherwise judgment was on the way! I Cor. 14:20-22 cf. Isa. 28:7-12; Dt. 28:49; & Jer. 5:15.

“Basically, the purpose of tongues as a sign is threefold. They are a sign of cursing (#1 above), a sign of blessing (see #2, #3 & #5 below), and a sign of authority (see #4 below)... Paul drew a conclusion from the Old Testament text. His conclusion was *that tongues are not for believing people; they are for unbelieving people*. What unbelieving people? The phrase ‘this people’ in verse 21 is referring to Israel, **so tongues was specifically a sign to unbelieving Israel...**In Isaiah 28 we find ourselves in the Southern Kingdom of Judah during the reign of King Hezekiah... In verse 7 Isaiah finds the leaders of Israel, the prophets and the priests in a drunken stupor... Notice the ugliness of verse 8... So (Isaiah) delivered his message of rebuke and of coming judgment (to them). Do you know what their reaction was? They mocked him, scorned him, chided him, and derided him...(notice) verse 9, ‘Whom shall he teach knowledge?... Only babies! Why? Because he always goes precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little. He must think we’re babies.’ ...They mocked him...(so) In verses 11-12 Isaiah says that God ‘with stammering lips and another tongue will...speak to this people... *In other words God said, ‘You wouldn’t hear the simple, repeated, childlike message of Isaiah, so I’m going to talk to you in a language you’ll never understand.’* He was referring to the babbling Babylonians who had already encompassed their city...And when they began to hear that unintelligible language of Babylonia, they would know that the judgment of God had fallen...The people of Israel had been warned before the warning of Isaiah (cf. Dt. 28:49)... this warning could have reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70...There was also a similar warning in the sixth century by the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 5:15)...

“In the Old Testament then, God had clearly pointed out to the people of Israel that when they were going to be judged, there would be a sign. That sign was that they would hear a language they couldn’t understand... When the Jewish people heard a multitude of languages they didn’t understand on the day of Pentecost, they should have known that the judgment of God was imminent. And it was! In A.D. 70 the Romans wiped out Jerusalem...

2) It was the way the believers knew the Holy Spirit had come and begun the special relationship that Jesus had told them to wait for, before attempting to begin fulfilling the Great Commission. (cf. Jn. 7:39; 14:16; 16:7; Acts 1:4-5 cf. v.8).

3) It also provided divine confirmation of who could be part of God’s family i.e. Anyone who would come to Christ for salvation. (e.g. Jews-Acts 2,Samaritans-Acts 8 [if tongues occurred there?], Gentiles-Acts 10, “OT” saints in the “NT” era-Acts 19

4) It was part of a “package” of sign gifts (or supernatural gifts) that God gave to the apostles to validate & authenticate them and their message. Heb. 2:3-4; II Cor. 12:12; Rom. 15:19; Acts 14:3 cf. 14:6-18.

“Who were the men of God who spoke of the curse and the judgment? Who were the men of God who spoke of the blessing to come to all nations? The apostles and the prophets. *And it was to them that God gave the ability to speak these languages as an authenticating, validating sign that what they were saying was indeed the truth.* To the Jewish mind, the idea that God would make such a transition would be so shocking, so shattering, so incomprehensible,...that there would have to be some kind of reinforcement that what they were saying was true. Therefore God gave them the ability to speak these languages... *remember it as the ABCs of the purpose of tongues: authority, blessing, and cursing.* The purpose of tongues was not private devotions (see below under “C” & “D”), evangelism, or a proof of ‘Spirit baptism...Once the transition was made the church was born, Jerusalem was destroyed, and the sign was no longer necessary... When I take a trip I rely on signs to tell me how close I am to my destination...Once I arrive... however, the signs will stop, because the purpose for the signs, as they point ahead to something, cease once the destination is reached. *Tongues were a sign. They pointed to something--a curse of God upon Israel. And once the curse came, the sign was no longer necessary.*” (MacArthur, S/T, pp. 135-136)

5) It inaugurated the Church age. Acts 1:4-5, 8; cf. Rom. 9-11. “When tongues occurred at Pentecost, the message to Israel was: ‘God is not going to work exclusively through one nation any longer--speaking only one language. God’s not going to favor one people any longer...(Eph. 3:2-6)...(so) Primarily tongues are as a sign of the curse on Israel. But notice the residual effect of that curse is the blessing that comes to the whole world.’” (Ibid, p. 134)

6) Additionally, there is the possibility (?) that the gift of tongues was used by Paul (& perhaps other apostles?) to proclaim the gospel to people groups whose language Paul did not know? cf. I Cor. 14:18-25. We really don’t have any confirmation of that, but it’s a possibility.

C) THE NATURE OF TONGUES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. Charismatic proponents notwithstanding, every indication is that the New Testament tongues which were spoken were always real languages-not some sort of gibberish, ecstatic speech, or “angel talk.” “‘Tongues’ is from the Greek word *glossa*, which, like our word tongue, can refer either to the physical organ or to a language. Paul is clearly referring to a gift of languages.” (Ibid, p. 225).

Unquestionably the tongues spoken in Acts (2, 10, 19) were genuine, known languages: **(1)** Note the reaction of the men from the various nations in Acts 2:6-11 who heard them, **(2)** “Language” (“tongue”-KJV) in 2:6, 8 is the normal word for a human language (*glossa*). “Nowhere does the Bible teach that the gift of tongues is anything other than human languages. Nor is there any suggestion that the true tongues described in I Corinthians 12:14 were materially different from the miraculous languages described in Acts 2 at Pentecost. The Greek word in both places is *glossa*. In Acts it is clear that the disciples were speaking in known languages...Luke went on to name some fifteen different countries and areas whose languages were being spoken (vv. 8-11).” (Ibid, p. 226), **(3)** “Furthermore, the Greek word *dialektos*, from which we get the English word ‘dialect,’ is also used in reference to the languages in Acts 2:6, 8.” (Ibid). **(4)** Note also I Cor. 14:10, where the languages (tongues) being discussed are clearly known, natural human languages!

“BUT WEREN’T THE TONGUES IN CORINTH DIFFERENT THAN THE TONGUES SPOKEN IN THE BOOK OF ACTS?”

Since it’s a well known and well established fact that much of the alleged tongues speaking going on today is linguistic gibberish that has been studied and shown to not possess even the rudimentary characteristics intrinsic to ALL human languages, *some charismatics have tried to advance the idea that the tongues spoken in Acts was different than the tongues spoken in I Corinthians* (i.e. that the tongues mentioned in I Corinthians refers [sic] to an unknown, unearthly, angel language or “angel talk” that believers can use in their private prayer times!) For instance: “Donald Gee, a well-known charismatic, wrote the following statement: ‘The revealed purposes of the gift of tongues are *chiefly devotional*, and we do well to emphasize the fact.’...Another charismatic, Larry Christenson, wrote, ‘One speaks in tongues, *for the most part, in his private devotions. This is by far its most important use and value.*’ [sic]...**That is the opposite of what Paul is saying in I Corinthians.**” (MacArthur, S/T, p. 90). Advocates of this view attempt to build a case for that position by appealing to several verses in I Corinthians 13 & 14:

1) **I Cor. 13:1** Here Paul refers to “the tongues of men, or angels.” “What did Paul mean by the ‘tongues of...angels?’ ...most charismatics believe that the gift of tongues today is a private prayer language, a heavenly language known only to God, celestial speech, or some other kind of unearthly idiom. There is no warrant in the text itself for such a view, however. Paul was making a hypothetical case, just as in the subsequent verses, where he speaks about knowing all mysteries and knowledge (even Paul could not literally make that claim)... Paul was speaking theoretically, suggesting that even if those things were true, without love they would be meaningless. To make his point about the necessity for love, Paul was trying to stretch his examples to the outer limits” (Ibid, pp. 225-226). What they fail to understand is that in those verses Paul was using irony, hyperbole, exaggeration,&/or sarcasm to make his points! Paul was not teaching in 13:1 that there is actually an “angel talk!” He was simply using exaggeration to get his point across (cf. 13:2-3 “*all knowledge,*” “*know all mysteries,*” “*have all faith,*” “*give all my possessions to the poor,*” “*deliver my body to be burned*”). “Besides, there is no evidence in Scripture that angels use a heavenly language. Whenever angels appear in Scripture, they communicate in normal human language (e.g. Luke 1:11-20, 26-37; 2:8-14)” (Ibid).

2) **The term “unknown” in reference to tongues in I Corinthians 14** (KJV). Charismatics also appeal to the fact that the King James Version of I Corinthians 14 “...repeatedly uses the expression ‘an unknown tongue.’ That, they say, describes a language that is not of this world. *The word unknown, however, was supplied by translators and does not appear in the Greek text.* That is why the King James Version shows the word in italics.”² (Ibid)

3) **I Cor. 14:2, 4, 13-14, 28.** Ecstatic (unknown) tongues advocates also appeal to phrases contained in these verses (“*speaks to God...edifies himself...my spirit prays... let him speak to himself and to God*”) for support for their private prayer tongue belief. *However*, in regard to Paul’s comment (v.2) “For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God [lit., ‘a god’];...Paul was saying, ‘You people with your pagan ecstasies are not doing what all spiritual gifts were given to do--minister (or speak) to men. Rather, you are all wrapped up in speaking pagan mysteries in ecstatic speech to some god... Paul’s not referring to the mysteries (Gk., *musterion*) of God or the mysteries that he taught; he’s referring to the mysteries of paganism.” (MacArthur, S/T, p. 86)

If Paul’s words were not outright condemnation (comment above), then it appears that he was using sarcasm in verses 2 & 28. “Note that in 1 Corinthians 14:2 Paul was criticizing the Corinthians for using their ‘gift of tongues’ to speak to God and not to men...Paul’s comment is not suggesting that tongues should be used as a ‘prayer language’; *he was using irony*, pointing out the futility of speaking in tongues without an interpreter, because only God would know if anything was said.” (Ibid, p. 228).

Paul does speak of edification in 14:4, so tongues advocates try to say that that verse refers to a “private prayer language” with which believers can edify themselves during their personal devotional times. “How could Paul be using hyperbole or sarcasm there?”, they ask. But such individuals are apparently unaware of the following facts regarding the term edification:

a) When Paul speaks of edification, it does not always have a positive connotation. In fact edification is used in a negative sense earlier in this very letter (I Cor. 8:10). “In 1 Corinthians 8:10, for example, the same Greek word is used to speak of ‘*strengthening someone’s conscience to do evil.*’” (Ibid, p. 229)

b) I Cor. 10:24 also puts the lie to the idea that Paul was serious &/or was commending personal, self-edification! (In this verse) “Paul was saying, ‘All things might be OK for you, but don’t do them because they’re OK for you--do them because they’re going to mean something to someone else.’” (MacArthur, S/T, p. 91)

c) “Paul was not commending the use of tongues for self-edification, but condemning people who were using the gift in violation of its purpose and in disregard of the principle of love

²Glossa always appears in the plural form throughout Acts, indicating multiple languages. In 1 Corinthians 14, however, Paul employed both the singular and plural forms. One possible explanation is that when he used the singular ‘tongue’ in verses 2, 4, 13, 14, and 19, he was referring to the counterfeit pagan babbling that some of the Corinthian believers were evidently using instead of the true gift of languages. Meaningless, ecstatic speech was fundamentally all the same, so the plural form was unnecessary. When Paul was clearly referring to the authentic gift of languages, however, he used the plural ‘tongues.’ The only exception is 1 Corinthians 14:27, where Paul describes one man speaking one language, so the singular ‘tongue’ was necessary there, too.” (MacArthur, CC, footnote, pp. 226-227)

(‘[Love] does not seek its own.’ - I Cor. 13:5). The word ‘edify’ in 14:4 means ‘to build up.’ It might carry either a positive or a negative connotation (see above), depending on the context.” (Ibid)

Similarly, in 14:13-14, Paul’s point is that if you don’t understand a foreign language yet are speaking it, you are doing something, but it is of no benefit to you & you should avoid it! cf. 14:15.

D) THE PURPOSE OF ALL SPIRITUAL GIFTS IS TO BENEFIT THE BODY OF CHRIST. THEY WERE NEVER INTENDED, NOR ARE THEY GIVEN, FOR OUR OWN BENEFIT! In response to the above-mentioned erroneous statements that there is such a thing as a “private prayer tongue” that God gives believers to edify themselves and use in their devotions, *it must be clearly and unequivocally pointed out that neither tongues, nor any other spiritual gift was ever intended for private devotional use, or to be personally beneficial to the possessor of the gift!*

ALL spiritual gifts are designed and intended to edify and bless OTHERS, not ourselves! - I Cor. 10:24; 12:7; 14:12, 26; I Pet. 4:10. To have and use a supposed “prayer tongue” for the personal benefit of the possessor is totally contrary to Scripture. “Spiritual gifts were never intended to be used for God’s benefit, or for the benefit of the gifted individual. Peter made that clear in 1 Peter 4:10: ‘As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another.’” (Ibid, p. 228) “So (while) its being said that speaking in tongues is a new way to have your devotions, a new way to edify yourself... In the first nineteen verses of 1 Corinthians 14, Paul basically chides the Corinthians for their selfish use of tongues... (in verse 2)...Paul was telling the Corinthians, ‘When you speak in ecstatic gibberish, you are doing what is done in the mystery religions by people who are speaking to their gods. This is not the design of any spiritual gift, because all spiritual gifts are designed to speak to men or to serve others.’...Paul says that the gifts were give to profit all (12:7). They had misused this gift.” (MacArthur, S/T, p. 124).

“(and) No spiritual gift was ever given for the purpose of ministering to God. All spiritual gifts are given to build up the Body of Christ by ministering to the members of the Body. God doesn’t need us to minister a spiritual gift to Him, because He’s not incomplete...”

“If you study prayer in the New Testament, you will never find a verse that tells you to pray to God in an unknown language. When Jesus laid out the model for prayer in Matthew 6:9-13, there wasn’t any gibberish or ecstatic language involved. (In fact, in verse 7 He had just condemned such an approach to prayer.)” (MacArthur, S/T, pp. 86-87, 125). I might add that *the whole mentality that it’s “more spiritual” to be mindless and not know what you are saying is false!* As one has observed: “...there is never a time in the Word of God when God wants us to be mindless. There is never a time when God wants us to function on pure emotion without understanding...In fact, in Matthew 22:37 Jesus says, ‘**Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind**’” (MacArthur, S/T, p. 112-emphasis added in the original)

E) BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE USE OF THE GIFT OF TONGUES-- ASSUMING (for the sake of argument) THAT THE GIFT IS STILL IN OPERATION TODAY. I Cor. 12 & 14

1) **Believers do NOT get a choice of which gift they get**-The Holy Spirit determines that. -I Cor. 12:11, 18. The idea that Christians can go forward in a church service, or in a similar fashion deliberately and purposely receive a particular spiritual gift, especially tongues, is totally unbiblical!

