

# **Apostolic Authority**

**And Its Relationship  
To The Modern**

# **Charismatic Movement**

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**Second Edition**

Printed in USA  
2005

First Published in 1997

**Weston Street Bible Church  
340 Weston Street  
Rome City, IN 46784**

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## Introduction

Eternity is a long time to be wrong about the terms upon which God will grant eternal life. Because this is so, man must have a verifiable, authoritative basis upon which he can rest the eternal destiny of his soul. It is not enough to pit one preacher against another, or one creed against another; if God is just, and He is, then He has provided an authoritative source of His will upon which we can define the object of our faith. That authority is, and always has been the continuity of revelation from the prophets of God who have been since the world began. God has seen fit to preserve that information for us in the sixty-six books which we call the Bible. Any source of revelation claiming God's authority over our lives which is outside the realm of those books is at best confusing and in reality is an attack upon that which God declares to be complete.\* 1

All authority rests in Christ. Christ's authority is derived from the fact that He is the eternal, second Person of the Godhead. His authority is evidenced to us through, as Luke said, "many infallible proofs."\*2 Truly Christ's authority is evidenced to us through those miracles He accomplished. His authority is also attested to by the fact that He is the fulfillment of all that was spoken in the Law and the Prophets. The Law and the Prophets are demonstrated to be of divine origin by the fact that their prophecies were meticulously fulfilled, with their ultimate fulfillment occurring in Christ. While this may seem like circular reasoning to some, the compounding of the evidence makes it mathematically impossible for the Old Testament Scriptures to not be the authoritative source upon which we may rest our faith.

But what about the post-apostolic saint? What about that saint who was to remain after the death and resurrection of Christ?

\*1 2 Timothy 3:16-17 "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (KJV)

\*2 Acts 1:3 "To whom also He shewed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God." (KJV)



## Apostolic Authority

God has never left His people without a witness. People seeking knowledge about God have always had a discernable, undeniable source of God's will from which they could derive the will of God.

\*3

But what about the New Testament canon? Under what authoritative basis was the canon of New Testament Scripture authored? The Lord Jesus alone authorized who would be the superintendents of the revelation of God for the New Testament age. **Those people whom the Lord chose to infallibly attend to authoritative New Testament truth were the twelve Apostles.** The primary purpose of the office of apostle was to serve as the authoritative superintendents of New Testament revelation. Everything believers have held to since the time of Christ needs to bear evidence of apostolic authority. As stated before, eternity is a long, long time to gamble the eternal destiny of one's soul on a hunch that a particular person speaking in the name of Christ is really speaking forth the truth of God. One must have an authoritative basis upon which to judge that which he hears. Ever since the ascension of Christ, that authoritative basis has been apostolic authority.

A key to discerning this principle of apostolic authority is John, chapters 14-17, a passage that contains, among other things, Christ's final instructions to His apostles and what role they would be playing in the coming church age. Many people fail to realize that this passage is primarily Christ instructing His disciples as apostles. This extended passage begins in John 13:31 and extends to John 17:26. Even though there is much truth in this passage for all believers, the primary application of this truth is to the eleven apostles. An example of this is in John 15:26-27 in which the Lord Jesus said, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth

\*3 Proverbs 2:1-5 "My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." (KJV)

from the Father, He shall testify of Me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning."

Notice the qualifying phrase, "because ye have been with Me from the beginning" in this passage. The Lord is saying that, in a special way, His apostles would bear witness of Him because they had been with Him from the beginning. Notice another qualifying text in this passage, John 16:13. "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come."

In this verse, Jesus promises to His apostles not only the gift of supernatural revelation about future events, but also inerrant understanding of those truths. The ability to prophesy futuristic events is not a gift that is continually dispensed by the Holy Spirit down through the Church age. All that God intends for believers to discern about eschatological events at this time is to be gained by a diligent inquiry into the Scriptures. So, once again, it can be seen that Jesus specifically has His apostles in view in these promises. Consider this next verse: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. (John 14:26)

Evident in this passage is the promise of total recall and understanding about all that the Lord had spoken. Of all the words which the Lord spoke, believers today have access only to that which was recorded for us by the apostles. Consequently, this promise has direct application to the apostles alone.

