

What Is the Mission of the Holy Spirit?

by Denis Lyle

The Charismatic Movement has brought confusion to the churches by emphasizing experience over doctrine and promoting the ecumenical cause.

Scripture: Jeremiah 6:16, 1 Corinthians 13:8, 1 Corinthians 14:22, 2 Corinthians 6:17, 1 John 4:1, Revelation 13:11

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Charismatic Movement"

Description

Denis Lyle preaches about the Charismatic Movement, highlighting its history, vocabulary, popularity, and tendency towards ecumenism. He delves into the theological confusion surrounding the emphasis on experience over Scripture, the transitional confusion regarding the temporary nature of certain gifts like tongues, and the ecclesiastical confusion that promotes ecumenism, perverts Biblical injunctions, poisons local churches, and puzzles individual believers. Lyle urges believers to test everything in the light of Scripture, separate from falsehood, return to the old paths, and seek to be filled with the Spirit daily.

Transcript

Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:1-13

20. CHARISMATIC CONFUSION

Startling things are happening among professing Christians today. Amazing claims abound that God is doing signs, wonders and miracles. Fantastic encounters with Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are reported as common place. Healings of all kinds are being claimed. Its not unusual to hear of striking testimonies about how God has corrected spinal injuries, lengthened legs, and removed cancerous tissue in repines to faith. Some of these miracles seem almost bizarre. Puppies are raised from the dead, washing machines are " healed". Empty petrol tanks are supernaturally filled. People are slain

(knocked flat by the Holy Spirit) One lady reports being given a " new belly button". A man named Marvin Ford testifies that he has actually been to heaven and back. What is happening Has God reserved for this present generation a renewal of the extraordinary gifts of grace which marked the first Christians Have we been privileged to see a world-wide diffusion of these gifts Is it not possible to hear the same miraculous tongues that amazed the crowds on the day of

Pentecost

Many sincere people believe the answer to those question is yes. They hail the rise of the Charismatic Movement as a sign of a great spiritual awakening within the church. Others who are as equally sincere believe that this movement needs to be brought under the scrutiny of God's Word. In effect, this is what we have been doing in this series entitled "The Holy Spirit and Us". Now this... in our concluding study I want to deal with Charismatic Confusion! There are four things that I want to do by way of introduction! Firstly in thinking about the Charismatic Movement I want to:

1. TRACE ITS HISTORY:

My, its nothing new! For about the year 150 AD Montanus formely a pagan priest who offered animal sacrifices embraced Christianity and formed an ecstasy religion, based on feelings. He was joined by two ladies who left their husbands to join him. Together they formed a new sect which emphasised the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Montanus and his followers claimed to receive revelation from God that supplemented the Word communicated by Christ and the apostles. Prior to this after the apostolic age history indicates that these things ceased after the Canon of Scripture was

complete. Now we you look for the beginning of the Pentecostal movement you come to 1st January 1901.

On that day Agnes Ozman, a student at Charles Parham Bible College in Topeka, Kansas began to speak in tongues after Parkham laid his hands on her. Parham later moved to Texas. There he influenced a young African - American student, William Seymour. Seymour moved from Texas to Los Angeles.

At the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles in 1906, under Seymour's leadership there was an outbreak of tongues. This phenomenon received national publicity and like the Toronto blessing people flocked there from all over the world. This spawned a movement that resulted in the mainline Pentecostal denominations. Now it must be noted that this historical Pentecostal movement came into being as a reaction against the deadness of the church, against Modernism and Liberalism and the early leaders of the Pentecostal Movement were sound evangelicals who emphasised the Baptism of the Spirit and Speaking in Tongues. Pentecostals emphasised personal holiness and living a separated life. Most of the woman believers did not wear any makeup, and they did not cut their hair. Now when we think of the Charismatic Movement or

Neo-Pentecostalism, which is to be distinguished from historical Pentecostalism we come to the 3rd April 1960 for on that day Pentecostal teachings and practices spilled over into non-pentecostal churches. At this time Dennis Bennett, rector of St. Marks Episcopal church in Van Nuys, California, announced that he had been baptised by the Spirit and that he had spoken in tongues.

After that as John Sherrill put it, "The walls came tumbling down and the Charismatic Movement spread into mainline denominations such as Episcopalian, Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, Brethren, Lutheran."

There are now three recognised Pentecostal movements.