2) **Everybody does not get the same gift** I Cor. 12:14-27, 30. The teaching that while believers receive various spiritual gifts, EVERY believer should (must?) receive the gift of tongues too, is unbiblical! “...in 12:30 Paul says, ‘Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?’ The implied answer is obviously NO(!)...

(so) Why does Paul say, ‘I wish you all spoke in tongues,’ (14:5a) if he knows they can’t?...(answer): he is speaking in hyperbole. In 1 Corinthians 7:1-6 Paul talks about marriage... in verse 7 he says, ‘*I would that all men were even as I myself.*’ In other words, ‘I wish you were all single.’ Now is that an actual divine mandate? No. That’s wishing the impossible for the sake of emphasis--which is exactly what Paul is doing in 1 Corinthians 14... Paul was using hyperbole as an emphasis. He’s balancing his strong words denying the primacy of tongues to emphasize the fact that there (was) a true gift.” (MacArthur, Speaking in Tongues, pp. 92-93). Many charismatics who proclaim that every believer should speak in tongues, say that that is the sign that they have been “baptized” by the Spirit, have “received” the Spirit or have been “filled” with the Spirit. However, “In 1 Corinthians 12 all are baptized by the Spirit; in Acts 2 people

receive the Spirit; and in Acts 4 people are filled with the Spirit. *But in each of those cases an accompanying phenomenon of tongues is NOT mentioned. Therefore, you can't equate the baptism of the Spirit, the receiving of the Spirit, or the filling of the Spirit with speaking in tongues.*" (Ibid, p. 127). Note carefully also, 1 Corinthians 12:13 cf. 30. "Paul wrote 'By one Spirit were we all baptized.' How many were baptized? All. Look at verse 30: 'Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?' No. In other words, all are baptized, but all do not speak in tongues. You cannot equate those two." (Ibid, p. 126).

3) **Speaking in tongues is the least important and least desirable spiritual gift.** I Cor. 12:29-30; 14:19. That is an amazing biblical fact, in light of the enormous overemphasis on the gift of tongues!

4) **Technically speaking, Jews should (?) be present in any service where tongues are used.**—Since one of the main purposes for the apostles speaking in tongues on the Day of Pentecost, as confirmed by the apostle Paul, was to be a sign to the Jews. (I Cor. 14:21-23) i.e. Tongues were a sign intended for UNBELIEVERS! One writer surmises that prior to A.D. 70: "Someone in the congregation would tell a person with the gift when there was an unbelieving Jew in their midst that spoke a certain foreign language. Then the person with the gift would look around to make sure that someone with the gift of interpretation was also present. In the right place at the right time, the one with the gift of languages would speak that language—a language unknown to him but known to that Jewish unbeliever. The message, then, would reach that Jewish person, the interpreter would interpret it for the edification of the congregation, and it would be used in its proper manner." (MacArthur, S/T, p. 152)

5) **Believers should desire the greater gifts- which eliminates tongues from contention,** since it's the least of the gifts. I Cor. 12:31 cf. vv.28-30 (Note: Since individual believers get no choice in what spiritual gift they get (see #1 above), *this passage is probably referring to the corporate body of the church, and that they should desire and pray for God to give them [their church] the best gifts i.e. good preachers!*)

6) Assuming, for the sake of argument, that tongues are still in operation today (?), **a maximum of 3 are to speak in tongues in any one service.** I Cor. 14:27. *If you have ever been in a service where more than 3 spoke in tongues, you can be certain that was not of God!*

7) **Tongues speakers are not to interrupt each other or speak at the same time.** ("each in turn"). I Cor. 14:27. *If you have ever been in a service where more than one was speaking in "tongues" at the same time, that was not of God!*

8) **If there is no interpreter, speaking in tongues is not to take place.** I Cor. 14:27-28. *If you've ever been in a service where people spoke in tongues, but no one interpreted it, that was not of God!*

9) **There should be only one interpreter.** I Cor. 14:27d. "Here is something most people miss. The Greek text emphasizes the word translated 'one' (*heis*) in this verse by putting it in the emphatic form. The verse is saying, 'Let one interpret—not two, five, seven, or fourteen—just one.' Why" Because the problem in the Corinthian church was that everyone wanted to gain the preeminence by giving the interpretation." (Mac., S/T, p. 153). *If you've ever been in a service with more than one interpreter, that was not of God!*

10) **Church leaders are to sit in judgment on whether preaching (prophesying) &/or the interpretations of tongues speaking given, are correct or not.** I Cor. 14: 29 "...many times when the so-called interpretation is given, it can be proved that it is not a true interpretation at all. There are many testimonies to the effect that people have experimented by speaking Hebrew or other known foreign languages, and the interpretation given had nothing to do with what was actually said!" (Ibid, p. 105).

11) **The service should be decent and in order, without chaotic behavior.** I Cor. 14: 32-33, 40. "Any confusion or disorder in the assembly was an indication of something that did not originate from God (verse 33)." (Paul Van Gorder, *Charismatic Confusion*, Grand Rapids: Radio Bible Class, 1972, p. 33, cited in MacArthur, CC, pp. 224-225). "In Corinth, the counterfeit practices of heathenism had engulfed the church... Those kind of ecstatic, sensual, feeling-oriented experiences, however, are never associated in the New Testament with the true work of the Holy Spirit. In fact, in 1 Corinthians 14:32 Paul says, 'The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.' In other words, no one is ever to give up his spirit or lose control of himself." (MacArthur, S/T, p. 82)

12) **Women are not to speak in tongues or prophecy (preach) at all!** I Cor. 14: 34-35 cf. I Tim. 2:11-15, esp. vv. 11-12. This is interesting, since the majority of most tongues speaking, in most charismatic churches is often done by women! *Any time a woman has spoken in tongues in a service, you can know that was not of God!*³

In relation to the above list, Van Gorder observes: “*Most contemporary charismatics violate every one of the apostle’s guidelines*” (Ibid, p. 225). MacArthur adds: “*These principles do a good job of regulating tongues. In fact, if the true gift of tongues hadn’t ceased in the first century, these regulations might end 95 percent of what goes on in the tongues movement today.*” (MacArthur, S/T, p. 154).

So...even assuming the gift of tongues is still in operation and being given to believers today (an assumption I do not agree with, but am allowing here for the sake of argument!)... **ANY TIME ANY OF THE ABOVE-MENTIONED GUIDELINES HAVE BEEN VIOLATED, YOU CAN KNOW THAT THAT TONGUES SPEAKING WAS NOT OF GOD.** AND WAS NOT THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT...**BECAUSE THE HOLY SPIRIT AUTHORED THE WORD OF GOD (INCLUDING THESE REGULATIONS), AND HE WOULD NOT CONTRADICT HIMSELF & GO AGAINST HIS OWN WORD!**

F) IT’S APPARENT THAT ONLY THE APOSTLES & FOUNDATIONAL LEADERS POSSESSED MIRACULOUS “SIGN” GIFTS. -II Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3-4; Acts 14:3 cf. 6-18; Rom. 15:19. **REASON: Those miraculous sign gifts authenticated the foundational prophets and apostles & their message.** There were false teachers and bogus apostles who traveled around too! How would people who had never met someone like the Paul, know that he was truly God’s servant and his word to be trusted and believed as the Word of God? Paul would do miraculous signs to validate his claims and establish instant credentials. *If those signs would have continued unabated throughout history, or if all believers possessed them, there would have been no way of knowing or validating who the true apostles and prophets were!* BUT EVERYONE DID NOT RECEIVE OR MANIFEST THEM!

G) HAS THE BIBLICAL GIFT OF TONGUES CEASED? I SAY YES! WHAT EVIDENCE IS THERE TO SUPPORT THAT VIEWPOINT?

1) **The Testimony of Scripture (I Cor. 13).** This passage has been interpreted in various ways, particularly in reference to the mysterious phrase “*when that which ‘is perfect’ (?) is come...*” -13:10

a) **What is, “the perfect”?** It seems to me, that the most natural interpretation is that “the perfect” refers to the eternal state, i.e. after the millennium, when the new heavens and new earth are revealed, as opposed to “the perfect” being the completion of the New Testament canon, the coming of the Holy Spirit, or even the coming of Christ at the end of the tribulation. “Many suggestions have been made as to the meaning of ‘the perfect.’ Some believe it is the complete New Testament; thus they conclude this passage is saying that tongues would cease when the canon was closed. Various others say the perfect thing is the maturing of the church, the rapture, or the second coming. But it seems that the perfect thing Paul has in mind must be the eternal state--’face to face’ in verse 12 can best be explained as being with God in the new heavens and new earth. It is only in glory that we will know as we are known (v. 12).” (Ibid, pp. 230-231)

b) **I Cor. 13:8 teaches that tongues will cease, the only question is when.** “Tongues...’will cease.’ The Greek verb used in I Corinthians 13:8 (*pauro*) means ‘to cease permanently.’ It implies that when tongues ceased, they would never start up again... The passage does not say *when* tongues were to cease. Some commentators believe verse 10 sets the timing: ‘When the perfect comes, the partial will be done away;’... The language of the passage puts tongues in a

³Female tongues advocates try to get around this biblical command by saying that Paul was simply referring to women chattering or talking during church services. But the entire context is dealing with tongues and prophecy (preaching)! In addition, if Paul forbids women from even talking in services, do you think he would allow them to preach or speak in tongues during a service? The Scripture is very clear on the question of women preaching in church services: They are forbidden to do so cf. I Tim. 2:11-15. It should also be pointed out here that the reasons women are forbidden to preach or lead a church are NOT due to Paul’s chauvinistic cultural hangups! On the contrary, there were two reasons (the order of creation, and the occurrences at the Fall), both of which are theological, NOT cultural! A thorough study of the subject will also demonstrate that appeals to the rare mentions of “prophetesses” in Scripture (only 7 instances in the entire Bible) also lends no support. Virtually all of the women in those passages were involved in such an activity one time only, *and some of their “prophesyings” consisted of nothing more than give birth to a child with a prophetic name*, etc.! (See John MacArthur, Jr., “God’s High Calling For Women” (I Tim. 2:11-15), for a fuller treatment and explanation of the topic of prophetesses in Scripture, and a refutation of the standard charismatic viewpoint on them.

category apart from prophecy and knowledge. Verse 8 says prophecy and knowledge will be ‘done away’ (Gk., *katargeo*), but tongues ‘will cease’ (*pauo*, ‘stop’). *Katargeo* appears as a passive verb, meaning that the subject of the sentence receives the action: Prophecy and knowledge will be ‘done away’ by ‘the perfect.’ *Pauo*, however, appears in the Greek middle voice, which here seems to signify a reflexive action: The gift of tongues will ‘stop itself.’ *When* is not stipulated, but they won’t be around when the perfect thing arrives. History suggests that tongues ceased shortly after Paul wrote this epistle, as we shall see...” (Ibid)

“Incidentally, knowledge and prophecy need not be understood in this context exclusively as miraculous or revelatory gifts. The non-revelatory gifts of knowledge (the ability to grasp the meaning of God’s revelation) and prophecy (the ability to proclaim truth powerfully) continue today and will not pass away until the ultimate perfection of the eternal state causes them to be ‘done away.’” (Ibid). “The Greek word for prophecy comes from the two Greek words *pro* (meaning ‘before’) and *phemi* (meaning ‘to speak’). *It literally means ‘to speak before.’* Its primary use is to speak before an audience (forthtelling), not ‘to speak before’ in terms of time (foretelling). The gift of prophecy, then, was to speak before people, proclaiming the Word of God. The purpose of this gift is indicated in 1 Corinthians 14:3... You may say, ‘I thought to prophesy meant to predict the future.’ No. The idea of predicting the future never came along until the Middle Ages, when the English word took on that meaning. That isn’t its meaning in the Greek language. *Propheteuo* simply means ‘to speak before others.’”(?) (MacArthur, S/T, pp. 15, 85). *Getting back to our point here though, the context of I Corinthians 13:8-13 would appear to teach that the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues would stop before the other two gifts (knowledge & prophecy) would.*

c) **13:9-13 seems to support the above idea that tongues would cease by itself BEFORE the other two gifts.** Please note that *after verse eight, tongues is not mentioned or alluded to again,* while knowledge and prophecy are repeatedly referred to in the ensuing context (esp. vv. 9, 12). “The verb *katargeo*, in describing the cessation of prophecy and knowledge, is in the passive voice... In the case of prophecy and knowledge, something will act upon them to cause them to stop. What is it that’s going to do that? Look at verses 9-10: ‘For we know in part [the gift of knowledge], and we prophesy in part [the gift of prophecy]. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away [Gk., *katargeo*]. What is it that’s going to come and stop prophecy and knowledge? *‘That which is perfect.’* Also notice that tongues do not appear in verse 9. Why? Because only prophecy and knowledge are stopped by ‘that which is perfect.’ The verb that says tongues will cease (*pauo*) is in the middle voice...the Greek middle voice is reflexive, indicating that the subject is acting upon itself... **Literally, then, verse 8 says, ‘Tongues will stop by themselves.’** That’s the meaning that the middle voice gives to the verb *pauo*... The Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) uses the middle form of *pauo* fifteen times to translate the Hebrew word that means ‘to complete,’ ‘to stop,’ ‘to finish,’ ‘to accomplish,’ ‘to end.’ It has a finality to it. And the reflexive middle voice gives it the idea that it ends all by itself. The inevitable deduction: The gifts of prophecy and knowledge, then, are going to continue on until ‘that which is perfect’ comes and stops them. The gift of tongues is going to stop all by itself. That’s what has to be deduced when one looks at the Greek text.” (MacArthur, S/T, pp. 18-19)

d) **“Tongues was a miraculous, revelatory gift, and as we have noted repeatedly, the age of miracles and revelation ended with the apostles.** The last recorded miracles in the New Testament occurred around A.D. 58, with the healings on the island of Malta (Acts 28:7-10). From A.D. 58 to 96, when John finished the book of Revelation, no miracle is recorded. Miracle gifts like tongues and healing are mentioned only in 1 Corinthians, an early epistle. Two later epistles, Ephesians and Romans, both discuss gifts of the Spirit at length--but no mention is made of the miraculous gifts. *By that time miracles were already looked on as something in the past (Heb. 2:3-4).*” (Ibid, p. 231)

e) **“...as we noted, tongues were intended as a sign to unbelieving Israel.** They signified that God had begun a new work that encompassed the Gentiles. The Lord would now speak to all nations in all languages. The barriers were down. And so the gift of languages symbolized not only the curse of God on a disobedient nation, but also the blessing of God on the whole world. Tongues were therefore a sign of transition between the Old and New Covenants.” (Ibid, p. 232)

f) **“Moreover, the gift of tongues (as noted above) was inferior to other gifts.** It was given primarily as a sign (1 Cor. 14:22) and cannot edify the church in a proper way. It is also easily misused to ‘edify’ self (14:4). The church meets for the edification of the body, not self-gratification or personal experience-seeking. Therefore, tongues had limited usefulness in the church, and so it was never intended to be a permanent gift.” (Ibid)

g) **“Another characteristic of the gift of tongues was that when a person spoke in tongues and had it interpreted, that was a direct revelation from God, Has direct revelation from God ceased? Yes.** (Jude 3 [‘contend for the faith **once for all** delivered unto the saints.’ NASV]). Is there any more to Scripture than we now have? No. In fact, at the end of the last book of the Bible, the apostle John wrote...Rev. 22:18... Tongues as a revelation source ceased to have the meaning they had in the infancy of the church--when God was giving revelations before the Bible was complete.” (MacArthur, S/T, p. 24)