In the above three verses the Lord promised His apostles that, after the Holy Spirit had descended, He would use His apostles to inerrantly teach the implication of all that He had spoken. The Lord would also use these apostles to tell forth futuristic, prophetic events. The Lord promised that, in a special way, the apostles would represent Him, authoritatively speaking in His behalf. This authority was unique to the office of apostle, an authority which was permanently fixed in writings that they authored.

The apostles knew their writings were to permanently preserve their authority. The Apostle Peter alludes to this in 2 Peter 1:15, "Moreover I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance."

So, then, the primary purpose of the office of apostle was to extend the undeniable, unquestionable authority of Christ into the Church age. People need an unquestionable source of authority. As a matter of fact, the Lord commends people in Scripture for demanding an authoritative basis for what they believed. In the book of Acts, Luke speaks of the Bereans as being "...more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore, many of them believed; also of honorable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few." (Acts 17:11-12)

## **The Purpose of the Miracles**

The primary purpose of miracles was to authenticate the divine ministry of the messenger. This had been true of the Lord Jesus and continued to be true in the preaching of the Apostles. In fact, a close examination of the miracles of Jesus will demonstrate that they were usually accomplished not primarily to relieve suffering, but more importantly to authenticate the Lord's Messianic credentials to a discerning soul. His miracles were always accomplished in the presence of, and for the benefit of an individual who was seeking to come to grips with the person of Jesus.

There are several places in the Bible where miraculous signs were used to demonstrate the continuance of the authoritative teaching of the Lord through the hands of the Apostles. In the infancy of the Church, signs, wonders, and various miracles were used to establish the extension of Christ's authority to apostolic teaching. Consider the following verses:

Hebrews 2:1-4 “Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders and with diverse miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will?”

Notice in this passage the author of Hebrews establishes that the primary purpose of the supernatural sign gifts was to establish a continuity between the teachings of Christ and the interpretation of those teachings by the Apostles. This same truth is also confirmed to us in the last verse of the Gospel of Mark: “And they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.” (Mark 16:20)

Notice once again that Mark states that Christ, after His resurrection, guided the preaching of the Apostles and confirmed their authority through the accompanying signs. The Lord also confirmed the Apostolic office of Paul to the early church. In 2 Corinthians 12:12, Paul makes his defense stating that “Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.”

From the above three passages, it can be safely concluded that the purpose of the apostolic miracles was to confirm to the first century world, that Christ had extended His authority to His twelve apostles.

## **A Source of Authoritative Doctrine for a Pre-Canon Church**

As the first century church grew, it was impossible for the apostles

to personally superintend over each of the numerous congregations. Yet, those believers also needed an authoritative source of God's will through which they could be edified. Apostolic sign gifts then served, not to authenticate that the apostles taught with the authority of Christ, but to confirm that a church was teaching apostolic truth. Apostolic sign gifts such as tongues, the interpretation of tongues, gifts of healing, etc. were a checks-and-balances system of supernatural revelatory gifts by which the early church could receive God's will in the absence of an apostle.

Before the completion of the New Testament canon, the early church had to have an authoritative source of God's will, since Scripture was not yet complete. As stated before, God never leaves His people without a source of His will. God gave them sign gifts by which they could know the information they were receiving was from Him. When the Apostolic sign gifts were in operation in the midst of a pre-canon assembly, through those gifts God's will was communicated.

Only an apostle could set these gifts in motion in the early churches. This is why, in Acts chapter 8, when Philip went to Samaria and won converts, it was necessary for the apostles to come to Samaria to lay hands on them to confirm them with the supernatural, revelatory, apostolic sign gifts:

Acts 8: 14-17 “Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet He was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.”

This apostolic visit was not for the purpose that these people might be indwelt by the Holy Spirit, but to set in motion those gifts through which the early church could receive authoritative

revelation. A similar circumstance occurs in:

Acts 19:6. "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."

Notice that this passage says the Holy Spirit came upon them. The author believes that this is not a reference to the indwelling which occurs simultaneously with faith, but to the filling of the Holy Spirit enabling these early believers to function in the supernatural, apostolic sign gifts, which in turn would enable them to function in Bible Doctrine. Through the laying on of hands by an apostle, the early church was endowed with supernatural, revelatory sign gifts through which they could receive authoritative teaching, even though an apostle was not present.