1. There is Traditional Pentecostalism:

These groups have for long been a strong evangelical force inside Protestantism. They exalt Christ, they preach heaven and hell and many within this group have shunned the Charismatic Movement because of that movements involvement with the Roman Catholic system.

2. There is Neo-Pentecostalism:

A title given to those who claim experiences similar to traditional Pentecostalism. But where they differ in this way. Years ago when someone had an Pentecostal experience like speaking in tongues, they left their own denomination and allied themselves with a Pentecostal group. This is no longer the case today, for inside the main line Protestant denominations are groups who practice the gifts. Under this title come places like

" The Christian Renewal Centre in Rostrevor", "The House Church Movement", "The Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International", etc.;

3. There is Roman Catholic Pentecostalism:

This has spread like wildfire in different parts of the Roman Catholic world. Many Roman Catholics are speaking in tongues. Prayer groups have sprung up in unusual places like convents and monasteries, and the so called Protestant Charismatics are hailing this as a major breakthrough as far as the Roman Catholic church is concerned. Some years ago I heard a converted Roman Catholic say and I quote, "I never knew a truly born again catholic in the Charismatic Movement".

(2) EXPLAIN ITS VOCABULARY:

What is meant by the term Charismatic Well, this word is based on the word "charisma", which means,

" a spiritual gift of grace". (Rom 12:6) This movement is so called because it emphasises the gifts of the Holy Spirit. (1) (2)

3. NOTE ITS POPULARITY:

Pentecostalism and the Charismatic Movement are now the fastest growing segments of Christendom. David Barrett of Regent University estimates there are 20 million Charismatics in the United States and as many as 460 million involved in the movement world-wide. Now why is this movement so popular. For at least three reasons:

1. Many are seekers after the spectacular rather than the spiritual. One Charismatic leader said, "Personal experience is what Pentecostalism is all about". Our generation wants to "feel it, if I can feel it, it must be good". But My, Bible truth is not tested by experience, rather experience is tested by Bible truth.

Do you recall what Paul says to Timothy, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine."

2. The Charismatic Movement offers a seemingly sudden and immediate solution to our problems.

People today desire "instant solutions". We want everything immediately. If we are hungry we want fast food, if we want information we hit the Internet, if we want to get fit we order a workout machine. Too many believers want God to solve their problems instantly, but many times God's work is slow.

3. The Charismatic Movement is a reaction against dead, cold, formal churchainty! People today want to be accepted and often they find they are more warmly accepted in these circles than ours! (1) (2) (3)

(4) MARK ITS TENDENCY:

For undoubtedly its tendency is Romeward and Ecumenical! Larry Christenson who is a Lutheran charismatic pastor and author has said, "Where the ecumenical influence is restricted the charismatic movement shrivels up". My, the objective of this movement is church unity! For many years the ecumenical movement worked hard to draw Protestant and Evangelical churches into the fold of Rome. One section which was always immune to their approaches was true evangelicalism. Now in recent years through the deceptions of the Charismatic Movement, Rome has been diverting many evangelicals from a genuinely Biblical position and leading them to an acceptance of the church of Rome. Its in the light of such tendencies that we cry aloud, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit ye like men be strong". (1 Cor 16:13) Now having giving you that, by way of introduction I want to state that there is confusion on at least three levels.

(1) THEOLOGICAL CONFUSION

Theology, the study of God and His works, is vital to the spiritual life of an individual believer as well as to the collective testimony of the church. Its true to say that the C.M. places a great deal of emphasis on experience. Indeed its interesting that Morton Kelsey a leading spokesman for the C.M. has subtitled his major work "Encounter with God", "A Theology of Christian Experience". Throughout this book he places a great stress on experience. The word "experience", is employed scores of times. Now this emphasis on the inward, on feeling, on religious mysticism, is typical of the C.M. Our Christian lives however, are not to be built on feelings, no matter how good they may seem, but upon the rock of Holy Scripture. Now in respect to theology Pentecostalism of all shades centre in large measure around the doctrine of the Baptism of or with the Holy Spirit! They tell us that this Baptism is subsequent to conversion and once you get it there is instant relief, full liberty, a new found joy, power to sing

and shout for the Lord. Now is this so The Baptism of the Spirit is viewed from three angles in the NT

(a) The Baptism of the Spirit is viewed Prophetically:

That is, there are a number of passages in the NT that look forward to this baptism, and speak of it as yet to be. (Matt 3:11 Mk 1:8 Lk 3:16 Jn 1:33) Let's look just at one. (Acts 1:3-5) Now notice several things about this promise!