2) **The Testimony of Church History.** Since the Bible teaches that tongues would cease by themselves, and that once they stopped, they would not return again, We must now ask the question: **“Was there ever a time when tongues ceased to operate in the Church? ANSWER: YES!**

a) **By the end of the first century tongues had ceased!** 1 Cor. 13:8 had said that they would cease, and there is no hint or intimation anywhere in Scripture that biblical tongues would ever start up again!⁴ “History records that tongues did cease.⁵ Paul wrote at least twelve epistles after 1 Corinthians and never mentioned tongues again. Peter never mentioned tongues; James never mentioned tongues; John never mentioned tongues; neither did Jude. Tongues appeared only briefly in Acts and 1 Corinthians as the new message of the gospel was being spread. But once the church was established, tongues were gone. They stopped. The later books of the New Testament do not mention tongues again. Nor did anyone in the post-apostolic age. Cleon Rogers wrote, ‘It is significant that the gift of tongues is nowhere alluded to, hinted at or even found in the Apostolic Fathers.’...**Chrysostom and Augustine--the greatest theologians of the eastern and western churches--considered tongues obsolete.** *Chrysostom* stated categorically that tongues had ceased by his time. Writing in the fourth century, he described tongues as an obscure practice... ‘*The obscurity is produced by our ignorance of the facts referred to and by their cessation, being such as then used to occur but now no longer take place,*’ he wrote. *Augustine* wrote of tongues ... ‘*These were signs adapted to the time...That thing was done for a betokening, and it passed away.*’...Augustine also wrote, ‘*Why is it that no man speaks in the tongues of all nations? Because the Church itself now speaks in the tongues of all nations.* Before, the Church was in one nation, where it spoke in the tongues of all. By speaking then in the tongues of all, it signified what was to come to pass; that by growing among the nations, it would speak in the tongues of all.’” (Ibid, pp. 233-234)

b) **After the first century, only odd & heretical groups practiced speaking in tongues until the 20th century!** The only groups who practiced tongues from A.D. 100 - 1900, were a few aberrant groups & individuals that existed in various times in church history.” During the first five hundred years of the church, the only people who claimed to have spoken in tongues were followers of *Montanus*, who was branded a heretic...The next time any significant tongues-speaking movement arose within Christianity was in the late seventeenth century. A group of *militant Protestants in Cevennes* region of southern France began to prophesy, experience visions, and speak in tongues... The group...(is) remembered for their political and military activities, not their spiritual legacy... At the other end of the spectrum the *Jansenists, a group of Roman Catholic loyalists* who opposed the Reformers’ teaching on justification by faith, also

⁴Charismatics try to use Joel 2 as biblical support for a restoration, or “second Pentecost,” but we have seen earlier in the notes, that a careful examination of that passage offers NO support for such an idea. “The context of Joel 2 is the great millennial kingdom, when the Jews are in their land, when the crops begin to grow, when the desert blossoms like a rose, when it rains in the first month as it would rain in a whole year of rain, when everything grows without the threat of pestilence or plague, and when everybody worships and praises God. That has never happened in the history of Israel; it’s referring to the kingdom.” (MacArthur, Speaking in Tongues, p. 41)

⁵“The Modern Tongues Movement, by Robert G. Gromacki, The Charismatics and the Word of God, by Victor Budgen, & Miraculous Gifts: Are They for Today?, by Thomas R. Edgar, are three excellent books that document this fact.” (MacArthur, Charismatic Chaos, p. 232)

claimed to be able to speak in tongues in the 1700s... Another group that practiced a form of tongues was the *Shakers*...*Mother Ann Lee*, founder of the sect, regarded herself as the female equivalent of Jesus Christ... The Shakers believed sexual intercourse was sinful, even within marriage... Then in the early nineteenth century, Scottish Presbyterian pastor *Edward Irving* and members of his congregation practiced speaking in tongues and prophesying. Irvingite prophets often contradicted each other, their prophecies failed to come to pass, and their meetings were characterized by wild excesses...This group eventually became the Catholic Apostolic Church, which taught many false doctrines, embracing several Roman Catholic doctrines and creating twelve apostolic offices...

“Thus we conclude that from the end of the apostolic era to the beginning of the twentieth century there were no genuine occurrences of the New Testament gift of tongues. They had ceased, as the Holy Spirit had said they would (1 Cor. 13:8)... New Testament scholar Thomas R. Edgar makes this observation: ‘*Since these gifts and signs did cease, the burden of proof is entirely on the charismatics to prove their validity...However, non-charismatics have no burden to prove this, since it has already been proved by history. It is an irrefutable fact admitted by many Pentecostals. Therefore the charismatics must prove biblically that the sign gifts will start up again during the Church Age and that today’s phenomena are this reoccurrence.*’” (Ibid, pp. 234-235) It will not do to say, “Yes, it did cease, but this is the ‘latter rain’ prophesied by Joel.” We have already noted (see III above) that that passage has nothing to do with any second Pentecost, restoration of 1st century gifts, etc., but rather refers to “the day of the Lord,” a time yet future! It is an irrefutable fact that tongues ceased long ago, and the Bible says that when they did, they would never reappear again. “Furthermore, Joel 2:28-29 doesn’t say anything about anyone speaking in tongues.(!) It does talk about prophecy, dreams, and visions--but it does not talk about tongues.” (MacArthur, S/T, p. 43).

H) “SO HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN ALL THE TONGUES SPEAKING GOING ON, IF THE BIBLICAL GIFT OF TONGUES HAS ALREADY CEASED?” ANSWER: THERE ARE SEVERAL POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS FOR IT. But before listing those, it is extremely important to point out that:

THE FACT THAT SOMEONE CAN SPEAK IN TONGUES IS NOT UNUSUAL, AND DOES NOT MEAN THE ABILITY IS FROM GOD! Various false religious groups, and even pagans, have spoken in tongues, throughout history and continue to do so! For example:

“Current editions of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* contain helpful articles on glossolalia (tongues) among pagans in their worship rites. Reports have come from *East Africa* telling of persons possessed by demons *who speak fluently in Swahili or English*, although under normal circumstances they would not understand either language. Among the *Thonga people of Africa*, when a demon is exorcised, a song is usually sung in *Zulu* even though the Thonga people do not know Zulu. *The one doing the exorcising is supposedly able to speak Zulu by a ‘miracle of tongues.’* Today, ecstatic speech is found among *Muslims, Eskimos, and Tibetan monks*. A parapsychological laboratory at the *University of Virginia Medical School* reports incidents of tongues-speaking among those practicing *the occult.*” (Ibid, pp. 239-240).

“*Plato*, who lived from 429-347 B.C., wrote in his dialogues to *Phaedrus* and *Timaeus* about pagan ecstasies of speech. (Obviously) This was not anything that belonged to Christianity... At the time of the Corinthian church, the *Greco-Roman world* had a multitude of gods. In their worship of these gods, it was common for a person to go into ecstasy, which literally means ‘to go out of oneself.’ They would go into a unconscious state where all kinds of psychic phenomena would occur. They believed that when they were in an ecstatic trance, they actually left their bodies, ascended into space, connected up to whatever deity they were worshiping, and would begin to commune with that deity... they would begin to speak the language of the gods. This was a common practice in their culture. In fact, the term used in 1 Corinthians to refer to speaking in tongues (*glossais lalain*) was not invented by Bible writers. It was a term used commonly in the Greco-Roman culture to speak of the pagan language of the gods that occurred while the speaker was in an ecstatic trance.” (MacArthur, S/T, p. 81, 79).

“Joseph Dillow, in his book *Speaking in Tongues*, has compiled the following data, complete with references: ‘The *Encyclopedia Brittanica* cites many instances of tongues speaking in pagan cults... D.C. Graham tells of a girl in the *Szechwan province of China* who was possessed by demons and “began to utter words incoherently.... As far back as *Virgil (70-19 B.C.)* there are references to the tongues speaking of the *Sibylline priestess on the Isle of Delos*. This is described in his *Aeneid*. Today ecstatic speech is found among... *the Eskimos of Greenland*... *The Bwiti cult among the Fang people of the Gabon Republic* has been observed speaking in tongues... *A Turkish actress* claims she learns the “language of *Jokosta*” from a black man she sees in her dreams.’” (MacArthur, *Speaking in Tongues*, p. 46).

If you have heard instructions by charismatics on television or in meetings on how to speak in tongues you have heard comments very similar to this: “**Arise upon your feet, speak or make some sound, continue to make sounds of some kind, and the Lord will make a tongue or language of it**”(Ibid, p. 46). Unfortunately, that statement, which is almost identical to ones made by charismatic leaders, was made by Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism--a non-Christian cult! Obviously then, the fact that a person can speak in tongues proves nothing in regard to whether or not the practice is from God! *Even in controlled scientific studies, tongues speaking has been produced by novices who are not Christians and have never heard of the phenomenon prior to participating in the experiment!*

1) Much “tongues speaking” is simply learned behavior. In Scripture, believers were never “*taught*” or “*coached*” on how to speak in tongues, nor did they have to “*practice it*” and “*sharpen it up,*” as charismatic followers are often told to do today. Such concepts are foreign to the biblical pattern, and an insult to the Holy Spirit who gives genuine gifts. The fact that most charismatic leaders “instruct” or “teach” people how to “speak in tongues” demonstrates the fact that much of it is learned behavior. “Why a person would have to *learn* how to receive a gift from the Holy Spirit is baffling... (Charismatic leaders)...Charles and Frances Hunter hold seminars to instruct people about how to receive the gift of tongues... *they encourage people to repeat “...funny little sounds.’ THAT’S CLEARLY NOT HOW A SPONTANEOUS GIFT OPERATES...* It is striking that many of the different tongues-speakers use the same terms and sounds. They all speak essentially the same way. Anyone who hears it enough can do it... In his book *The Psychology of Speaking in Tongues*, John Kildahl concluded after much study of the evidence, that glossolalia is a learned skill. Kildahl, a clinical psychologist, and his partner Paul Qualben, a psychiatrist, were commissioned by the American Lutheran Church and the National Institute of Mental Health to do a long-range study on tongues. After all their work, they came to the firm conviction that it was nothing more than a ‘learned phenomenon.’

*“A more recent study conducted at Carleton University, Ottawa (Canada), demonstrated that virtually anyone can learn to speak in tongues with minimum instruction and modeling. Sixty subjects who had never spoken in tongues or heard anyone else do it were used in an experiment. After two brief training sessions including audio-and videotaped samples of tongues speaking, all the subjects were asked to attempt to speak glossolalia for thirty seconds. Every subject in the test was able to speak passable glossolalia throughout the thirty-second test, and seventy percent were able to speak fluently.(cf. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 95:1 (1987), 21-23).” (MacArthur, CC, pp. 240-241).*

As to why so many have the tongues experience, the following quote is highly significant: “*Within the charismatic movement, there is great peer pressure to belong, to perform, to have the same gifts and power that everyone else has.* The ‘answer’ to spiritual problems is tongues. It... has become the great common denominator, the universal test of spirituality... for charismatics. But it is a faulty test. Kildahl and Qualben wrote, ‘*Our study produced conclusive evidence that the benefits reported by tongue-speakers which are subjectively real and continuous ARE DEPENDENT UPON ACCEPTANCE BY THE LEADER AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GROUP*, rather than upon the actual experience of saying the sounds. Whenever a tongue-speaker broke off the relationship with the leader of the group, or felt rejected by the group, the experience of glossolalia was no longer so subjectively meaningful.’ They also reported a widespread disillusionment among the subjects of their study. People who spoke in tongues realized instinctively that what they were doing was learned behavior. There was nothing supernatural about it.” (Ibid, pp. 241-242)

2) Some tongues speaking is simply a deliberate fake. I (mwe) have friends from charismatic churches and backgrounds who have admitted this to me. I believe this is not uncommon.

3) Some tongues speaking is psychologically induced. *If you want something to happen badly enough, you can will it to happen* (cf. notes under VI.,I., #'s 1-4). “Some of the strangest cases have been explained as psychological aberrations. The tongues-speaker goes into motor automatism, which is clinically described as radical inward detachment from one’s conscious surroundings. *Motor automatism results in disassociation of nearly all voluntary muscles from conscious control...* Have you ever watched a newscast that showed young teenage girls at a rock concert? In the excitement and the emotion, the fervor and the noise, they literally give up voluntary control of their vocal chords and their muscles. They fall to the floor in a paroxysm (spasm, convulsion)... The condition in which most people sense the euphoria of *the tongues experience seems to be closely related to the hypnotic state.* Kildahl and Qualben stated from their studies that ‘hypnotizability constitutes the sine qua non (the essential element) of the glossolalia experience. If one can be hypnotized, then one is able under proper conditions to speak in

tongues.’ After extensive study of tongues speakers, Kildahl and Qualben concluded that people who were submissive, suggestible, and dependent on a leader were those most likely to speak in tongues... Dr. E. Mansell Pattison, a member of the *Christian Association for Psychological Studies*, said: ‘In certain types of brain disorders resulting from strokes, brain tumors, etc. the patient is left with disruptions in his automatic, physical speech circuit patterns... we can observe the same decomposition of speech that occurs in glossolalia. Similar decomposition of speech occurs in schizophrenic thought and speech patterns, which is structurally the same as glossolalia. *This data can be understood to demonstrate that the same stereotypes of speech will result whenever conscious, willful control of speech is interfered with, whether by injury to the brain, by psychosis, or by passive renunciation of willful control.*’ AS WE HAVE SEEN, WOULD-BE TONGUES-SPEAKERS ARE OFTEN EXPLICITLY INSTRUCTED TO ENTER INTO ‘PASSIVE RENUNCIATION OF WILLFUL CONTROL.’” (Ibid, pp. 242-243).