This is probably what the Apostle Paul is referring to in:

1 Corinthians 1:4-7, which reads, "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; That in every thing ye are enriched by Him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

It is interesting to note in verse 7 that the word for "gift" is the Greek word **karismati**.<sup>\*4</sup> It is the same word that is used in 1 Corinthians 12:4,9,28,30 and 31 to refer to the sign gift used for edification in the early church. The prepositional phrase "**en umin**" (in you) of verse 6 of this passage should probably be taken as a dative of sphere, which would therefore yield the translation, "in your midst."<sup>\*5</sup>

\*4 Zane C. Hodges and Arthur Farstaad, The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text, Second Edition (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers) ,512

\*5 For a discussion of the preposition " en" as a local dative, see H.E. Dana and Julius Mantey, A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament (Toronto, Canada; Macmillan 1927), 105

Just as the Lord originally extended His authority to the apostles and confirmed that authority with signs and wonders, so it is seen that apostolic authority was being confirmed in the midst of the believers. Very similar to ordinations today, in which participants will lay their hands on the candidate, confirming that the candidate is abiding in sound doctrine, thus also in the early church, through the laying on of hands by an apostle, God's will was confirmed in the midst of a group of believers.

The apostolic sign gifts were distributed among the individuals of a church as a checks-and-balances system by which the early church could receive supernatural, authoritative truth. One would speak a revelation in a tongue; another would interpret that revelation; another would confirm that revelation with miracles; and another would speak forth direct revelation via prophecy. Each part of the body of Christ in the pre-canon church would function in his gift, resulting in the delivery of authoritative truth to the entire body, resulting in its collective edification.

1 Corinthians chapter 12 is a description of how this total edification package functioned in the early church. Central to our understanding of the gifts are verses 7 through 12, which read,

1 Corinthians 12:7-12 "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."

A literal translation of verse 7 of the above passage would read this way: "But to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit unto the

collective benefit". Truly each member of the body of Christ was important to the edification of the body. This was especially true in the early church, for the purpose of their gatherings included the authoritative reception of Bible doctrine, resulting in edification.

In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul taught that this edification took place only when the end result of the diverse manifestations of the Spirit was understanding of Bible Doctrine. It is a great mistake to assert that tongues itself is edifying. The only time edification occurred from the use of tongues was when those tongues were interpreted:

1 Corinthians 14:12 & 13 states, "Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church. Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret."

So, just as miracles confirmed the authority of the apostles, thus the apostolic sign gifts of 1 Corinthians chapters 12 through 14 confirmed to those pre-canon saints the authority of the teaching occurring in their churches.

## **A Permanent Authority For a Mature Church**

A key to understanding this issue of tongues and the gift's cessation in the book of 1 Corinthians is the Greek phrase "**ek merouj**". It occurs five times in 1 Corinthians addressing this issue and is translated "by part," or literally "out of part." This phrase could also be used to refer to an "allotted portion."\*<sub>6</sub> This phrase is used to describe the means by which the early church received authoritative truth for its edification.

Consider closely the following verses in:

1 Corinthians 12 & 13: "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

(1 Corinthians 12:27) Literally rendered, this verse would read, "members by part," or "members by allotment."

The Apostle Paul then continues in verse 28 to tell us just what those parts were:

1 Corinthians 12:28 "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, Thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."

The primary point of 1 Corinthians chapter 12 is to demonstrate how each member of the body of Christ is needed for the body's edification. In 1 Corinthians chapter 13, Paul begins a contrast between that which will abide through the church age as a means of edification and that which will not abide. He speaks of how all gifts need to be ministered in love because, as he says in:

1 Corinthians 13:8, "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail: Whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away."

\*<sub>6</sub> Wesley J. Perschbacher, The New Analytical Greek Lexicon (Peabody, Mass., Hendrickson, 1990), 271

What does Paul mean when he says that love never fails? The author believes that Paul is saying that love will never fail to be a means of edification in the church like prophecy, tongues, and knowledge will fail. The question is this: "In what way will prophecies fail?" No prophecy which has ever been uttered by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit will fail to be fulfilled in its own time. The word "faileth" here is the Greek word "**katargeo**" which basically means "to become inoperative."\* 7 Obviously, the prophecy to which this verse refers is that supernatural, apostolic gift of prophecy by which the person who possessed the gift received direct revelation from the Holy Spirit. Paul states here that this gift of prophecy would one day fail to be operative in the church. Likewise, this passage says knowledge shall vanish away. Now, this cannot possibly mean that there will come a time when the people of God will no longer possess knowledge about God. Once again, this knowledge is that supernatural wisdom by which the person in possession of this gift could discern truth without the aid of Scripture. This context also says that tongues shall cease in a similar fashion. That word "cease" is the Greek word "**pauw**," which simply means "to stop." \*8 So this passage teaches that the day will come when the revelatory sign gifts will cease to be a means by which authoritative teaching is received.