1. This Baptism was to be experienced by ALL and not Some.

2. This Baptism was yet to be, "ye shall be baptised..."

future tense.

3. This Baptism was limited to a point of time "not many days hence". So there was no Baptism of the Spirit previous to our Lord's ascension. That I think is clear enough.

(b) The Baptism of the Spirit is viewed Doctrinally:

Look at (1 Cor 12:13) That word "by", can be translated "in or with", but whatever way we take it Paul is stressing that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is a Baptism into the Body of Christ. What happened on the day of Pentecost was this. These believer units were constituted a spiritual body by the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, and thereafter by this Baptism everyone upon believing in Christ is incorporated into the Body. Did you notice here that this Baptism is not connected with our State as believers but with our Standing as

believers. My, the real purpose of the Baptism in the Spirit is not that Christians may be energised for witness and service, the real purpose of the Baptism of the Spirit is to bring us into the body of Christ. Literally, that word "baptise", means "to immerse", but figuratively it means "to be identified with."

When the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, He identified these believers with their glorified Head the Lord Jesus and formed the body which is the church. "For by one Spirit were we all baptised into one body". So the Baptism of the Spirit is when God's Spirit takes a person and places him into the body of Christ. (a) (b)

(c) The Baptism of the Spirit is viewed Historically:

Look at (Acts 2:3 11:15-16) The cloven tongues that sat on their heads weren't actually fire, they appeared to be like fire. This was a testimony that each without exception had received the Holy Spirit. This was the Baptism of the Spirit and they all partook of it. The Holy Spirit identifying these believers with their glorified Head the Lord Jesus, and forming the body which is the church. What then about this current view that multitudes of Christians have never experienced the Baptism of the Spirit and that believers should seek it, tarry for it, ask for it until they experience it. My, such teaching is unscriptural and the spread of it is bringing many believers into bondage and confusion.

The believer in the NT is never told that he must be baptised with the Spirit, he is told that he is has been baptised with the Spirit. As someone has aptly put it,

" This baptism is not to be sought, it has already been wrought for every saint". (1)

(2) TRANSITIONAL CONFUSION

Transition means "a change from one set of circumstances to another". Now who would deny that the Acts of the Apostles is a transitional period. From beginning to end in the Book of Acts changes are taking place. In Acts we go from the synagogue to the church, from OT saints to NT believers, from a body of Jewish believers to a body the church made up of Jews and Gentiles who are one in Christ. In Acts the dead are being raised Is that happening today Where are the so called healers in our land who can raise the dead

So in the Acts of the Apostles we have a transitional period where amazing things were happening and one of those amazing things was "the gifts of tongues". Now tongues are mentioned in three books of the Bible. In

(Mk Ch 16 Acts Ch 2 Ch 10 Ch 19 and 1 Cor Ch 12-14) Now its interesting to notice that this gift is related to three different groups of people. Tongues is:

(a) RELATED TO THE HISTORY OF THE NATION:

It was a sign to the Jewish nation. Look at:

(1 Cor 14:21-22) "Tongues are for a sign ..". A sign to whom Are they a sign to Christians confirming the baptism of the Holy Spirit No! "Not to them that believe". (1 Cor 14:22) My ... tongues are not a sign to Christians. "But to them that believe not". Now who are those who believe not The answer is in (14:21) Where is Paul quoting from (Is 28:11-12) What does that refer to A time in the history of Israel when they turned away from God. Through Isaiah came this warning, predicting the invasion from Assyria and Israel's resulting captivity. "You are going to hear men speak in languages you won't understand. They will

be your conquerors and captors and you will know when you hear such My judgement has come". Now that prediction came true 780 odd years before God wrote to the Corinthians. But now once again God was getting ready to judge Israel. Do you recall the words of the Lord Jesus

" When ye see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that desolation thereof is nigh... and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles". (Lk 21:20-24)

Again, the sign of judgement was being heard, "with men of other tongues (languages) will I speak unto this people". (Israel) My, when Titus the Roman sacked the city of Jerusalem and dispersed the Jews over the world in AD 70, the reason for tongues disappeared and the gift ceased in and of itself. The reason for the gift is no longer here and God does not give His gifts as toys when their purpose has ceased to be. (a)

(b) RELATED TO THE INFANCY OF THE CHURCH:

This gift related to the childhood of the church. In arguing, for the temporary nature of certain gifts including tongues, Paul uses the illustration of physical and mental growth from childhood to adulthood.