4) Some tongues speaking may be demonically inspired (e.g. the Mormons [LDS]; Buddhists; etc). As one writer has stated: “...I am convinced that Satan is often the force behind phenomena that pass as gifts of the Spirit. After all, he is behind every false religion (1 Cor. 10:20), and he specializes in counterfeiting truth (2 Cor. 11:13-15)...Former tongues-speaker Ben Byrd believes some of his extraordinary abilities were ‘psychic and possibly satanic powers... Many, many times I have walked down ministry lines praying for people with my eyes closed while I prayed in tongues. *I was able to function as if my eyes were open...BUT MY EYES WERE CLOSED... Functioning through another realm IS POSSIBLE* But PLEASE REMEMBER THAT ALL GIFTS ARE NOT FROM GOD” (Ibid, p. 239, emphasis in the original).

I. MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS & OBSERVATIONS ON ACTS 2: 1-13. Here we have Jews speaking in tongues. **Reasons for it occurring:**

- 1) So that the followers of Christ would know the Holy Spirit had come, per Christ’s prediction, and that they could now go forth and evangelize (cf. Acts 1:4-8).
- 2) On the Day of Pentecost, this was a final, merciful warning sign to unbelieving Jews, to show them that they had made a terrible mistake and had rejected the true Messiah. I Cor. 14:20-22
- 3) It marked the birth of the Church, and the Church Age (Rom. 11:11, 25)

AN IMPORTANT WARNING REGARDING USING THE BOOK OF ACTS AS A PATTERN OR “NORM” FOR TODAY:

“The book of Acts-(is) a journal of the apostles’ experiences...Acts is historical narrative, in contrast to the epistles, which are didactic (teaching)... Historically, Christians committed to a biblical perspective...have understood Acts as an inspired historical record of the apostolic period, not necessarily viewing every event or phenomenon recorded there as normative for the entire church age... the book of Acts was never intended to be a primary basis for church doctrine. It records only the earliest days of the church age and shows the church in transition from the Old Covenant to the New. The apostolic healings, miracles, signs, and wonders evident in Acts were not common, even in those days... Transitions are seen from beginning to end in the book of Acts. Changes happen in almost every chapter. The Old Covenant fades away and the New Covenant comes in all its fullness. Even Paul was caught in the changes. Although he was an apostle of the new era, he still had ties to the old, as indicated by his taking Jewish vows (see Acts 18:18 and 21:26). In Acts we move from the synagogue to the church and from law to grace. The church is transformed from a group of Jewish believers to a body made up of Jews and Gentiles united in Christ...*Acts, therefore, covers an extraordinary time in history. The transitions it records are never to be repeated. And so the only teachings in the book of Acts that can be called normative for the church are those that are explicitly confirmed elsewhere in Scripture.*” (MacArthur, CC, pp. 171-172)

J. MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS & OBSERVATIONS ON ACTS 10:44-46. Here we have Gentiles speaking in tongues. **Reason for it occurring:** This showed the Jewish believers that Gentiles could be saved and be part of Christ’s body too. In order for that to be believed by the Jews, something this dramatic would have had to happen. Likewise, IF tongues occurred in Acts 8 (?) it showed the Jews that Samaritans could be part of the Church.

K. MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS & OBSERVATIONS ON ACTS 19:1-7. In this passage we find the story of a little group of people (12 in all) who had heard and believed the message of John the Baptist, but had never heard the rest of the “story,” having apparently moved away from Israel. *So they were sort of like Old Testament saints living in the New Testament era!* **Reason for it occurring:** It showed this little group of new

converts that they were part of Christ's body too, that they hadn't "missed out" or been converted too late to be included.

L. MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS & OBSERVATIONS ON I CORINTHIANS 12-14.

12:3 - This verse refers to either false tongues (i.e. people were speaking in real foreign languages and unwittingly cursing Christ, without realizing it), or it refers to an early form of the Gnostic heresy which created a false dichotomy between the man Jesus (denigrating or cursing him), and praising the Christ "spirit" (sic).

13:1 - Some of the pagan mystery religions used *gongs & cymbals* in their false worship.

13: 12 - "Verse 12 says, '*For now we see in a mirror, darkly.*' That's referring to prophecy. We can perceive what God is doing, we can perceive His Word, and we can perceive His program--but only partially. Someday, however, we will be face to face with God and have full perception. Further, referring to the gift of knowledge, Paul said, 'Now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known.' The illustration of seeing in a mirror darkly was appropriate to use with the Corinthians. They would know exactly what Paul was talking about because one of the trades in the city of Corinth was mirror making. In those days they made mirrors by flattening out a piece of metal and polishing it to a high shine. If you've ever looked into a metal mirror, however, you know that it tends to be a little wavy, which somewhat distorts the image. Additionally, after a period of time, metal mirrors are prone to decay--becoming blotched and marred. Paul was saying, 'For now, we are looking in a mirror that reveals a rather vague and confined image.'...Have you ever looked in your (car's) rearview mirror as you began to change lanes, only to be startled by a loud honk from a car that you hadn't seen? You hadn't seen the car because it was in your blind spot. That's essentially what Paul is saying in verse 12." (MacArthur, S/T, p. 64)

14: 1-5 - "*The gift of tongues is secondary to the gift of prophecy because tongues cannot edify, but prophecy can. What is significant about that? The purpose of the church when it meets together is edification.* At the end of 14:26 Paul says, 'Let all things be done unto edifying.' At the end of 14:12 Paul tells the Corinthians to 'seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.' In other words, the purpose of the church when it meets together is (worship &) edification. Throughout chapter 14, this same concept is repeated over and over again. For example, verse 4 says, 'He that prophesieth edifieth the church.' Verse 5 says, 'That the church may receive edifying.' Verse 31 says, 'All prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.' The point is this: the church is to come together for edification--to be built up. *Paul was saying, 'Look, tongues cannot edify--especially the counterfeit kind that you have. But prophecy edifies the whole congregation.' That's the basic proposition of the first five verses.*" "Paul essentially said, 'Since you're so zealous of spiritual gifts, and you so want the manifestation of the Spirit, seek that which will truly edify the church. Incidentally, this is how Paul ends the first part of this chapter in verse 5 when he says to seek 'that the church may receive edifying.' In fact, this is the way he ends each of the various sections of this chapter (14) because he's dealing with their selfishness." (Ibid, pp. 83-84, 109)

14:15 - "The word *sing* in 1 Corinthians 14:15 originally meant 'to play the harp.' Through the years it came to mean 'to sing to the accompaniment of the harp.' There are some people who say that the church shouldn't have musical instruments, but that can't be supported biblically. In the New Testament and in the Septuagint, the word *sing* was understood to mean 'to sing to the accompaniment of a harp.'" (Ibid, p. 113)

14: 15 - "Paul in effect said, 'When I talk to God, it's going to come from inside of me. I'm going to use my breath (or my wind), but I'm also going to use my brain.'...Apparently the Corinthians used to sing in ecstatic languages as well as pray in them...But Paul said, 'I don't do that. What purpose does that serve, except to show off to everyone that I have a private prayer language that hooks me up to God in a special way? I'm not going to do that. I'll pray with my breath and my mind, and I'll sing with my breath and my mind--not mindlessly.'" (Ibid)

14:16 - "'the place of the unlearned.'...the word is *idiotes*. Here it means 'ignorant' and simply refers to someone who is ignorant of the language being spoken... *Amen* is simply a Hebrew interjection that means 'True, brother,' 'So let it be,' or 'I'm with you.' And in the synagogue, saying amen was so important that you could hardly get your lesson done because of all the amens. Here are some quotes from the rabbis as preserved in the Talmud: '*He who responds "Amen" with all his might, has the gates of Paradise opened for him*' (Shabbath 119b). '*If a man says...a curtailed Amen, his days will be curtailed. But if one draws out the Amen, his days and years will be prolonged*' (Berakoth 47a). Consequently, do you know what happened in a synagogue? It was a contest to see who could amen the most to get into the kingdom." (Ibid, p. 114)

14:18-19 - “Here Paul does the same thing that he did earlier in the chapter. Basically he says, ‘I’ve been kind of hard on the subject of tongues, and I don’t want you to get the wrong idea. I do believe it’s a true gift (at that time), and I thank God that I speak more languages than all of you.’...Paul had the true gift of tongues. Since he was an apostle, he had the gifts of an apostle (2 Cor. 12:12). He exercised those gifts, no doubt, as he traveled around. *How did he use this gift? First of all, I’m sure he didn’t use it as a private prayer language. Second, I’m sure he didn’t use it in Christian meetings to show that he was spiritual. And third, I’m sure he didn’t use it for his own benefit.* Let me tell you how he did use the gift of tongues. (?) He used it when he traveled to a place where there were people who spoke a foreign language that he didn’t know. In that kind of situation, he was given the ability by God to speak their language, so that they might know God was present and a miracle had happened. Then he would speak the truths of God, and they would be given the opportunity to be saved. Paul was a missionary to the Gentiles, so he might have had many instances in his missionary travels when he could have used this gift. It’s interesting...however, that he ranked the gift of tongues so low. *In fact, in all his writings he never refers to using this gift--except here in 1 Corinthians 14:18. And even here he doesn’t give an illustration of when he used it...* Paul in effect said, ‘The true gift of tongues is fine for evangelizing pagans in a language they understand and for showing them that God is present and that God is speaking. But in the church I’d rather speak five words that I understand, so that I might teach others, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.’...Five words to ten thousand words is not actually the ratio. The Greek word translated ‘ten thousand’ is *murioi*. And the reason this word is used here is that it was the largest number in Greek mathematics for which there was a word. For example, Revelation 5:11 speaks about the angels...In the Greek text it keeps repeating the word *murioi* because it was the word that represented their biggest number. *In the English, verse 19 would be more accurately translated, ‘I would rather say five words with my understanding than quintillion words in gibberish.’ In other words, there isn’t even a comparison. Why? Because Paul wanted to teach people something they would understand.”* (Ibid, pp. 115-117)

14:22 - “Prophesying isn’t restricted to unbelievers during a limited period of history (such as tongues is); it is for believing people through all years of the church. Tongues were a sign, pointing to something else; but prophesying is something in and of itself. *The New American Standard Bible has the phrase ‘prophecy is for a sign’ in verse 22. They put it in italics, indicating that it’s not in the original, but nevertheless it’s an unfortunate translation. Prophecy is not a sign! Prophesying is that which edifies. It always has a function...* (Note) Verse 3... Verse 4... verse 1... What does it mean to prophesy? It simply means ‘to proclaim the Word of God.’ The Corinthian church was characterized by hysterical, selfish, self-centered, ego-building confusion. Paul in effect said, ‘Cut all that stuff out. Tongues have a specific purpose for a specific time only. But when you meet together, seek to prophesy and proclaim the truth.’ *It’s far more important to preach the Word... There is no record in the entire Bible of anything ever said by anyone in tongues. Do you know why? Because it was a sign that was meant to pass away. It had no lasting value, even in a revelatory sense.* But on the other hand, Peter called the entire Bible ‘*a more sure word of prophecy*’ (2 Pet. 1:19). There’s no comparison between something that’s a sign and something that’s a reality.” (Ibid, p. 136)

M. MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS & OBSERVATIONS ON MARK 16:9-20. There are serious textual questions about the genuineness of these 11 verses, since they are not found in a number of the earliest, and most important manuscripts. However we will not debate that issue here, but assume they are genuine and part of the original.

1) Anyone who wishes to appeal to this passage for support for certain current charismatic practices such as speaking in tongues, NEEDS TO REALIZE THAT THEY MUST do ALL five of the signs mentioned in order to be biblical! (i.e. cast out demons; speak with new tongues; pick up serpents w/o being harmed; if they drink poison not be harmed; & miraculously heal people through the laying on of hands upon the sick). The text and construction does not allow us to lift out one or two of those five practices and do them. *It is “all or nothing,” i.e. if you don’t do them all then you are not to do any at all.* (note: the drinking of poison is the only one that is moderated by the conditional “if.” **Four of the 5 signs are NOT “if,” but “will” & “shall”**) The common charismatic practice of using this passage as support for speaking in tongues is bankrupt, unless they are also performing and experiencing the other four miraculous signs mentioned there. Unfortunately, some charismatics who DO realize that this is a “package deal,” fail to realize this was a promise for the apostles only, & HAVE tried to do all five, including drinking poison and picking up poisonous snakes with tragic consequences! “Fatality rates in snake-handling churches...can be quite high. Snake handlers are charismatics who interpret to a literal extreme the words of Mark 16:17-18. (e.g.) Charles Prince of Canton, North Carolina, was a snake-handling preacher who defied state authorities and held public services where deadly snakes were handled and poison was imbibed. *Prince died in August of 1985* after a rattlesnake bit him and he drank strychnine (poison) in a church service in Greenville, Tennessee. Nearly every year, the news media carry

reports of snake-handling worshipers who die from poison or snakebites. It is a high price to pay for misunderstanding Scripture.” (MacArthur, CC, p. 159).

2) **A careful reading of the passage in Mark 16 will help us understand it.** Pay particular attention to who this was spoken to, and who it applied to:

- a) **The theme of the passage is unbelief—the unbelief of the DISCIPLES!** 16:11 (“*refused to believe*”), 16:14 “...He reproached them (the eleven disciples) *for their unbelief... because they had not believed.*”
- b) **The context seems to clearly indicate that Christ was speaking specifically to the eleven apostles** (Judas Iscariot had, of course, hung himself by this time). -16:10-11, 13
- c) Jesus tells the apostles (the eleven?) that, **in place of their unbelief, they should manifest true belief,**(or true faith).
- d) **Jesus then goes on to tell the eleven what the marks of true belief would be, as opposed to their unbelief** -16:16-17. He says the signs of those who were not unbelieving, but possessed true faith would be the amazing signs they would subsequently perform. Christ then listed them.

SUMMARY: This passage appears to have been addressed specifically to the 11 disciples.⁶ In it Christ rebuked the eleven for their unbelief, and told them that if they would forsake their unbelief and truly believe, they would be able to do miraculous signs... **and they did** (e.g. Acts 3:4-8; 5:3-5; 8:6-7, 39-40; 9:32-42; 13:9-11; 14:3, 8-10; 15:12; 16:16-18; 20:9-10; 28:4-6; cf. 19:16)!