The question is, "When?" When will tongues cease? The next two verses give the answer. Remember, the key to understanding the topic is the Greek phrase "**ek merouj**," which literally means "by portion" or "by part."

1 Corinthians 13:9 "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part."

\*7 Joseph Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing, 1977), p.336.

\*8 *ibid.* p. 496.

Or,..."now we know by part (**ek merouj**) and we prophesy by part (**ek merouj**)." In other words, the knowledge for their collective edification was coming from the individual parts of the body of Christ (enumerated in 12:28) through the supernatural, revelatory, apostolic sign gifts. The "parts" here were those believers who made up the body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 13:10 "But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."

The question must be asked, "What is that which is perfect?," because when it arrives, then that which is out of part (**ek merouj**) will be done away. The next verse alludes to the answer:

1 Corinthians 13:11 "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things."

It is unfortunate that this was translated "childish things." Childish, in today's vernacular, carries with it a negative connotation. This sentence would have been better translated, "when I became a man, I put away the things of the child." The church in its infancy had to rely on receiving knowledge in a way that it would no longer utilize when it became of age. This verse is offered as an explanation of that which is "by part," being put away when that which is perfect is come. Consider now, the next verse:

1 Corinthians 3:12 "For now we see through a glass, darkly, but then face to face: now I know in part; but then I shall know even as also I am known."

Many people interpret this to be a reference to Heaven and a face-to-face encounter with Christ; but the Scriptures in other places use the language of the mirror to describe the present face-to-face encounter we have with the Lord, which is ours through the transforming effect that looking into the Word of God has upon the believer. For example:

James 1:23-25 "For if any be a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whosoever looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

Notice in this passage that looking into the Word of God is likened to getting a good look at oneself in order that he might judge himself. The book of Hebrews teaches how the Word is sharper than any two-edged sword and is a discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart. The living Word of God helps one to see or know himself just like God knows him. In that sense, when that which is perfect (or complete) has come, "we will know as we are known." Many people try to interpret this passage as saying, "We shall know the Lord like He knows us," but the underlying Greek will not support that interpretation. Only as a person gains the discernment which comes from the Scriptures will he be able to truly see himself as the Lord sees him, which is the first step toward practical holiness.

Consider also this passage:

2 Corinthians 3:16-18 "Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

These two passages state that looking into the Word of God is an unveiled, transforming look at both one's depraved self and the transforming glory of the Lord. Before glass mirrors had backings on them, a person looking into a mirror would not only see his

reflection, but also the image of what was behind the glass. Thus, when the Christian looks into the perfect law of liberty with an unveiled conscience, not only is he seeing his own reflection, but also the image of Christ on the other side of the glass: and, as he continues to take in that image, he is transformed into His likeness.

Now, let's return to 1 Corinthians to consider this verse:

1 Corinthians 13:13 "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

In this verse, Paul offers to contrast the permanence of the abiding gifts of the Spirit with the temporary nature of supernatural, revelatory, apostolic sign gifts of which tongues was a part. In other words, even though the apostolic sign gifts are passing away, faith, hope and love will continue to abide as a means by which believers can edify one another throughout the church age. \*9 Believers will always need the strength which can come only as they gather together as a church. But believers would not always need, throughout the church age, the apostolic sign gifts as a source of authoritative truth.

In conclusion, upon close examination of 1 Corinthians 12-14, those supernatural, revelatory, apostolic sign gifts were a package of gifts for the early church through which they could authoritatively receive truth for their edification. When each part of the body of Christ would come together and function in his gift, God would bear witness to these people as to the accuracy of the truth received by these gifts. The author is persuaded that this passage teaches that those gifts would be done away, when the apostles and those whom they authorized permanently fixed God's will for the church in the completed books which we call the New Testament.

