

# Charismatics and the Bible for all of Life

By Craig R. Dumont, Sr.

Victory! Healing! Prophecy! Salvation! Wisdom! Prosperity! Worship! (. . . and oh, yes, Tongues!)

Pentecostals and Charismatics tend to speak about all these themes with exclamation mark enthusiasm. At our worst (pick anyone on television), which is how most of our critics judge us, we sound shrill and insincere, oddly entertaining mostly due to very creative hairdos. At our best (pick most, although surely not all, from a typical congregation) we are a group of believers filled with faith, hope, love and the Word of God which causes us to attempt great things for Christ. I believe it was Gary North who once called charismatics “operational postmillennialists,” and he was right; we are an action-oriented group concentrating on building, fixing, subduing, and even healing. We tend to live exclamation mark lives driven by an exclamation mark faith!

One reason the charismatic movement continues to grow so rapidly despite many faults (and I have written about our faults regularly) is that it has, perhaps more than any other group of Christians, embraced the entire Bible in an attempt to re-spiritualize the world—and I use that term in the best sense. True charismatics see the world with a spiritual clarity or vibrancy that many non-charismatics find threatening or perhaps just too simplistic.

Charismatics read the Old Testament and believe it! They take for granted that God created the entire cosmos in six days and we don't dispute the fact that there was a real Adam and Eve who actually sinned after their encounter with Satan and temptation. From the start we see the awesomeness of God's power and authority even as Satan is acknowledged to be seeking the destruction of man and the planet. No doubt unconsciously, we affirm that there is no neutrality in the

universe. The battle is joined and we are called to participate as God's warriors. There are brilliant victories secured by God for His people as they obey and act in faith, but we also understand we run the risk of spectacular failure if we are disobedient, rebellious and fearful. This emphasis upon action causes us to charge ahead in such a way as to anticipate victory, endure defeat, but absolutely despise complacency.

Indeed, because the entire Bible is given for all of life we see a continuation of God's purpose and provision throughout Scripture. God is the same yesterday, today and forever and the Bible speaks often of healing (Num. 21:8; Ex. 15:26; Psm 103:3; the book of Job; Matt. 4:24, 8:13 & 16), prosperity (Deut. 8:18 & 28:1-14; the book of Job); prophecy (Num. 11:25-26; 1 Sam. 10:10; See all the prophets; Acts 19:6 & 21:9), and worship (1 Chr. 16:29; Psm 29:2, 96:9 & 150; John 4:23). God provides all these things to overcome the works of the devil, which Jesus Himself described as killing, stealing and destroying, and reestablishing covenant believers and all creation to its proper order, fulfilling His intent. This means we're called and equipped for spiritual warfare and are promised Victory!

The entire Bible is relevant to the charismatic because he sees Old Testament examples concerning the gifts of the Spirit and believes Scripture indicates that rather than quietly disappearing during some future dispensation, there will be a time of general outpouring in which great numbers of covenant believers receive and utilize them. For instance, Joel 2:28 speaks of prophecy, visions and dreams this way:

I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh;  
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
Your old men shall dream dreams,  
Your young men shall see visions.

**W**e affirm that there is no neutrality in the universe. The battle is joined and we are called to participate as God's warriors. There are brilliant victories secured by God for His people as they obey and act in faith, but we also understand we run the risk of spectacular failure if we are disobedient, rebellious and fearful. This emphasis upon action causes us to charge ahead in such a way as to anticipate victory, endure defeat, but absolutely despise complacency.

Charismatic worship service is not a stand alone phenomena, but flows specifically from their understanding and view of God and His Word in its entirety. Believers have *always* lifted up holy hands to the Lord. They have *always* praised Him on every instrument available. They have *always* “sang a new song to the Lord.” They have *always* danced in His presence. They have *always* cried out with a loud voice of praise and adoration. They have *always* given a “positive confession” of God’s grace, mercy and provision and have *always* spoke *with faith*, walked *by faith* and celebrated *in faith*. You cannot replicate the worship until you replicate the full-orbed Biblical view!

Isaiah 65:20 indicates widespread enjoyment of good health and James thinks it normal that if you’re sick you will call upon the elders to hear a confession of sin if necessary, anoint you with oil, pray the prayer of faith, and be healed. Rather than looking for the point in time that many of the “Old Testament” promises and gifts were repealed or ceased to operate, charismatics read the entire Bible and see a continuation of these blessings today. In fact, we would see them as even better promises and more powerful gifts finding their fullness or completeness in the risen Christ.

With this re-spiritualized vision of the world it’s no wonder that charismatics seem so animated and passionate about their faith in God. With the gifts of the Spirit liberally poured out and in operation, there is confidence that we can do battle with a supernatural foe and vanquish the demonic realm in Christ’s name. This Biblical mindset creates the vision of the Cosmic Christ, King and Ruler over all creation and all tribes, nations and tongues shall praise Him.

Vibrant, dynamic, wholehearted worship is a trademark of the Pentecostal/charismatic movement. Many non-charismatic denominations and groups have attempted to replicate the energy level and powerful emotional elements that are the hallmark of our “praise and

worship services” without success. In my opinion this is due to the fact that non-charismatics have approached worship from the wrong direction. Many believe that if they can offer a similar worship service or experience they will experience the same church growth rates as the charismatics.

However, the charismatic worship service is not a stand alone phenomena, but flows specifically from their understanding and view of God and His Word in its entirety. Believers have *always* lifted up holy hands to the Lord. They have *always* praised Him on every instrument available. They have *always* “sang a new song to the Lord.” They have *always* danced in His presence. They have *always* cried out with a loud voice of praise and adoration. They have *always* given a “positive confession” of God’s grace, mercy and provision and have *always* spoke *with faith*, walked *by faith* and celebrated *in faith*. You cannot replicate the worship until you replicate the full-orbed Biblical view!

Worship that flows from a view of “all the Bible for all of life” tends to underscore already deeply held assumptions about God and reenergizes individuals and congregations to step out and live a life of faith and optimism. If God is for us, who can be against us? With God, all things are possible! Charismatic clichÈ’s? No. God’s unchanging Word? Absolutely.

While there were some shaky moments and bad theology at the beginning of both the Pentecostal and charismatic movements (and high-profile examples of the same today), we’re now maturing in theology, ecclesiology and eschatology and are serving the entire body of Christ in exciting ways. Even as our critics have focused on our shortcomings and weakness, charismatics have reintroduced the (entire) Bible themes of Victory! Healing! Prophecy! Salvation! Wisdom! Prosperity! Worship! (Öand oh, yes, Tongues!) to the Church once again.



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