“The disputed text of Mark 16:17 simply mentions tongues as an apostolic sign...What then can we say with certainty about Mark 16:17-18? *First of all*, we note that there is quite a bit of debate about whether verses 9-20 are even part of the original text of Mark’s gospel. But let us assume that the verses are a legitimate reflection of the original, inspired manuscripts. Applying the historical principle of interpretation, *the first question we must ask is, ‘Have all Christians of all ages, right up to the present, been able to perform the five signs?’*...It quickly becomes apparent that these promises have not been fulfilled in the life of every Christian for all time. What, then, do they mean? **Applying the historical and synthetic principles, we see that these signs were true of one certain group--the apostolic community.** And indeed, the apostles DID do these things, as the Book of Acts clearly reports in many places (see above references). All these wondrous signs (except the drinking of poison) can be scripturally verified as having happened during the apostolic era--*but not thereafter*. It is incorrect to assert that these signs should be the norm for all believers today (2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:2-4). Furthermore, it is cruel to make Christians believe that those who cannot get well do not have enough faith or are not spiritual enough to claim the signs listed in Mark chapter 16. The whole thing adds up to a tremendous guilt syndrome, and it is all based on a misinterpretation of Scripture. **Either all five signs are valid for everyone today or none is valid. They were given as a unit to the apostles to confirm the gospel message and its earliest messengers.**” (Ibid, pp. 102-103).

N. SO...WHY DO SO MANY PEOPLE “SPEAK IN TONGUES” (or try to)? MacArthur lists several reasons, which I wish to include before closing:

- 1) **“Spiritual hunger.** People hear that tongues is a way to have a wonderful spiritual experience. They fear that if they have not spoken in tongues, they may be missing something.
- 2) **“...Many people are hungry to express themselves spiritually.** They have been coming to church for years, but they really have not been involved.
- 3) **“The need for acceptance and security.**
- 4) **“...the charismatic movement is a reaction to the secularized, mechanized, academic, cold, indifferent society in which we live.**
- 5) **“Probably the key reason tongues have exploded on the scene with such force is the need for an alternative to the cold, lifeless Christianity that permeates so many churches.** People who join the charismatic movement often are those who are looking for action, excitement, warmth, and love.

CONCLUSION: “We can thank God for charismatic and Pentecostal people who believe in the Word of God. We can be grateful that they believe the Bible and hold it up as authoritative, *though we are concerned about their view of revelation.* We can also praise God that they...proclaim the faith with zeal. Some might say, ‘Why criticize them?’ We do so because **it is scriptural to be concerned about whether our brothers and sisters are walking in the truth.** Although it may not seem very loving to some, the Bible is clear that we are to ‘speak the truth in love’ (Eph. 4:15). True love must act on the truth.” (MacArthur, CC, p. 245). And may the Holy Spirit daily fill (control) us, & manifest the fruit mentioned in Acts 4:31!

⁶Note the context of 16:9-20 cf. Acts 2:43. Note also to whom the initial promise of being “baptized with the Spirit” was addressed: Acts 1:4-5, cf. 1:2, 13, 22, 25, 26; 2:14, 37. It appears (?) that only the apostles were in mind here. The 120 are mentioned at one point (1:15), but then the account seems to shift back to the 11 apostles (cf. above verses). Reading further we observe that in Acts 2 quite possibly only the apostles spoke in tongues (cf. 2:14).

FAITH HEALING & FAITH HEALERS

XIII. **“FAITH HEALING” AND FAITH HEALERS.** “During the last three decades of the twentieth century a renewed worldwide interest in healing has emerged in both secular and Christian circles. Many circumstances have caused this interest to rage like a mighty river, potentially wreaking havoc in the lives of those who seek relief in these ‘healing waters.’ *First, the information explosion of recent times has recreated the Dark Ages in reverse.* During those cruel times of intellectual poverty, uneducated people did not possess enough knowledge to believe. Today, however, the available knowledge more than doubles every decade, and people do not know what to believe. *Second, a new wave of existential thought has joined the data deluge.* Belief in miracles creates a surging reaction to liberal theology with all its spiritually deadening effects. This wave has overflowed biblical boundaries at points and flooded people’s thinking with presumption disguised as faith... *Third, ‘experiential Christianity’ is the ultimate judge of truth today.* This mindset can be found within many age groups and denominational organizations, and the common denominator that unites them is experience. In this view, God’s reality cannot be expressed apart from experience, and experience can override biblical teaching. *Fourth, sickness runs rampant in our society.* A popular periodical reported that the health-care industry billed record increases in payment for medical services over the last decade... Each year the medical profession makes phenomenal advances in the raging war against disease. Yet an increasingly sick society, bent on instant cures, is willing to turn to whomever can offer the quickest and least expensive path to relief... Such a person, who has no hope from doctors and lies helplessly incapacitated without God’s intervention, feels irresistibly drawn toward this last-ditch, beckoning prospect of health.” (Richard Mayhue, The Healing Promise. Harvest House Publishers: Eugene, Oregon, 1994, pp. 27-29)

A. A BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF FAITH HEALING. “Among those promoting healing (after 1940) were *Allen, Angley, Branham, Hagin, Kuhlman, Osborn and Roberts*... During the 1980’s the players changed radically. Few healers remain in the spotlight today who also stood there in the 1940’s through the 1970’s. The various elements in this new generation of healing defy compartmentalization because of their diverse overlaps; they cannot all be considered as one movement because of their varying uniquenesses. **However at least two strands seem to stand out:**

1. “On one hand we have adherents to a ‘health-and-wealth’ theology preaching a prosperity gospel whose results come by way of *Positive Confession*. The teachers of this gospel make up what is commonly called the Faith movement... The health-and-Wealth teachers tend to have little formal education in Scripture and view God as prospering those people who show sufficient faith... First let us consider those who espouse a health-and-wealth theology. *Paul Yonggi (now David) Cho, Morris Cerullo, Kenneth and Gloria Copeland, Paul and Jan Cruoch, Kenneth Hagin, Marilyn Hickey, Robert Tilton, and Benny Hinn* rank among the more influential representatives. This movement focuses first on man and then afterward on God to supply mankind’s need of health and wealth. The Positive Confession element of the Faith movement has cultic origins.⁷ A careful study of Satan’s two attacks on Job’s spiritual integrity--the removal of his wealth (Job 1) and the removal of his health (Job 2)--highlights the true basis of name-it and claim-it theology. Satan theorized that without health and wealth, Job would curse God. Job’s righteous response to God, however, proved Satan and the health/wealth movement wrong (Job 42:5-6).
2. “Then on the other hand are those who believe that *signs and wonders* should be evidenced in our time because the kingdom of God is now present... The signs-and-wonders teachers are generally well-educated and appeal to the glory and kingdom purposes of God as the basis for supernatural intervention... (they) explain inconsistent results as consistent with the present kingdom will of God... (this) group has been called the Signs and Wonders movement or ‘The Third Wave,’ or has been identified with John Wimber’s Vineyard movement. Visible personalities include *Jack Deere, Wayne Grudem (?), Kevin Springer, John Wimber, and C. Peter Wagner*. These (comments)... give an idea of what (John Wimber) believes about healing... ‘Stories like Naaman’s are not confined to biblical times... In sum, raising of the dead was a dramatic and infrequent event in the New Testament, but something that I believe is possible still today.’”(!) (Mayhue, pp. 29-32)
3. The “Leader of the Pack” in Faith Healing: Benny Hinn. “No one involved in healing ministry today approaches the visibility and recognition accorded to Benny Hinn. His recent books have been

⁷Extensive documentation to support the charge of cultic origins has been provided by D.R. McConnell, A Different Gospel (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988) and H. Terris Neuman, ‘Cultic Origins of Word-Faith Theology Within the Charismatic Movement,’ *Pneuma* (Spring, 1990), 32-55.” (Mayhue, p. 270). The Seduction of Christianity, by Dave Hunt & T.A. McMahon also thoroughly documents this fact-MWE

bestsellers; he also appears as a regular guest on the Trinity Broadcasting Network. Hinn intimates that he has taken up where Kathryn Kuhlman left off. Because of his unusually widespread influence and because he has attempted to express a theology of healing in *Lord, I Need a Miracle* (hereafter abbreviated as LINM), it becomes particularly important to examine what Benny Hinn teaches. This brief analysis will compare what Hinn believes about healing with what the Scriptures teach. You can then make up your own mind about Hinn's teaching credibility (see Acts 17:11):

- a) "Benny Hinn does not pray 'Lord, Thy will be done' [LINM, p. 63]. Jesus Christ did (Luke 22:42).
- b) "Hinn believes that God always intends for believers to be healed (Ibid). In contrast, the Bible teaches that some of the greatest saints had physical infirmities from which they were never healed, including Jacob and Paul.
- c) "Hinn teaches that believers should command God to heal [LINM, pp. 74-75]. The Bible teaches we are to ask (1 John 5:14-15).
- d) "Hinn suggests that miraculous healing from God is gradual [LINM, pp. 79, 81, 83-84]. Healing by Christ and the apostles occurred instantly (see later in this paper).
- e) "Hinn teaches that faith on the part of the sick person is essential to healing. [LINM, pp. 85-87]. Lazarus and Jairus' daughter could not have exercised faith when they were raised from the dead.
- f) "Hinn writes that we must do our part before God can heal [LINM, pp. 58-62]. The Bible teaches that God is sovereign.
- g) "Hinn believes that Christians should not be sick [LINM, pp. 67, 72]. The Bible teaches that Christians can be sick and all will eventually die.
- h) "Benny Hinn implies that a person's healing can be lost and that the healed person must do certain things to keep the healing [LINM, pp. 100-102]. Nowhere in the Bible do we find such teaching.

"Amazingly, Hinn not only contradicts Scripture on the subject of healing, but he also contradicts himself. Hinn wrote in 1992... 'I heard Kathryn Kuhlman prophesy in her own inimitable way that the day would arrive, before the coming of the Lord, when the power of God would be so great that everyone would be healed... Of course she never saw it come, but it will come. The Holy Spirit has convinced me of that.' Later in a 1993 interview, Charisma magazine asked Hinn, 'You've mentioned some other changes in your theology. Have you changed your view of healing?' Compare his 1993 answer to what the Holy Spirit allegedly told him in 1992: '...Jacob walked with a limp. Elisha died a sick man... Even the apostle Paul had an infirmity-although we're not sure what it was. Why didn't God heal them? You know, my father died of cancer. Sadly, in the past, I stated publicly: Had my father known then what I know now, he wouldn't have died. How cruel! I'm not going to say that about anyone again. Yet I still believe that healing is promised to all of us as children of God. The Word of God is clear on that (sic)... So I believe with all my heart that healing is a part of our inheritance as believers... But now I have come to realize that God is sovereign, and there are things I just don't understand.'

NOTE: "Either the Holy Spirit spoke correctly in 1992 and Hinn has chosen to correct the Spirit in 1993, or the Spirit didn't speak what Hinn alleged in 1992 and he has resorted to damage control in 1993." (Mayhue, pp. 32-35)

B. AN EVALUATION OF FAITH HEALERS & THEIR TECHNIQUES. "The Christian community must come to grips with the fact that it is extremely rare when a reported healing begins to match up with the biblical model. **When God miraculously healed through the prophets, Christ, or the apostles, these qualities, among others, characterized the healing:**

1. It was immediate.
2. It was public.
3. It took place on ordinary, unplanned occasions.
4. It included illnesses that were untreatable by the medical community.

5. It was complete and irreversible.
6. It was undeniable, even to detractors.

“Taking contemporary healing a step further, most of today’s reported healings look little different than reported healings from the cults and other world religions. John MacArthur makes this point. ‘The gift of healing... has been claimed through the centuries by Christians and pagans alike. Historically, the Roman Catholic Church has led the way in claiming the power to heal. They have boasted of healing people with the bones of John the Baptist, or Peter, fragments of the cross, or even vials of Mary’s breast milk... *Oriental psychic healers say they can do “bloodless surgery.”* They wave their hands over afflicted organs and say incantations. Supposedly people are cured. *Witch doctors and shamans even claim to raise the dead.* Occultists use black magic to do lying wonders in the healing arts. Mary Baker Eddy, founder of Christian Science, claimed to have healed people through telepathy. Satan has always held people in his dominion by means of counterfeit healings.’... **IF CONTEMPORARY HEALINGS LOOK LITTLE LIKE THOSE IN THE SCRIPTURE AND MUCH LIKE THOSE OF FALSE RELIGIONS, THEN THERE MUST BE EXPLANATIONS FOR THESE EXPERIENCES OTHER THAN THE POWER OF GOD.** Are these ministries of God or of man? Charles Swindoll answers the question for us.

“Now the critical question: Do I believe God has placed His healing powers in a few “anointed individuals” who claim to do divine healings? I say, unequivocally, I do not. In fact, I don’t think I have ever ministered to any more disillusioned souls than those who had been promised healing by an alleged “healer” and then were not healed... In no way does this mean, however, that I do not believe God has the power to heal... and on unique occasions, He does do so. I believe that with all my heart. The problem comes when attention is focused on a person who claims healing powers, or on the series of emotionally overpowering events that surround a so-called healing service. *If those “divine healers” are authentic and “anointed” miracle workers of God, why aren’t they out going floor-to-floor in hospitals and emergency wards? Why don’t they prove the truth of their ministry there...humbly...unobtrusively...free of charge?* Then I would have reason to believe they are servants of the living God in whose lives the Spirit is consistently pouring out His power to heal.” (Mayhue, pp. 35-37, citing MacArthur, Charismatic Chaos, pp. 203-204 & Swindoll, Flying Closer to the Flame, p. 197)

C. THE IMPORTANCE OF A CORRECT, BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF HEALING. “After surveying what is being taught and written in the name of Christianity, we can see why a state of confusion about divine healing rests over the church. Questions like these perplex many people: *Is it real? If it is not real, how can I explain some of the apparent healings? How does it work? If it does work, why should I ignore or deny a good thing? Why the sudden appearance and increase of healing if it was possible all along? Is it biblical? Why am I sick? Should I quit taking medicine? Why haven’t I been healed? Why are some leaders in the healing movement sick? Why do all people in the healing movement die?...*Maybe you have asked some of these questions yourself.” (Ibid, p. 37)

The above questions are very important questions to which one must seek and find biblical answers. In that regard, the following **true story** illustrates the heart-rending tragedy of misunderstanding, even sincerely, what God’s Word teaches in regard to physical healing:

“Larry and Alice Parker wanted God’s best for their family of six. But their oldest son suffered from diabetes and regularly received insulin injections. When Daniel Badilla held special services in their Barstow, California, church, the Parkers ‘walked the aisle’ with 11-year-old Wesley. They sincerely sought a healing miracle.