\*9 See Romans 12:6-8 for a more comprehensive list of the abiding gifts.

## **The Ramifications of the Modern Charismatic Movement**

Those who hold that the apostolic sign gifts are extant today find their churches characterized by many of the same errors that Paul was trying to correct in Corinth. It is amazing that the proof text that these groups point to as a defense for their practices was actually penned to correct the abuse of those gifts when they were still in operation. This begs the question, "If tongues is always the result of the Holy Spirit moving upon an individual, then why did Paul ever have to teach against it?" After all, "who does he think he is, telling me I can't speak in tongues when the Holy Spirit moves me to do so?" So it must be concluded that even in the early church, when the gifts were still in operation, tongues were also, at times, from an origin other than the Holy Spirit.

Another mistake made by those who insist in the perpetuity of the sign gifts is that tongues is a sign of maturity. Tongues was never a sign of maturity. Tongues and their interpretation were vehicles through which authoritative truth could be received. Only when that truth was consistently adhered to was the desired fruit of righteousness produced. Today, many in the charismatic movement view spirituality as that "good feeling" they obtain from participating in tongues, thus short-circuiting the real process the Lord uses for their equipping. A relative of the author was recently trying to dissuade a lady from her addiction to tongues. The lady's response was, "But it feels so good."

When a person's measure of eternal success is measured by a good feeling, is it any wonder that Christianity has such little impact on the national ethos?

Those who are addicted to tongues as the primary measure of their spirituality usually have little regard for the Bible as the sole source of truth and edification. This was apparently the case during Paul's

ministry to the church at Corinth. In 1 Corinthians 14:37-38 he concludes his teachings on the abuse of tongues by saying, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write to you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant."

By this exhortation, we see the apostle Paul weaning the early church away from the sign gifts and toward the Scriptures as their abiding source of authority. As evident from verse 38, apparently even under the direct exhortation of an apostle, there were people who were ignorant beyond recovery about this issue. So, today, believers should not be surprised when they find people whose faith has been short-circuited by the charismatic movement.

Probably the greatest error of the modern charismatic movement is the fact that it is tantamount to an attack on the Word of God. When one understands that the purpose \*10 for the supernatural, revelatory apostolic sign gifts was one of providing authoritative truth to the pre-canon church, then to say that the gifts are extant today is to say that God's Word as revealed in the Bible is not complete and final.

God has always given His people very clear indication as to when they can expect additional revelation. For example, God's closing words of the Old Testament canon were Malachi 4:5-6, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

\*10 Of course, another major purpose of tongues was that it, in fulfillment of Isaiah 28, was a sign against the nation of Israel. When Israelites heard men of other tongues proclaiming the salvation of God, Israel would know that they had "missed the boat," so to speak. As the prophet Isaiah said, "For with stammering lips and another tongue will He speak to His people. To whom he said, "This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear." (Isaiah 28:11-12) (KJV) Christ had come to give them the rest of his reign, but they would have none of it."

In other words, the next revelation of God was to come from Elijah, whom the Lord said in Matthew 17:12 was John the Baptist. Likewise in John's Revelation the Lord's final words to His saints are:

Revelation 22:20, "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

In other words, God's next revelation to mankind will be the revelation of Christ Himself. This same passage pronounces severe consequences upon anyone who would presume to add to or take away from that which God says is complete. Yet this is exactly what the charismatic is unwittingly asserting when he insists that the sign gifts abide into the age of a mature church.

## **An Analogy of a Charismatic**

### **A charismatic has a faulty view of Scripture.**

A charismatic does not view the Scriptures as God's sole source of instruction, guidance and equipping for the believer.

2 Timothy 3:16,17 "All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,<sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

Notice that this context teaches us that a man, through the teachings of the Scriptures, is completely and thoroughly furnished unto every advancement and accomplishment he would desire at the hands of the Lord.

The Charismatic in practice believes that the Scriptures are not a complete source of God's truth for edification.

The Charismatic believes that he has his own source of personal inerrancy operating in his soul. The charismatic believes that he has an extra-biblical witness and leading of the Spirit which serves as the believer's conscious source of moment-by-moment guidance. A verse which is often used to support the concept of personal internal inerrancy is:

1 John 2:27 "But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him."

The anointing of which the verse speaks is not the Holy Spirit; it is rather the teachings of the Holy Spirit. The audience of John in this epistle did not need to be taught concerning the issue at hand because they had already been taught in that particular area.