(1 Cor 13:8-11) Why does Paul use this picture To show that the church was in a process of development at the time he wrote from infancy to maturity.

(1 Cor 14:20) My, tongues or languages appeared briefly in the early days of the church, as the church was being established, but once that occurred they were gone, they stopped. They belonged to the childhood of the church. Today, the church's life and ministry is founded on the Word of God. (Acts 20:17-38) (a) (b)

(c) RELATED TO THE MINISTRY OF THE APOSTLES:

Think of this, the apostles of Christ came into the Roman Empire and Jewish communities preaching a startling message. They were declaring that the crucified Jesus of Nazareth had been miraculously raised from the dead, that He had ascended and was the Only Saviour. Now that was a very difficult message for either Jew or Gentile to receive. What proof was there that this Jesus was Messiah and Saviour (2:33 4:12) How could men know that what the apostles preached was

accurate Well, God solved this problem by granting to the apostles and those closely associated with them mighty signs which served to corroborate the message and the men. (Mk 16:15) Paul says in (2 Cor 12:12)

" Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds". Now let me ask you, where the apostles

unique Well, they were chosen directly by Christ:

(Lk 6:13) they were eye-witnesses of His resurrection:

(Acts 1:22) they had power to work miracles:

(Acts 5:12 8:18) and they were those gift was temporary. (Eph 2:19-20)

Now if the gift of apostleship was temporary, and if that gift was attested by other gifts (including tongues) then the need for those attesting gifts no longer exists. Do you know what Paul says He says, "Tongues

shall cease". (1 Cor 13:8) And the Greek verb he uses means "to cease permanently". (pauo) It implies that when tongues ceased, they would never start up again, and the later books of the Bible do not mention tongues again.

Sir Robert Anderson, who was associated with Scotland Yard could speak 14 different languages fluently. He decided to do some research into the phenomena of tongue speaking. So he visited as many Pentecostal meetings in the London area as he could. For months on end all he heard was gibberish. Then one night in a little back street a fellow got up in this hall and in his cockney accent he spoke perfect Chinese. Sir Robert Anderson knew exactly what he was saying. Do you know what he was doing He was cursing Christ and the cross, he was blaspheming the work of Calvary and they were all shouting Hallelujah. Oh, it was funny now, the flesh and the devil had taken over! My, do you see what happens when you don't recognise that the book of Acts is a transitional period You get yourself into a real mess! So there is (1) (2)

(3) ECCLESIASTICAL CONFUSION

What effect has the Ch.M. movement had in the churches of this land and others Well, let me state several things in closing.

(a) IT PROMOTES THE ECUMENICAL CAUSE:

Virtually every traditional division of Christendom is found under the umbrella of what is called "The Charismatic Renewal". In many cases those claiming to have the gifts of the Spirit are not born again and are members of churches where the gospel is ridiculed.

However they meet together on the basis of a common experience. One old line Pentecostalist in decrying the ecumenical involvement of Neo-Pentecostals said,

" The tongues experience seems to serve as a bridge over the chasm of theological difference". Featured speakers at many Charismatic conferences represent all portions of the theological spectrum. A Roman Catholic writer says, "One of the richest fruits of this contemporary charismatic movement is the binding together of Christians of many denominations in the Spirit of Jesus. Episcopalians, Lutherans, Presbyterians Methodists, Baptists, Disciples, Nazarenes, Brethren as well as denominational Pentecostals have become our very dear brothers and sisters in Christ, united by the baptism in the Holy Spirit."

There is nothing here about the cry of the 16th century Protestant Reformation "By grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone". Indeed, most Roman Catholic charismatics remain loyal to the Roman Catholic church. Listen to the testimonies of R.C. charismatics who claim to experience the baptism of the Spirit.