“The preacher pronounced Wesley healed. Larry joyfully entered ‘*Praise God our son is healed!*’ into Wesley’s insulin log. But Wesley’s next insulin test indicated differently. Yet by faith the Parkers claimed the healing and blamed the unexpected insulin results on Satan. Shortly afterward, Wesley began to suffer the nausea and severe stomach cramps that predictably indicate low insulin. Larry and Alice postponed medical treatment and sought God’s continued healing power through prayer. In spite of their sincere faith, Wesley fell into a coma and died three days later. *Newsweek* magazine reported the tragedy nationally [Sept. 10, 1973, p. 31]. (Ibid, p. 27)

Richard Mayhue, in his book *The Healing Promise*, gives a follow up to the above story of the Parkers: “...**When people’s lives could be at risk, we must have the sure Word of God, not the theories and reported experiences of men...** even though Larry and Alice had placed their full faith in God, Wesley still died. A lawyer in Indiana shared with me this letter that he received from Larry Parker. Years had passed since Wesley’s death. During that time Larry struggled for the truth and found it only as he sought full scriptural counsel. He wrote:

‘I am writing this letter with the hope and prayer that somehow I can share with you a lesson that I have learned at great expense. It is only by the grace of God, and the never-failing, all-encompassing love of Jesus Christ our Lord that my wife and I have been able to come through this trial... We wanted to see our son healed, but went about it the wrong way. It was during our trial for involuntary manslaughter and felony child abuse that my wife felt she could tell me what the Lord had shown her. She told me that our love, because it was lacking, failed Wesley, and that God’s word says, “Love never faileth” (I Cor. 13:8). *I knew then that we had allowed what we thought was faith to cause us to forget to love.* As we prayed for Wesley and saw him in obvious pain, our love for him wanted to give him the insulin that we knew would stop his suffering. However, we felt that would be a lack of faith, and would cost him his healing. We learned that our actions were contrary to what the Scriptures say. God’s Word says that love is greater than faith (I Cor. 13:13). The trouble (with faith-healing theology) lies with the fact that we confuse faith and belief. **We think that if we believe hard enough, the healing will take place. We tie healing to some ability on our part to believe enough, i.e., to have enough faith.** To withhold medicine, especially life-giving medicine, is a very presumptuous act on our part that actually hinders the Spirit of God from His work. *My prayer is that you will consider these thoughts at length, for they have come at an incomprehensible price that no one would voluntarily pay’*” (Ibid, pp. 37-38).

D. POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS FOR “HEALINGS” BY FAITH HEALERS. People often tend to automatically assume if someone is healed of a genuine disease or disability, that it must be “*of God.*” However, such a blanket assumption is clearly wrong and can lead to serious error. Consider the following information:

“Dr. Jerome Frank, distinguished professor of psychiatry at Johns Hopkins University, *estimates that there are more patients treated by healers who are not licensed medical doctors than by those who are* [U.S. News & World Report, Feb. 12, 1979, p. 68]. Those people reason, ‘Since my religion works, why should I go to an expensive professional?’

“Because ‘religion works,’ REPORTED HEALINGS EXTEND WAY BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES OF CHRISTIANITY.(!) Restored health is not limited to the domain of the church. Christians don’t monopolize the field of apparent healings. What works for non-Christians can also work for Christians, even though it clearly does not come from God. *This means we must responsibly sort out authentic healings directly from the hand of God from those real or thought-to-be-real healings that have other explanations...*

“**‘Miracles’ are common in tribal religions where the shaman, master of ecstasy, performs spectacular feats amid hysteria and rapture. In folk Islam, folk Buddhism, and folk Hinduism, various specialists practice the miraculous; some are magicians, others are medicine men and witchdoctors, and still others deal in the manipulation of the spirits that haunt the air. ALL OF THEM ROUTINELY REPORT WONDERFUL SUCCESSES AT HEALING THROUGH THEIR MAGICAL MINISTRATIONS.** In high Islam we even find saints and sadhus who perform magic works of resurrection, along with fakirs and dervishes whose talent is limited to ecstatic healings. BUT HERE, TOO, REPORTS OF HEALINGS ARE COMMONPLACE... Two things are noteworthy about the claims of healing in folk religions and cults. THE FIRST IS THAT THEIR REPORTS ARE NUMEROUS AND PLAUSIBLE. THE SECOND IS THAT THEY ARE DONE IN A SPIRITUAL CONTEXT UTTERLY DIFFERENT FROM AND HOSTILE TO THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL [Lewis B. Smedes, ed., *Ministry and the Miraculous* (Pasadena, CA: Fuller Theological Seminary, 1987), p. 58].

EXPLANATIONS FOR REPORTED HEALINGS. “In an attempt to understand reported healings, we should always ask, ‘Could this be explained by...?’ ...I (Mayhue) have listed 12 possible answers to this important and practical question. Let’s begin with the most obvious:

1. “**GOD HEALED.** That God could have directly intervened and healed is a very legitimate possibility. Biblically, nothing prohibits God from reaching down directly to restore a person’s health... Our charismatic, Pentecostal brethren might be surprised to learn that noncharismatics *do* believe that God can and does heal.” (Ibid, p. 65)
2. “**MEDICAL TREATMENT WORKED.** Most people who go to faith healers and claim to be healed have also been to doctors. They have had medicine, and some have even had operations. In spite of that, they often fail to include the doctor when giving credit for healing... Jesus recognized the importance of doctors...(Mk. 2:17; Lk. 10:30-37) (Ibid, pp. 67-68)
3. “**HEALING CAPACITY OF THE BODY.** This is probably the one most-often overlooked explanation for reported healings. Our bodies are incredible pieces of machinery. *God created them with such marvelous design that they have the capacity to heal themselves of many physical problems.* We

might call this natural/divine healing. To make the point, consider the conclusions reached in this interesting article:

‘As a protest to soaring rates for malpractice insurance, doctors in Los Angeles went on strike in 1976. *The result with no doctors around? An 18 percent drop in the death rate.* That same year, according to Dr. Robert S. Mendelsohn, doctors in Bogota, Colombia, refused to provide any services except for emergency care. *The result was a 35 percent drop in the death rate.* When Israeli doctors drastically reduced their daily patient contact in 1973, the Jerusalem Burial Society reported that *the death rate was cut in half.* The only similar drop had been 20 years earlier at the time of the last doctor’s strike [Parade (October 4, 1981), p. 27, cited in Mayhue, p. 68].

4. “**SPONTANEOUS REMISSION.** The medical field recognizes as unusual, but nevertheless real, spontaneous cures and regression of diseases for no apparent medically diagnosed reason. This seems to be particularly true of cancer [Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Healing and the Scriptures, 1988, pp. 29-31; & Dr. Franklin E. Payne, Jr., Biblical Healing for Modern Medicine (Augusta, GA: Covenant Books, 1993, p. 153].

5. “**EMOTIONALLY INDUCED ILLNESS.** Doctors agree that stress can have a severely debilitating effect on the body. Kenneth Pelletier wrote these significant words:

‘Medical and psychological problems caused by stress have become the number one health problem in the last decade. One standard medical text estimates that 50 to 80 percent of all diseases have their origin in stress. Stress-induced disorders have long since replaced infectious disease as the most common maladies of people in the post-industrial nations. During recent years, four disorders--heart disease, cancer, arthritis, and respiratory diseases such as bronchitis--have become so prominent in the clinics of the United States, Western Europe, and Japan that they are known as ‘*the afflictions of civilization.*’ Their prevalence stems from poor diet, pollution, and most important, the increased stress of modern society [Pelletier, “Mind as Healer, Mind as Slayer,” *Christian Medical Society Journal*, 11:1 (1980), p. 8].

“Emotionally induced illnesses frequently can go into reverse. Removing the stress helps to remove the physical symptoms caused by that stress. For instance, Psalm 32 reveals that the cause of David’s physical distress was guilt over his sin with Bathsheba.

6. “**PSYCHOGENIC ILLNESS.** Doctors have confirmed that a psychogenic illness can falsely register an apparent physical infirmity in the mind. We normally call that a psychosomatic illness. Therefore, a change of mind can often cause a change in physical well-being.

“William Nolen, a world-renowned surgeon, tells of an amazing case of pseudocyesis (false pregnancy) that he encountered as a young Army doctor. *He treated a 35-year-old woman who had been married 12 years and had all the signs of pregnancy. He followed the pregnancy for seven months and all appeared normal. But in the eighth month, an associate discovered that the woman actually had a false pregnancy.* After that, it took only a short while for the patient’s body to return to normal [William A. Nolen, Healing: A Doctor in Search of a Miracle (Greenwich, CT: Fawcett Publications, 1976), pp. 253-255].

“Dr. Verna Wright comments: ‘This (psychogenic illness) is well illustrated by an incident that happened at Liverpool, where I trained. There was an asthmatic sufferer who was allergic to roses and always went into an asthmatic attack if she visited a rose garden. She came into the consulting room of my chief, who happened to have a rose on his desk, and she promptly had an asthmatic attack. It was in fact a plastic rose. It is clear that the psychological aspect of disease should not be underestimated [Wright, “A Medical View of Miraculous Healing,” in Peter Masters, The Healing Epidemic (London: The Wakeman Trust, 1988), p. 211. Also, read C. Samuel Storms, Healing and Holiness (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1990), pp. 43-46].

7. “**MISDIAGNOSIS.** An illness can sometimes be diagnosed wrongly. As a result, the prescribed treatment for the mistaken illness is ineffective. The patient may then go to a healer, who supposedly heals a diagnosed disease. Thus the healer is credited with healing an ailment which in reality the person never had... Misdiagnosis is far more common than we might imagine.

8. “**MISLEADING REPORT.** Often an alleged healing is embraced by people because of a convincing but misleading report. That is, *the sincerely given testimony just does not match the facts as they actually*

occurred. George Peters... provides a vivid illustration...(the) Indonesian revival (written about by Mel Tari in “A Mighty Wind”) ...Peters decided to go to Indonesia to interview the people and find out firsthand what had happened. He talked to people who were ‘raised from the dead’ and questioned those who had been healed. His findings were published in the book Indonesian Revival... He writes... ‘The reports from Timor that God raised some people from the dead have startled many American Christians. *I do not doubt that God is able to raise the dead, but I seriously question that He did so in Timor. In fact, I am convinced that it did not happen...* I shall leave any judgments about these miracles to the reader. I went away satisfied that according to their usage of the word death and their concept of death, they had experienced resuscitation. According to my concept of death, no such miracles happened; I learned again the value of seeing words and concepts from the people’s point of view and interpreting them according to their mentality and understanding.’ ...Those people were either unconscious or in a comatose state. They had not yet reached the point where their life processes were irreversibly stopped... **REPORTS (HOWEVER SINCERE THE REPORTER) MAY NOT ACCURATELY PORTRAY WHAT TOOK PLACE.** What seemed to happen through secondhand reports was not what truly happened. **Firsthand reports can also be out of sync with reality.** Dr. Wright chronicles this not-uncommon occurrence:

‘Patients often fail to understand the nature or the degree of seriousness of their condition. Let me give you an example from an Anglican church which placed a good deal of emphasis upon the healing ministry. A lady from this church who suffered from abdominal pain told the church prayer group that she was going into (the) hospital the following week for extensive surgery. Naturally they prayed for her. She came out of (the) hospital some fourteen days later and reported to the group that the operation had revealed that the disease had entirely disappeared, and they praised the Lord for this great deliverance.

It so happened that there was surgeon in the congregation, a man clearly sympathetic to the healing movement, or he would not have been there. With the patient’s permission he obtained sight of the medical notes and discussed them with the surgeon who performed the operation. He found that the surgeon had been extremely reluctant to operate and had only been persuaded to do so because of great pressure from the patient and her general practitioner. He opened the abdomen and rather as he anticipated he found nothing but a rather mobile colon. He therefore sewed the lady up again and her abdominal pain disappeared, but she soon began to suffer from migraine with increasing severity. Note the difference of perspective: to the healing group this was a miracle. Did they not have the testimony of the patient? She suffered from abdominal pain and extensive surgery was going to be necessary to rectify it; they prayed for her, the surgeon operated, and nothing could be found. But from the surgeon’s perspective a very different story emerged, and we may feel that it was significant that this lady’s symptoms soon changed from abdominal pain to migraine.’ (Dr. Verna Wright, “*A Medical View of Miraculous Healing*,” pp. 205-206, in Masters, “The Healing Epidemic” pp. 205-206, cited in Mayhue, pp. 74-75)

9. **PLACEBO EFFECT.** The ‘*placebo effect*’ describes the patient improvement that occurs after receiving medicine or undergoing medical treatment which has little or no documented or demonstrable medical value.

“In the July 1993 issue of *Clinical Psychology Review*, Dr. Alan Roberts, director of medical psychology at Scripps Clinic and Research Foundation, reported the findings from a study of 6,931 patients who received treatments that later were medically discredited. *Unbelievably, almost one-third of the former patients reported good results from their treatment and 40 percent reported excellent improvement.* [Rita Reuben, “Placebos’ Healing Power,” U.S. News & World Report (November 22, 1993), p. 78].

“Dr. Payne comments: ‘What is remarkable is that it works! The effect is so consistent and strong that medical research is sometimes considered invalid unless a placebo is administered to one group of patients along with another group who receives the actual medication. Not uncommonly, the placebo group does as well, and sometimes better, than those who receive the medication. Further, the placebo can actually cause physiologic (“real”) changes! For example, blood pressure can be lowered, intestinal ulcers healed, and migraines relieved [Payne, pp. 152-153, cited in Mayhue]. *Faith healers often prove to be no more and no less than ‘spiritual placebos.’* This one factor alone would easily account for many of the reported healings at so-called healing meetings, although only a small fraction of those who attend ever claim to be healed. Most leave with their hopes dashed because the ‘placebo effect’ did not work for them. The unhealed pay the price in disappointment and doubt, while the faith healer continues to herald his ‘miraculous’ triumphs.” (Ibid, pp. 75-76)

10. **“MASS HYPNOSIS/HYSTERIA.** “When a John Wimber team conducted meetings in Leeds, England, five Christian doctors--including one of England’s leading psychiatrists--were in attendance. They became so incensed at what they all agreed was the attempted induction of hypnosis, that they filed the following report:

’There was an hour’s repetitious chorus singing which began the proceedings. A fair amount of reeling and writhing commenced at the start of the singing. No space was found for a Scripture reading as such. The congregation was at no time called to prayers of confession of sin and repentance. “Hold out your hands. Feel heat coming through you. Your eyelids may feel heavy. You may feel like falling; some persons may scream. It is all right. You can see the Holy Spirit resting on people, the power of God resting on many.”... Volunteers were then put into trance while hands were laid on them. They were not unconscious and would, we were assured, hear what was said to them. They remained thus for many minutes with assorted shakings, tremblings, smilings, fallings, swayings and utterings... Throughout the building other individuals proceeded to fall into trance. *The audience was told that the Holy Spirit might lead some persons to scream or to breathe very deeply. As one expected from hypnotic states these things happened more or less at once.* Uncontrollable laughter, crying, groaning, shrieking and sobbing, together with the murmurings of many who wished to minister some spiritual comfort to the affected brethren, made it more difficult to follow any more the official progress of events.’