To say that the anointing of this context is the Holy Spirit Himself is to call the Holy Spirit an "it" (it has taught you). The Holy Spirit is not an "it": He is a He.

The Anointing of this context is a reference to the divine enablement which causes believers to be able to advance in their service for the Lord. That enablement is not the Holy Spirit Himself, but rather the content of His truth. It is not the fact that the Holy Spirit remains with us which protects the believer from error, it is the believer abiding in His teachings which protects the believer.

1 John 2:24 "Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father."

1 John 2:14 “I have written to you, fathers, Because you have known Him *who is* from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, And you have overcome the wicked one.”

John 15:7 “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.”

Because the Charismatic believes he has his own source of personal inerrancy, He has a low regard for Scripture. The Charismatic doesn't not need the discernment which comes from rightly discerning the Scriptures. He gets his discernment from the mystical leading of the Holy Spirit. Therefore it should not be surprising that most Charismatics have a low regard for diligent Bible study. This, by the way, is the real danger of the Charismatic movement. The Charismatic, through his addiction to experience, never knuckles under to the true source of maturity: a consistent consideration of the Word of God.

**A charismatic has a faulty view of the leading of the Holy Spirit.**

A charismatic believes that extra-biblical guidance is to be a regular, if not daily occurrence in a believer's life. The Charismatic, because he has a low regard for the ability of Scripture to provide him with a complete source for daily guidance, seeks subjective experience as the source for guidance. “The Lord told me”, “the Lord burdened me” is usually the mode of operation for the charismatic.

The charismatic is constantly looking for such cues from God because of his low regard for the sufficiency of Scripture. The discernment that the believer needs for daily guidance is gained through the discernment of a renewed mind.

Romans 12:1,2 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service.<sup>2</sup> And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

The phrase “that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” is discernment. Most believers who are trying to practice personal inerrancy through the direct leading of the Holy Spirit are doing so because they have failed to make the assimilation of Bible Doctrine a priority in their lives. Because this is the case, they are not being guided by the wisdom which characterizes someone who has proven “what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Proving the will of God means engaging in a process with the Holy Spirit through which the Word of God, properly understood and meditated upon, becomes the frame of reference through which the believer filters all of his decisions. The believer who has such a perspective abiding on his soul will not constantly be having to listen for that “still small voice” for guidance. The believer who is has the word of God abiding on his heart will have the practical wisdom he needs to make God-honoring decisions.

Philippians 1:9,10 “And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment,<sup>10</sup> that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ,”

Once again, the above context identifies what is to provide the daily guidance a believer needs in his life: the discernment which comes from a steady contemplation and exercising of the conscience in Bible doctrine.

**Many church leaders claim to have the gift of knowledge to gain ecclesiastical advantage over those in their sphere of influence.**

How can a person argue against a person who claims to get his instructions directly from his pipeline to the throne room of God. How can a believer who claims only to walk according to the truth he can glean from the Scriptures compete with “God told me.”

The Scriptures warn us about people who claim to have a direct pipeline flowing from the throne room of God. The apostle Paul, trying to correct the Corinthians’ warped concept of spirituality, correctly identifies the truly spiritual person in 1 Corinthians 14:37.

1 Corinthians 14:37 “If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.”

The apostle Paul in this context states who is the truly spiritual believer. The truly spiritual believer is the person who is willing to allow his direction to come only from an application of Biblical truth. The belief that God is speaking directly to an individual, providing that individual guidance, opens a person up to all kinds of spiritual dangers.

The Apostle Paul refused to exert any greater influence over people’s lives than what the Lord had authorized him to exercise. As we read in:

Romans 15:18 “For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient,”

The Apostle Paul, even though he was an Apostle and did have the power to exercise gifts, refused to use his gifts to try to coerce a person into walking with the Lord.

It has been the experience of this pastor that those who claim to still be experiencing the gifts which 1 Corinthians 13 teaches have ceased, do so to unjustly manipulate the unsuspecting in their religious sphere of influence. Either that or they have such a limited level of discernment gleaned from the Scriptures that they crave another source of direction from the Lord. Time and time again, it has been my experience that such people who claim that “God told them to do thus and thus” do so with complete disregard to the direction they would have received had they been in possession of discernment gleaned from a priority in the Word.