" Attendance at mass has grown to be my way of life,

through the mass I receive all the strength I need to witness to Christ and His teachings". "Most of us received the baptism of the Spirit while kneeling before the blessed sacraments in prayer". Need I go on. In May 1975 thousands of Catholic Pentecostals went to Rome and some of them had the privilege of meeting Pope Paul who in turn gave them his blessing. While they were there a special mass was performed in their honour. Michael Harper formerly assistant curate of All Souls, Langham Place, London, said " that Catholic Pentecostalism is a Christ-centred movement."

My, do you know one of the purposes of the Holy Spirit " He will guide you into all truth". (Jn 16:13)

How can an enlightened believer have fellowship with a catholic penitentialist who still celebrates the mass, reveres the pope and prays to Mary How can such a movement be of God co-operating as it does with the hierarchy of Rome (a)

(b) IT PERVERTS THE BIBLICAL INJUNCTION:

The C.M. is a foe of Biblical separation. An Assembly of God preacher said and I quote, "We used to be leaders in experiencing the baptism of the Holy Spirit but now since the Spirit has visited the great historic Protestant churches I know says he an Episcopalian priest in this city who is so liberal he neither believes in the virgin birth nor the resurrection, yet he recently received the baptism in the Spirit and exhibits marvellous power in ministry". Do you see what they are saying It does not matter what you believe! What difference does it make whether a person believes in the verbal inspiration of the Bible In the deity of Christ In the once and for all sacrifice In the new birth What difference does it make if a person is supporting the apostate programme of a liberal denomination If he or she has been baptised by the Spirit and speaking in tongues, this they say is the most important matter. My, what does God say God's command to separate from those who hold false doctrine still stands. " Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord." (2 Cor 6:17)

(c) IT POISONS THE LOCAL CHURCH:

I think this... of the heartbreak and conflict that has resulted in many churches because of the charismatics.

Churches that stood for the truth for years have been captured and taken over by the charismatics. In 1983 I visited South Africa and saw the havoc that the C.M. had wrought in the Baptist Union of South Africa! And My, is the same not happening in local churches throughout our nation (a) (b) (c)

(d) IT PUZZLES THE INDIVIDUAL BELIEVER:

" How do you explain the fact that some people seem to speak in tongues" This question is frequently encountered in discussions with believers. There are several things that must be kept in mind in facing the problem of the current C.M.

1. The Phenomenon of tongues is not unique to Christianity:

The fact that someone has spoken in tongues does not mean that he is a superior Christian (Corinth) it does not even mean that he is a Christian at all. My, false religions are known for tongues, ecstatic babblings and euphoric experiences. Today ecstatic speech is found among Muslims: Eskimos: Tibetan Monks: Voodoo Priests, and there have been incidents of tongues speaking from those practising the occult. It's interesting to read that Joseph Smith the founder of Mormonism trained mormons to speak in tongues with instructions almost identical to those given in charismatic churches today.

" Arise upon your feet, continue to make sounds of some kind, and the Lord will make a tongue and language of it". (1)

2. Most modern tongue-speaking is a learned skill:

My, there was a spontaneity and supernaturalness of the gift when it was manifested in the early church. However, modern authors such as John P. Kildahl have underscored the fact that tongues-speaking is a learned skill. Larry Christenson, a leading charismatic, details for his readers how they many begin to speak in tongues, outlining the steps to follow and declaring that if the seeker just starts talking and keeps talking in faith the Spirit will shape his sounds into a language. My, this can hardly be said to be the biblical gift of tongues

Probably most of what passes as the gift of tongues today is psychologically induced. The final thing is this.

3. The possibility of demonic control cannot be overlooked:

Now I'm not saying that all tongue speaking is satanic. But what I am saying is that every false religion in the world was spawned from the same individual, the devil.

And when, and where human beings relinquish control of their faculties the devil can come in and take over.

My, because something is unusual or unexplainable does not mean that the thing in question is divine in its origin. The coming emissaries of Satan during the tribulation period will startle the world with their extraordinary exploits. (Rev 13:11-14)

Well, there you have it. Charismatic Confusion on at least three fronts (1) (2) (3) My, what is to be our reaction to all of this:

1. Test everything in the light of Scripture: "Beloved believe not every spirit but try the spirits whether they are of God." (1 Jn 4:1)

2. Lets separate ourselves from all that is false and spurious:

3. There needs to be a return to the old paths. "Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way and walk therein and ye shall find rest for your souls". (Jer 6:16)

4. We need to know what it is to be daily filled with the Spirit of God.

" Have thine own way, Lord."

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