“The team of doctors then wrote: ‘Hypnotic trance with suggestion is a powerful psychological tool. It has many uses. Psychosomatic disorders and physical symptoms related to neurosis are very likely in the short term to respond to this treatment. Relief of pain as in dental extraction or childbirth is relatively commonplace with hypnosis. In the Wimber team’s meeting we saw no change that suggested any healing of organic, physical disease... The hypnotic state, though conscious, is not what Scripture means by self-control, the mind of Christ in us or mind renewal. To describe these trances, their visible or audible features, or any healings experienced as the perfectly legitimate result of hypnosis--*to describe this as the plain work of the Holy Spirit is a deception.*” (Ibid, pp. 76-77)

11. **“DELIBERATE DECEIT.** “...The Christian community needs to admit that there have been cases of deliberate fraud... ‘Last fall the National Courier, a biweekly tabloid published by Logos International, launched a testimonial series on miracles. One of the first stories was about faith healer Alice Pattico, who claimed she had been healed in a 1974 Kathryn Kuhlman meeting from breast and brain cancer and addiction to painkilling drugs. She said her breasts, which had been removed in surgery, were restored, and that God had filled thirteen holes that had been drilled in her head in 1973 to administer laser beam surgery. She and her husband provided the Courier with doctors’ letters to document her claims.’ ...Later, Moody Monthly published a follow-up report *about the National Courier’s subsequent retraction when it became apparent that the facts had been falsified.* ...More recently faith healers W.V. Grant and Peter Popoff have been thoroughly exposed by James Randi as frauds. Popoff received electronic transmissions from his wife Elizabeth as the supposed ‘word of knowledge’ --not from God, as he claimed. Grant rented wheelchairs, put healthy people in them, and then later allegedly healed them.” (“Retraction,” Moody Monthly [February, 1977], p. 53; cited in Mayhue, p. 76).

12. **“SATANIC INVOLVEMENT.** Is Satan ever involved in healing? Second Corinthians 11 indicates that Satan disguises himself and his ‘apostles’ as angels of light. They appear and act as though they are from God. They come as close as they can to the real article while actually being false... Satan can actually hurt people in his attempts to imitate God. Job is the most familiar biblical illustration. Remember also the lady who was afflicted for 18 years, probably by Satan through demons...(Luke 13:16)... *On at least four occasions the Scriptures credit Antichrist and the false prophet with the satanic power to perform signs* (2 Thessalonians 2:9; Revelation 13:3-12; 16:14; 19:20). It is impossible to know for sure how real or perceived these powers might be. ...However, not even good angels are given creative power. Since Satan and his demons are evil angels, we can reasonably conclude that with regard to miraculous healing, which would require creative power, neither Satan nor demons can actually heal. Nonetheless, they are masters at deceitful perceptions, attempting to convince people that they can do things that in reality they cannot.” (Note: All above quotes in #'s 1-12, from Mayhue, pp. 65-80).

XIV. THE BIBLICAL TEACHING REGARDING HEALING. Since all kinds of groups and people including members of false cults, false religions, etc., claim to be able to heal people, **if we are going to recognize true healers, and the hand of God as opposed to other sources for alleged healings, we are going to have to go to the only source of**

absolute truth-the Bible, to find out how to recognize true healing from false healing, and those who possess the true gift of healing, from those who are counterfeit.

A. **THE OLD TESTAMENT RECORD.** Ex. 4:11; Dt. 32:39; Job. 5:17-18; Isa. 45:7; Lam. 3:37-38. “What testimonies! By His own declaration, God assumes ultimate responsibility for health or sickness, for life or death... *From the time of Abraham (about 2200 B.C.) until the time of Isaiah (about 750 B.C.), ONLY 20 SPECIFIC HEALING INCIDENTS APPEAR IN THE OLD TESTAMENT RECORD:* five in the time of Job and Abraham, five in the time of Moses, two in the time of Samuel, and eight from the time of David until Isaiah. Then from about 750 B.C. onward, no recorded healings through men occurred until the time of Christ!⁸ (See chart in appendix “*The Old Testament Healing Record*” for complete listing).

“**AFFLICTED BY GOD.** God physically afflicted people on numerous occasions. This aspect of God’s justice often escapes our attention. People quickly seek healing, but conveniently ignore God’s judgment. For example, God brought a crushing blow to the Egyptians when they refused to let the Jews return to Palestine (Exodus 12:29-30). Literally thousands of firstborn people and cattle lost their lives as a punishment for a nation’s disobedience. God is not always easy on His own people, either. Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron...(Lev. 10:1-2)... Ezekiel became a widower in the midst of his prophetic ministry... (Ezekiel 24:16-18).

1) “**SIN-RELATED SICKNESS.** Some physical affliction came because of personal sin, although the person afflicted was not always the sinner. Surprisingly, when affliction was most appropriate, God occasionally withheld it. After Aaron led the nation into idolatrous worship, for example, the Lord smote the people, but not Aaron (Exodus 32:35)... On other occasions the one who sinned received God’s physical chastisement. Miriam...(Num. 12:1-15)... and Korah (Num. 16:1-50)... Even a person who did not sin sometimes became the subject of God’s affliction. The most prominent example involves the child born out of David and Bathsheba’s immoral relationship (2 Samuel 12:1-23).

2) “**UNEXPLAINABLE SICKNESS.** The Old Testament contains many cases of unaccountable illness. They seemingly have nothing to do with sin or even a known disease...Mephibosheth...(2 Sam. 4:4)...the death of the Shunammite’s son (2 Kings 4:18-37)... Daniel turned ill more than once after receiving prophetic visions (Daniel 7:28; 8:27).

3) “**SATAN INVOLVED.** Only the well-known Old Testament episode of Satan afflicting Job indicates that Satan could be an agent for sickness (Job chapters 1 and 2).

4) “**SAINTS WERE SICK.** Believers were not immune to physical infirmities. Isaac (Genesis 27:1) and Jacob (Genesis 48:1) became sick and later died. Job was severely smitten with boils (Job 2:7).

“**HEALED BY GOD.** God not only afflicted but He also healed. And no one can accuse the Lord of having one favorite healing technique. The means of healing varied widely and numbered almost as many as the actual healings themselves. Healing methods ranged from God’s direct intervention, to human prayer, to some of the most bizarre methods imaginable... Miriam (Num. 12:13-15)... Nebuchadnezzar...(Daniel 4:28-37) ...Naaman... (Numbers 21:4-9). *Certainly no Old Testament norm emerged as a healing method that God consistently favored.*

1) “**GOD HEALED UNBELIEVERS.** It was not necessary for a person to have a saving relationship with God to be healed ...the Syrian general (2 Kings 5:1-14) and a Babylonian king (Daniel 4:28-37). God sovereignly healed whomever He wanted.

2) “**GOD RESTORED LIFE.** In the entire Old Testament, only three people received restoration to life from the dead. The widow’s son at Zarephath was healed through the hand of Elijah (1 Kings 17:17-24). Elisha raised the Shunammite’s son (2 Kings 4:18-37). The third instance remains unforgettable...the man touched the bones of Elisha (and) revived and stood up on his feet (2 Kings 13:20-21).

⁸John Wimber and Kevin Springer, *Power Healing* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1987), 244. Appendix C, ‘*Healing in the Old Testament,*’ needs to be used with great caution and careful study lest one be left with erroneous impressions. Of the 75 texts cited, only 15 deal with a particular incident of physical healing. Most deal with spiritual, national, or millennial restoration, not physical healing. It is a bit ironic, considering the book’s emphasis, that three of the texts listed contain the message that ‘there is no healing’ (Jeremiah 46:11; 51:8-9; Hosea 5:13). Surprisingly, the list does not include six of the 20 Old Testament occurrences of specific healing (Genesis 21:1-2; 29:31; 30:22; Numbers 25:1-9; 1 Samuel 1:19-20; 2 Samuel 24:1-17; and Job 42).” (Mayhue, references, p. 273)

daughter (Matthew 15:21-28), and the son of an official in Capernaum (John 4:49-53) received their healings apart from Jesus' presence." (Ibid, pp. 99-100)

5) "**HEALING METHODS VARIED**. (Christ touched, spoke, used spittle, plugged ears, & anointed with clay)

6) "**JESUS APPROVED OF DOCTORS**. Jesus recognized the normal means of physical healing--a doctor and medicine. Not once did He demean the medical profession... (Matt. 9:12). He approvingly told of the Samaritan who used oil, wine, and bandages to help the abandoned Jew (Luke 10:30-37).

7) "**HEALING FOR GOD'S GLORY**. Although sickness can result directly from personal sin, as evidenced in the Old Testament, nowhere in the Gospel accounts is sickness attributed directly to personal sin. However, Scripture states twice that sickness occurred so that God could be glorified... (cont. pp. 100-101)

8) "**CHRIST'S MINISTRY WAS UNIQUE**. Scripture states emphatically that in previous history there had never been a healing ministry like Christ's... (Matt. 9:32-33).

9) "**JESUS SHUNNED ACCLAIM**. Jesus went out of His way to avoid public approval or reward for His healing miracles... Luke 10:20... Christ never sought fame and fortune through healing. For a while He drew large crowds who heard His kingdom message, but later they crucified Him in spite of all the miracles.

10) "**HEALINGS WERE UNDENIABLE**. The spectator reaction to Christ's healings proved phenomenal. Everyone, including His enemies, stood amazed, astounded, and unable to deny or discredit the miracles. In fact, one of the most incredible statements affirming Christ's ministry came from the unbelieving Pharisees and priests: *'Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, "What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs. If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation"'* (John 11:47-48).'

11) "**REACTIONS WERE WIDESPREAD**. Christ's healings brought widespread reaction. Mark 1:45...Even though he remained in unpopulated areas, people came to Him from *everywhere*.

12) "**CHRIST' HEALING DID NOT NECESSARILY SAVE**. Christ's miracles could not be denied (John 3:2), *but they did not necessarily lead to faith*... (Luke 10:12-15).

13) "**FAITH WAS NOT NECESSARY**. *An expression of a personal faith was NOT a necessary requirement for healing.* (Lazarus (Jn. 11), Jairus' daughter (Mt. 9), & the widow's son (Lk. 7) *were all dead and incapable of displaying faith.* Yet they arose from the dead. Furthermore, wherever Jesus healed the multitudes it can be assumed that most, if not all, eventually rejected Christ and His gospel. In Luke 17, when Jesus healed ten lepers, only 'one of them...turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him' (vv. 15-16). Note Jesus' response: 'Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine--where are they? Was not one found who turned back to give glory to God, except this foreigner?'"

14) "**ANOTHER'S FAITH HONORED**. At times Christ healed when someone other than the one afflicted displayed his faith. Note especially Matthew 17:19-20... (Christ) informed them that they lacked faith. The parallel passage in Mark 9:28-29 adds that prayer would have been successful. *Thus anyone who claims that a person can remain unhealed because of his or her own lack of faith needs to be corrected and warned. In this case the deficient faith belonged to the would-be healers.*

15) "**HEALINGS WERE NOT PREARRANGED**. Jesus healed from the beginning of His ministry (Matthew 4:23-25) to the end (John 11:1-44). Often He initiated the interaction and approached the person, as He did the lame man at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-9). Furthermore, Jesus always healed during the normal course of His daily ministry... (Mt. 9:27-29...

16) "**HEALING BY THE DISCIPLES**. People other than Christ performed healings in the Gospel accounts... For example, Jesus Himself sent the disciples on their preaching and healing excursions

(Matthew 10:1-15). Seventy others went out with a similar commission from the Lord to preach and heal (Luke 10:1-16). The evidence is stunning. Christ's healings were--

- undeniable
- spectacular
- overwhelming
- abundant
- awesome
- instant
- authoritative
- without limitations
- total
- convincing

“No one before or since has even fractionally approached the power of Jesus Christ to heal. He remains forever unique. No one could possibly claim to have a healing ministry like Christ’s.

However, God’s healing power did not stop with His Son but continued on through the apostles. The Acts and New Testament epistles tell that story next.” (All above points & quotes: Ibid, pp. 104-105).

C. **THE APOSTOLIC RECORD.** “The Lord Jesus Christ left His disciples with this expectation in the Upper Room: ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me, the works that I do shall he do also’ (John 14:12). He commissioned the twelve to preach the gospel accompanied by powerful works of God (Mark 16:14-18)... And Jesus kept the promise He had made in John 14:12. *Just as He Himself had been authenticated by miracles* (Acts 2:22), **so too were the apostles** (Hebrews 2:1-4)... *Over the approximately 30-year span of Acts, only 16 incidents of healing are recorded.* They follow the outward movement of the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome” (Ibid, p. 108). Mayhue divides the healings into two categories: a) *The healing ministry of God directly* (Acts 9:17-18 cf. 22:12-13; 14:19-20; 28:1-6), (and), b) *The healing ministry of God through men* (Acts 2:43; 3:1-10; 5:12-16; 6:8; 8:7; 9:32-35; 9:36-43; 14:3; 14:8-18; 19:11-12; 20:7-12; 28:7-8; 28:9)... (the first seven)... accompanied gospel preaching in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria (Acts 1-12). Only six healings...appear in all of Paul’s journeys (Acts 13-28). Since there appears to be little repetition of the same scenario, Acts 4:29-30 would come the closest to establishing any pattern of healing ministry. There the apostles preached the Word while God did the healing.... As we did with Jesus in the Gospels, let us look at the major features of God’s healings in the book of Acts.”(Ibid, pp. 107-109). (Note: See the chart in the appendix “The Healing Ministry in Acts” for a complete listing).

IN THE BOOK OF ACTS. (Note: All the following headings are taken verbatim from Mayhue):

1. **“HEALING TECHNIQUES VARIED.** “... (1) By command (Acts 3:6). (2) By being in the healer’s shadow (Acts 5:15). (3) By touching a cloth from the healer’s body (Acts 19:11-12). (4) By prayer and the laying on of hands (Acts 28:8-9).
2. **“HEALING WAS IMMEDIATE.** “...the healings were instantaneous, with no recuperative period required. *No one claimed their healing by faith, for they obviously had not received it yet if they were not healed on the spot(!).*
3. **“UNBELIEVERS WERE HEALED.** “As in Christ’s ministr;y, saving faith in Jesus Christ was not a necessary requirement for healing... ‘The multitudes... saw the signs which (Philip) was performing. For in the case of many who had unclean spirits, they were coming out of them shouting with a loud voice; and many who had been paralyzed and lame were healed (Acts 8:6-7). At the same time that unbelievers were being healed, saints such as Dorcas were ill (!) (Acts 9:36-43).
4. **“FAITH OF THE AFFLICTED HONORED.** “*At times the faith of the afflicted was praised (Acts 3:16)... Yet at other times a personal faith was not necessarily required of the afflicted...(Acts 9:34).*
5. **“HEALINGS WERE UNDENIABLE.** “...Even the most vocal opponents of the gospel could not explain away the healings since they were so publicly spectacular (Acts 4:16-17).
6. **“SIN-RELATED SICKNESS.** “Sometimes God afflicted people because of personal sin...(Acts 5:5, 10; 9:8; 12:23; 13:4-12).