**A charismatic has a faulty view of the means and source of edification leading to maturity.**

Since the Charismatic has his own source of personal inerrancy, he has little regard or respect for the pastor who is diligent in discerning the will of God from a search of the Scriptures. To the Charismatic, his experience trumps your doctrine. To the Charismatic, his source of edification is not the rightly discerned truth from the Scriptures. The Charismatic’s source of edification is that still small voice as he walks in the garden, with God.

As we have already seen in Romans 12:1,2, the means of being transformed into a vessel of honor before the Lord is through the assimilation of Bible Doctrine. Quite frankly, growth in Christ is a cognitive reality. Growth in the life of the believer occurs as the believer takes in Bible Doctrine and allows that Doctrine to transform his life. As the believer understands truth, appropriates truth and exercises himself in truth during times of testing, he grows into a vessel of honor before the Lord. As we read in:

2 Peter 1:2-8 “Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, <sup>3</sup> as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, <sup>4</sup> by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises,

that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust.<sup>5</sup> But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge,<sup>6</sup> to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness,<sup>7</sup> to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.<sup>8</sup> For if these things are yours and abound, *you will be* neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Notice in this context that growth is a matter of growing in knowledge and having the Holy Spirit apply that knowledge to your soul. No one ever said that Christianity was just the accumulation of knowledge. By growing in knowledge, we provide the Holy Spirit the resources he needs as our internally-abiding resident teacher to build us up. As the Holy Spirit makes these truths precious to our souls, He internalizes the truth of the Word of God into our hearts. After He has internalized the Word of God into our souls, the Lord will cause us to exercise those truths during inconvenient times of testing. During those trials, if we draw upon that truth which the Holy Spirit has previously made precious to our souls, and continue to draw upon them, the transformation of our character into the image of Christ takes place. Truth by Divine truth, trial by Divine trial, the believer is transformed into the image of Christ.

So you see, in a sense, growth in grace is a very practical experience which has at its beginnings the believer taking in Bible Doctrine while the Holy Spirit makes those truths precious to our souls. These truths, when drawn upon during times of testing, result in genuine Christian growth.

But contrary to this Biblical roadmap to maturity, the Charismatic seeks to engage a different means to maturity: a moment-by-moment obedience to the subjective leading of the Holy Spirit in his life. The Charismatic is not sustained by a contemplation of the

Word of God, rather the Charismatic is sustained by what he believes to be personal encounters with the Holy Spirit. While on the surface this indeed sounds exciting, it is not the roadmap to Christian maturity.

This is another real danger of the charismatic movement: The Charismatic Movement offers the believer a short cut to maturity which leaves the believer un-established in the faith and thus disqualified to be used by God.

The Apostle warned his understudy, Timothy, that the day would come when believers would abandon the Biblical model of edification based upon the assimilation of Bible Doctrine. Listen carefully to:

2 Timothy 4:1-4 “I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: <sup>2</sup> Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. <sup>3</sup> For the time will come when they will not **endure sound doctrine**, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; <sup>4</sup> and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”

The Apostle Paul foretold of a future in which people’s edification would no longer be based upon the reception of and application of Bible Doctrine. With the recent advent of the Charismatic Movement, that time is here.

**A charismatic has a faulty view of spirituality and maturity.**

Another mistake that the Charismatic make is that he mistakes his experience for a sign that he is right with God. Even when the apostolic sign gifts were in operation in the early church, the person in possession of one of those gifts was not necessarily a mature

believer. In fact, apparently even in the early church, when the gifts were in operation, the Apostle Paul felt the need to correct the motives of people who were exercising the gifts. As we read in:

1 Corinthians 14:1-4 “Pursue love, and desire spiritual *gifts*, but especially that you may prophesy. <sup>2</sup> For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands *him*; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries. <sup>3</sup> But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men. <sup>4</sup> He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.”

