

Pentecostalism's Fatal Flaw

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The list of failures of Pentecostalism grows the more the subject is studied even by those trying to be unbiased and unprejudiced in their approach to it. In Memphis recently a Pentecostal man suffered a brain tumor and subsequently passed away. A fellow-member of the church he attended called their preacher who claims to possess power to heal and asked him to heal their brother, but he refused to do it. The man died. The man who died and the man who made the sincere request of their preacher were all members of the same Pentecostal-type church. The deceased and the other member have a mutual friend who is a member of the church of Christ. He related this incident as it was unfolding in concerned conversations to me. I know their preacher makes such bold claims because he appears regularly on television in Memphis making those claims. In sharp contrast, the apostles of Jesus Christ had power to heal and power to even raise the dead. Examples of these powers may be investigated from eyewitness reports that have not only undergone the scrutiny of man but are recorded as a product of divine inspiration in the word of God in Acts 3 and 9 to provide just two of such examples. The flaw of Pentecostalism here is in its inability to do that which it claims to be able to do.

The attitude of the apostles in this connection was uttered by one of them, "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake" (I Thess. 1:5). On at least one occasion in public debate on this subject a Pentecostal repeatedly was asked to follow the example of those truly in possession of miraculous powers and provide proof instead of just talking about it, but never was empirical evidence provided (cf. *The Woods-Franklin Debate*, 1974).

While a number of errors could be listed in regard to Pentecostalism including the use of scripturally unauthorized religious titles by its leaders, unbiblical church organization, worship practices unapproved by God, and many, many more, there stands one particular flaw in Pentecostalism that clearly is fatal to the salvaging of any vestige of hope that Pentecostalism could ever be acceptable to God. It is their view consistently held by the various Pentecostal groups that it takes a direct, immediate, and special revelation from the Holy Spirit to save the soul of man. One man of theirs concerning whom there has been no public censure of his flamboyant representations of Pentecostalism from the Pentecostals themselves is the well known Benny Hinn. On a Trinity Broadcasting Network television program June 27, 2006 at 5 a.m. (local Memphis channel 91) Benny Hinn taught ostensibly from Acts 16 and Matthew 16 that what saves a person is a direct revelation from the Holy Spirit. Even though what the Philippian jailor initially was concerned about was the fact that he was about to enter eternity facing certain ruin and loss beyond degree (Acts 16:27), Benny Hinn affirmed that Jesus Christ is not a "fire escape." Is avoidance of eternal hell inadequate and inappropriate motivation to be concerned about salvation? According to Hinn, yes; according to the Philippian jailor, absolutely not! Now, the flaw that is fatal to Pentecostalism is the position universally taken by them that what saves a person is a direct revelation from the Holy Spirit, and here's why it is so. **IT MAKES GOD A RESPECTOR OF PERSONS. IT MAKES GOD UNABLE OR UNWILLING TO ACCOMPLISH HIS WILL.**

Scriptural proof of these two factors should empty out every last Pentecostal-type church in the world because the religion cannot be sustained as from God in contradiction to the Bible texts which affirm the truths they flat out

reject. Please note first what the Bible says on the truth that "God is no respecter of persons." "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35). Even of human beings the Lord affirmed, "But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors" (Jas. 2:9). Since "God is no respecter of persons," should the immediate, direct, revelation of the Holy Spirit save a person in order to be consistent every person on earth now and for all time past and future should be saved. Otherwise, God would be a respecter of persons! Second, the Bible plainly declares God's will regarding those that are lost. The apostles Paul and Peter spoke by the inspiration of God to the point. Paul wrote that God "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:4). Peter wrote, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Pet. 3:9). According to the Pentecostal position, if all men are not saved God is either unable or unwilling to accomplish his own will! So, the flaw that is fatal to Pentecostalism is the position universally taken by them that what saves a person is a direct revelation from the Holy Spirit.

By what means is a lost person saved? James answers, "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (Jas. 1:21). All men must hear it and believe it (Rom. 10:17), repent of past sins (Rom. 2:4), confess their faith in Jesus Christ as the divine Son of God (Rom. 10:9-10), and be baptized into Christ for the remission of their sins (Rom. 6:3-5; Acts 2:38). This is the message that is to be preached so that men can be saved (I Cor. 1:18-21), and this is the plan to continue to the end of the world (Mt. 28:19-20).