7. **LIFE RESTORED.** “Two people were raised from the dead--Dorcas (Acts 9:36-43) and Eutychus (Acts 20:9-12). Add to these two the three Old Testament resuscitations plus the three in Christ’s ministry, and **only eight specifically named people were raised from the dead in all of Scripture** (not counting the onetime happening in Mt. 27:51-53).

8. **HEALING IN ABSENTIA.** “God worked so powerfully through Paul that cloths touched by him could bring healing without his presence (Acts 19:11-12).

9. **NONAPOSTOLIC HEALING.** “Rarely did someone other than the twelve heal. *The only possible exceptions involve Stephen (Acts 6:8), Philip (Acts 8:7), and Barnabas (Acts 14:3).*

IN THE EPISTLES. “While the Gospels indicate that the disciples would see God do great miracles through them, *just the opposite proves true in the epistles (!).* There is no biblical expectation that the postapostolic generations of Christians would experience or perform the healing miracles of either Christ or His apostles.” (Ibid, p. 112)

1. **PURPOSE OF HEALING.** “God used signs, miracles, and wonders to authenticate the apostles and their ministry (Rom. 15:18-19; 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:4)... *If nonapostolic Christians through the centuries were supposed to perform such deeds, then they could not have served as the signs of apostleship* (see 2 Cor. 12:12). The signs by the apostles attested that their words had equal authority with those of Jesus Himself, for He had chosen them as His spokesmen (See Matthew 10:11-15, 20, 40; 1 Cor. 14:37). True signs could be counterfeited, but they would not fool God (Matt. 7:21-23). The church received continual warnings to be alert, to be on guard, and to be discerning (Acts 20:17-32; 2 Cor. 11:13-15).” (Ibid)

2. **THE DECLINE OF HEALING.** “In the epistles, Paul’s frequency of healing declined with the passing of time. (1) Gal. 4:13-14-Paul was ill., (2) 2 Cor. 12:7-10-Paul was possibly afflicted., (3) Phil. 2:25-30-Ephraim was ill., (4) 1 Tim. 5:23-Timothy was ill., (5) 2 Tim. 4:20-Trophimus was ill.

3. **MEDICINE APPROVED.** “Paul recognized and recommended medicine...(1 Tim. 5:23).

4. **SIN-RELATED SICKNESS.** James 5 will be discussed more thoroughly below. “In the meantime, please observe that this passage says nothing about healing which in any way resembles healing through the apostles.”

5. **THE DISAPPEARANCE OF HEALING.** “Healings became significantly less noticeable with the passing of time in the apostolic era. *Paul mentions nothing about future healing ministry in his last three epistles--1 and 2 Timothy and Titus.* In his other letters, Paul also mentions nothing about current healing except to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 12:9, 28, 30). *Neither 1 or 2 Peter say anything about healing,* although Peter does alert his readers to the possibility of suffering (1 Pet. 4:19). *Nor does John mention healing in his three epistles.* Interestingly, *not one of the non-apostolic epistles-Hebrews, James, and Jude-instruct the saints about future miraculous healing ministries.*

Specific instructions from Christ to the church say absolutely nothing about physical healing either (Revelation chapters 2 and 3). In fact just the opposite happens: Jesus prepares the church at Smyrna for suffering and death (2:10), warns the church at Thyatira of God’s impending judgment involving sickness and death because of immorality and idolatry (2:22-23), and rebukes the Laodiceans for boasting in their physical health to the exclusion of spiritual well-being (3:17-18).” (Ibid, pp. 112-114)

SUMMARY OF WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES REGARDING HEALING. “The biblical evidence can be summarized this way: **Healing is noticeable in the Old Testament** (over a span of 2000 years), **overwhelming in the Gospels** (about three years), **occasional in Acts** (about 30 years), and **negligible in the epistles** (about 40 years). As the apostolic age ended, miraculous healing by direct human intervention ceased. And the healings reported by early church historians do not compare to the biblical record as to the miraculous quality of instant, total, and undeniable healing.” (Ibid, p. 114)

AN EXPLANATION OF 1 PETER 2:24. “The Bible does contain a healing promise. Many have misunderstood it. Look at 1 Peter 2:24 carefully... can you see it? ‘*By His wounds you were healed.*’ What does Peter mean?... Two foundational truths help get us off to a right start in understanding Peter and divine healing. *First,* every human being, when conceived, possesses a congenital spiritual defect--a sin disability that needs to be healed. *Second,* Peter addresses our need for

spiritual restoration in 1 Peter 2:24 with his discussion of Christ's provision of salvation's healing... **First Peter 2:24 has everything to do with spiritual healing, which the Bible calls salvation. In fact, 1 Peter 2:18-25 means just the opposite of what most healing advocates teach.** Peter argues that since Christ physically and spiritually suffered for our spiritual healing (verses 21-24), then we should be willing to physically suffer in this life at the hands of men (verses 18-21) because we have already received God's healing promise of eternal salvation (verses 24-25). Peter actually validates the divine purpose in human suffering rather than eliminates it... **Tragically, this wonderful truth of eternal salvation (our spiritual healing of which Peter writes) has been seriously mistaught by many people today.**" (Mayhue, pp. 18-20)

"BUT GOD DOESN'T CHANGE, SO SHOULDN'T MIRACULOUS HEALINGS STILL BE THE NORM!"

ANSWER: NO! "One of today's greatest threats to a correct interpretation of the Bible is assuming that any specific historical experience in Scripture is a valid, general expectation for today. This line of thinking... normally rests on such passages as Malachi 3:6, '*For I am the Lord, I change not,*' or Hebrews 13:8, '*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and forever.*'...(But) First, God's ability to do something is not the real issue. God is able to do *all* things at *all* times in *any* way He chooses. Second... it is wrong to reason that because God has done a certain thing in the past He will automatically do it for you or others today... *Unless we can show by the authority of Scripture that it is God's will to do something, then to say He will do it and demand that He perform is to sinfully presume on God.* Third...God has always warned about the counterfeit--false prophets (Dt. 13:1-5; 18:14-22), false apostles (2 Cor. 12:12), and even false believers (Mt. 7:13-23). **Jesus warned that neither exclamations such as 'Lord, Lord,' nor experiences like miracles or exorcisms necessarily distinguish between the true and false (Mt. 7:21-23).** To generalize is to open the gate of error and deception.

"IF WE WERE TO APPLY GENERALIZATION TO ALL BIBLICAL EXPERIENCES, WE WOULD COME TO SOME RATHER OBVIOUS WRONG CONCLUSIONS...

Because God supernaturally supplied food to the Jews in the wilderness (Ex. 16:1-21) and prevented their clothes and shoes from wearing out during their four-decade journey (Dt. 29:5), we would expect God to feed and clothe us that way today. We are not expecting to be taken up to the third heaven as Paul was...*Nor do we believe that leprosy patients who dip seven times in a river will be cured* (2 Kings 5:1-14).

BEWARE, TOO, OF MAKING EXPERIENCE THE ULTIMATE DETERMINER OF TRUTH. "This line of reasoning says that if I have an experience that is portrayed somewhere in Scripture, then it must be from God. This person uses experience to validate Scripture, rather than vice versa. First we need to go to the Bible and ask if the experience could possibly be from God." (Ibid, p. 116). Remember that in the church at Corinth, they apparently had some who felt they were glorifying God in their tongue's speaking and didn't even realize (?) that they were saying '*Jesus is accursed*' (1 Cor. 12:3)... If an experience could come from God, then it needs to be tested by Scripture and other godly people. Jesus taught that fruit would be the test (Mt. 7:20). Paul said that prophets were to be tested by prophets (I Cor. 14:29 cf. I Thess. 5:21-22; 1 Jn. 4:1). (Ibid, pp. 113-114).

(Note: E-K below are unfinished at this time [3/05]-mwe)

E. ISAIAH 53 - IS THERE "HEALING IN THE ATONEMENT?"

F. CALLING FOR THE ELDERS: AN EXAMINATION OF JAMES 5:?

G. IS IT SINFUL OR AN EVIDENCE OF FAITHLESSNESS FOR A BELIEVER TO BE SICK?

H. WHAT ABOUT SATAN &/or DEMONS AS A CAUSE OF SICKNESS? ("SPIRITUAL WARFARE").

I. INTERPRETING AND UNDERSTANDING CORRECTLY THE FAVORITE VERSES USED BY FAITH HEALERS.

J. THE SPIRITUAL GIFT OF HEALING.

1. WHAT WAS ITS ORIGINAL PURPOSE?

2. IS IT STILL IN OPERATION TODAY?

K. DOES GOD STILL HEAL TODAY?

XVI. SUMMARY REGARDING THE TOPIC OF SICKNESS AND HEALING.

XVII. APPENDICES-CHARTS ON HEALING IN THE BIBLE.

THE OLD TESTAMENT - THE HEALING MINISTRY OF GOD DIRECTLY⁹

1. Genesis 21:1--Sarah
2. Genesis 29:31--Leah
3. Genesis 30:22--Rachel
4. Exodus 4:6-7--Moses
5. 1 Samuel 1:19-20--Hannah
6. 1 Samuel 6:3--Philistines
7. 2 Kings 13:21--unknown man
8. 2 Chronicles 30:20--Israel
9. Job 42--Job

THE OLD TESTAMENT - THE HEALING MINISTRY OF GOD THROUGH MEN

1. Genesis 20:17--Abimelech, his wife, his maids
2. Numbers 12:1-15--Miriam
3. Numbers 16:41-50--Israel
4. Numbers 21:4-9--Israel
5. Numbers 25:1-9--Israel
6. 2 Samuel 24:1-17--Israel
7. 1 Kings 13:4-6--Jeroboam
8. 1 Kings 17:17-24--Widow's son
9. 2 Kings 4:18-37--Shunammite's son
10. 2 Kings 5:1-14--Naaman
11. 2 Kings 20:1-11--Hezekiah (cf. 2 Chronicles 32:24-26; Isaiah 38:1-22).

THE HEALING MINISTRY OF GOD THROUGH JESUS¹⁰

	<u>Matthew</u>	<u>Mark</u>	<u>Luke</u>	<u>John</u>
1. Multitudes	4:23-24	1:39	-----	-----
2. Leper	8:2-3	1:40-42	5:12-13	-----
3. Slave	8:5-13	-----	7:2-10	-----
4. Woman	8:14-15	1:30-31	4:38-39	-----
5. Multitudes	8:16-17	1:32-34	4:40-41	-----
6. Demoniac	8:28-34	5:1-20	8:26-39	-----
7. Paralyzed man	9:1-8	2:1-12	5:17-26	-----
8. Little girl	9:18-19, 23-26	5:21-23, 35-43	8:40-42, 49-56	-----
9. Woman	9:20-22	5:24-34	8:43-48	-----
10. Blind man	9:27-31	-----	-----	-----
11. Demoniac	9:32-34	-----	-----	-----
12. Multitudes	9:35	-----	-----	-----
13. Multitudes	11:2-5	-----	7:18-22	-----
14. Man	12:9-14	3:1-6	6:6-11	-----
15. Multitudes	12:15-21	3:7-12	-----	-----
16. Demoniac	12:22-23	-----	-----	-----
17. A few people	13:54-58	6:1-6	-----	-----
18. Multitudes	14:13-14	-----	9:10-11	6:1-3
19. Multitudes	14:34-36	6:53-56	-----	-----
20. Gentile girl	15:21-28	7:24-30	-----	-----
21. Multitudes	15:29-31	-----	-----	-----
22. Demoniac boy	17:14-21	9:14-29	9:37-43	-----
23. Multitudes	19:2	-----	-----	-----

⁹ From Richard Mayhue, The Healing Promise. (Harvest House Publishers: Eugene, OR, 1994), p. 87

¹⁰ Mayhue, pp. 96-97

24. Blind men	20:29-34	10:46-52	18:35-43	-----
25. Blind/lame	21:14	-----	-----	-----
26. Demoniac	-----	1:21-28	4:31-37	-----
27. Deaf man	-----	7:32-37	-----	-----
28. Blind man	-----	8:22-26	-----	-----
29. Multitudes	-----	-----	5:15	-----
30. Multitudes	-----	-----	6:17-19	-----
31. Widow's son	-----	-----	7:11-17	-----
32. Women	-----	-----	8:2	-----
33. Demoniac	-----	-----	11:14	-----
34. Woman	-----	-----	13:10-13	-----
35. Man	-----	-----	14:1-4	-----
36. Ten lepers	-----	-----	17:11-21	-----
38. Man's son	-----	-----	-----	4:46-54
39. Lame man	-----	-----	-----	5:1-9
40. Blind man	-----	-----	-----	9:1-7
41. Lazarus	-----	-----	-----	11:1-45
42. Many more	-----	-----	-----	20:30-31; 21:25

THE HEALING MINISTRY OF GOD THROUGH MEN

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
1. Disciples	10:1-15	3:15; 6:7-13	9:1-6	-----
2. Unknown men	-----	9:38-40	9:49-50	-----
3. Seventy	-----	-----	10:1-20	-----

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - THE HEALING MINISTRY OF GOD DIRECTLY¹¹

1. Acts 9:17-18---Paul healed by God (cf. Acts 22:12-13)
2. Acts 14:19-20---Paul healed by God
3. Acts 28:1-6---Paul protected by God

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - THE HEALING MINISTRY OF GOD THROUGH MEN

1. Acts 2:43---Apostles performed signs and wonders
2. Acts 3:1-10---Peter healed a lame beggar
3. Acts 5:12-16---Apostles healed
4. Acts 6:8---Stephen healed
5. Acts 8:7---Philip healed (cf. 8:13)
6. Acts 9:32-35---Peter healed Aeneas
7. Acts 9:36-43---Peter resuscitated Dorcas
8. Acts 14:3---Paul and Barnabas performed signs and wonders (cf. 15:12)
9. Acts 14:8-18---Paul healed a lame man
10. Acts 19:11-12---Paul healed people at Ephesus
11. Acts 20:7-12---Paul resuscitated Eutychus
12. Acts 28:7-8---Paul healed Publius' father
13. Acts 28:9---Paul healed many at Malta

¹¹Mayhue, p. 108