Notice that the Apostle Paul recognized that tongues was not a sign of spiritual maturity; rather it was a vehicle through which the Church could receive truth resulting in maturity. Tongues was part of the delivery system through which authoritative truth was delivered to the Church. It was this Divine truth, which when assimilated into the soul, resulted in edification. Some of the Christians in the early church were parading this gift before others (I Cor. 13:4) in an attempt to give the appearance of spirituality to others. Many of the believers in the carnal church at Corinth were in a spirituality contest, trying to gain a reputation of “spiritual Christian” through the showing off of their gifts in the midst of the assembly. The Apostle Paul cut short that competition in the early church by stating that “If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord”. (1 Corinthians 14:37)

**The Charismatic fails to comprehend the overarching principle of the manifestation of tongues in the early church.**

The overarching principle behind the manifestation of tongues in the early church was that tongues were to serve as a testimony against Israelites. According to both the Old and New Testaments, Tongues served as a testimony to the Israelites that they missed the boat. Tongues were intended to be manifested in the midst of a

rebellious nation of Israelites as a sign against them, to provoke them the jealousy.

1 Corinthians 14:20-22 “Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature. <sup>21</sup> In the law it is written: “With *men of* other tongues and other lips I will speak to this people; And yet, for all that, they will not hear Me,” says the Lord. <sup>22</sup> Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe.”

Let’s look now at this prophecy as it appears in the book of Isaiah.

Isaiah 28:9-16 “Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those *just* weaned from milk? Those *just* drawn from the breasts? <sup>10</sup> For precept *must be* upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little.” <sup>11</sup> For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people, <sup>12</sup> To whom He said, “This *is* the rest *with which* You may cause the weary to rest,” And, “This *is* the refreshing”; Yet they would not hear. <sup>13</sup> But the word of the LORD was to them, “Precept upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little,” That they might go and fall backward, and be broken And snared and caught. <sup>14</sup> Therefore hear the word of the LORD, you scornful men, Who rule this people who *are* in Jerusalem, <sup>15</sup> Because you have said, “We have made a covenant with death, And with Sheol we are in agreement. When the overflowing scourge passes through, It will not come to us, For we have made lies our refuge, And under falsehood we have hidden ourselves.” <sup>16</sup> Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: “Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, A

tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation;  
Whoever believes will not act hastily.”

This context contains several details concerning the first advent of Christ and the Jews’ rejection of Him;

1. Isaiah 28:9 teaches us concerning those whom Jesus would choose as His disciples, “those just drawn from the breasts.” The disciples were not seasoned theologians, they were baby Christians.
2. Notice the temporal relationship between the rejection of the message of the Messiah and the appearance of tongues. This prophecy says that the Lord will speak to the Israelites with tongues, the ones to whom He had previously said, “this is the rest, with which you may cause the weary to rest”. This rest can be none other than the rest of salvation that Christ had died to provide. As we read in:

Luke 19:42-44 “If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things *that make* for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.<sup>43</sup> “For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side,<sup>44</sup> “and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”

In other words, because the Israelites had not been devoted to their Scriptures, they failed to recognize their Messiah. As a result, Israel’s people were scattered and their cities destroyed. A sign that the Israelites had failed to comprehend God’s provision for their salvation would be that non-Jewish people would communicate God’s Word for them, to them. This is precisely what was occurring in the early church. Israel had missed God’s provision for their salvation. A sign against them was to be that people of other

nations were being employed to deliver God's message to them. This was fulfilled both in the Babylonian captivity and by God's choosing to entrust the Church with His message for all peoples, including the Jews.

In conclusion, The Charismatic never embraces the true source from which genuine Christian growth occurs because he is pre-occupied with the pursuit of spiritual experience. Until the Charismatic grows tired of the lack of transformation in his life and forsakes his addiction to his spiritual roller coaster of experience, he will never embrace the means through which genuine maturity occurs.

## **Conclusion**

Eternity is a long time upon which to gamble the object of one's faith. God has always made sure that His people had an authoritative source of His will. The supernatural, revelatory, apostolic sign gifts served as that source for the pre-canon church until the time that the New Testament writing could be completed. Now that the canon is complete, to insist that the sign gifts are extant is to diminish the supremacy of the completed canon. Let those who believe in the Scriptures as the only source of God's will permit those Scriptures to have their complete work in their lives. Only through this means will they demonstrate to the charismatic the emptiness of a faith short-circuited by a pursuit of emotional experience to the exclusion of righteousness.

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