

Lesson 5 –An Overview of Pentecostalism
A Study of Religions Beliefs
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Introduction: The growth of the Pentecostal movement in this country has been extraordinary.

A. What do we mean by the “Pentecostal Movement?”

Pentecostalism is a movement within Christianity that places special emphasis on a direct personal experience of God through the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The term *Pentecostal* is derived from Pentecost, a Greek term describing the Jewish Feast of Weeks. For Christians, this event commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the followers of Jesus Christ, as described in the second chapter of the Book of Acts. Pentecostals tend to see their movement as reflecting the same kind of spiritual power, worship styles and teachings that were found in the early church. For this reason, some Pentecostals also use the term *Apostolic* or *full gospel* to describe their movement. – Wikipedia

B. This movement gives great emphasis to speaking in tongues, healing through miracles, the direct leading of the Holy Spirit and Holy Spirit baptism.

1. While these are Bible subjects and can be examined through Bible study, the Pentecostal Movement mirrors Mormonism in giving priority to personal feelings and experience over anything found through a reasoned study of scripture.
2. There are numerous divisions within this movement.
3. As with any broad movements like this it is important to let the individual you are working with explain their own beliefs. The real challenge is in finding a common ground upon which to study!

I. What is the work of the Holy Spirit?

A. Jesus plainly stated the work of the Spirit. **(Jn 16:7-15)**

1. The Holy Spirit's work involves the exposure of sin!
2. The Holy Spirit's work is to lead men to righteousness!
3. Sadly, many think that the Spirit's work is to satisfy the flesh of men!

B. The Holy Spirit worked through selected men to bring forth a perfect revelation. **(Jn 16:13)**

1. It was not just anyone who was inspired by God. **(Eph 3:3-5)**
2. God delivered this message without error! **(Mt 10:19-20; Jn 14:26)**
3. This message could be trusted! **(1 Cor 2:10-13)**

C. The Holy Spirit convicts and converts men through the spirit given word!

1. The written word is the sword of the spirit. **(Eph 6:17)**
2. The gospel is God's power to salvation. **(Rom 1:16)**
3. How did men become Christians in the New Testament?
 - a. They were called by the gospel. **(2 Thess 2:14)**
 - b. They heard the gospel and believed. **(Eph 1:13)**
 - c. After hearing and believing, they were baptized. **(Acts 18:8)**
4. If the Holy Spirit had not been sent, would Christ have died in vain? **(Titus 2:11-12)**

II. The Temporary Gifts of the Holy Spirit

A. A brief survey of the book of Acts shows how gifts were given.

1. At first only the apostles were working signs and wonders. **(Acts 2:4, 43; 4:33; 5:12)**
2. The apostles then laid their hands on selected men. **(Acts 6:3-6)**
 - a. These men could then perform signs. **(Acts 6:8; 8:5-7, 12-13)**

- b. But these men who were not apostles could not impart spiritual gifts upon others. **(Acts 8:14-18)**
- B. Timothy had Paul's hands laid upon him. **(2 Tim 1:6)**
 - 1. He received the gift of prophecy.
 - 2. Again spiritual gifts were given by an apostle!
- C. Paul could not send another to Rome to impart a spiritual gift. He has to go himself. **(Rom 1:11)**
 - 1. This is one of the unique powers of an apostle. **(2 Cor 12:12)**
 - 2. These gifts were necessary during a period of transition.
- D. Other ways the "laying on of hands" is described in the N.T.
 - 1. To appoint a man to an office.
 - a. The appointment of the seven. **(Acts 6:6)** note the dual usage here!
 - b. The choice of Paul and Silas by God. The church publicly recognized this. **(Acts 13:2-3)**
 - c. The elders laid their hands upon Timothy with Paul when he received the gift of prophesy. **(1 Tim 4:14)**
 - d. In this recognition there is a fellowship and a responsibility. **(1 Tim 5:22)**
 - 2. In the use of the spiritual gift of healing.
 - a. Jesus prepared his disciples for this work. **(Mark 16:18)**
 - b. Paul was healed by Ananias before his baptism. **(Acts 9:17)**
 - c. The father of Publius was healed by Paul. **(Acts 28:8)**

III. How can we know these gifts ceased?

- A. **Spiritual gifts were to end at a given time.**
 - 1. There are no living apostles today.
 - a. Their work was limited and was completed! **(1 Cor 4:9; Acts 1:22)**
 - b. Their work continues through the written word.
 - 2. Spiritual gifts ceased when the word of God was fully revealed and written down. **(1 Cor 13:8-10; Jas 1:25)**
- B. **The gift of healing.**
 - 1. Since the gift cannot be given, then it cannot be practiced.
 - 2. Those who claim to heal today cannot duplicate Bible miracles.
- C. **The need to confirm God's word has ceased. (Mark 16:17-20; Heb 2:2-4)**
 - 1. Once the covenant was confirmed then it cannot be changed. **(Gal 3:15-17)**
 - 2. The need for direct revelation apart from the written word of God has ceased!

IV. The Chaos and Spiritual Slavery created by this movement

- A. In my dealings with those in this movement I have found an emotionalism that is aggressive and blind.
 - 1. When one's personal experience becomes the foundation, then anything that disputes the path that your experience leads you to must be rejected.
 - 2. When the mind is effectively blocked from a reasoning on scripture then often there are men who will manipulate and lead those who have stopped thinking. **(2 Cor 4:3-5; 2 Pt 2:19)**
 - 3. Years ago I was approached by an honest man who was disturbed over a church's attempt to have him "speak in tongues." He took him to a back room and suggested that he take a phrase like "Jesus is Lord" and repeat it faster and faster until he would be speaking in tongues! He was too honest to do that.

To show how absurd these people are with these instructions, observe what a converted Lutheran preacher to the glossolalia movement says one must do to receive the baptism of the Spirit:

1. Please close your eyes, lift up your head, and look away to Jesus. Praise Him in your heart.
2. Now open your mouth wide. Just open your mouth wide like a hungry robin.
3. Now breathe in and out-with your mouth wide open-as deeply as you can.
4. Sometimes foreign words that you do not understand will begin to come at this point. Speak them out boldly, without hesitation."

4. Many of the "experiences" are a result of a learned behaviour re-enforced by peer-pressure. This is why there is great emphasis on giving "personal testimony" in their meetings.

B. How do you reason with one who is in emotionalism? (2 Tim 2:24-26)

1. You plant seeds. Ask about the sincerity of Mormons or of some other experience based group. Maybe even have them arrange to meet each other.
2. Wait for an opportunity for them to be disillusioned through the massive contradictions in their system. Sadly, some of the most uneithical people I have met claim to be guided by the Holy Spirit in their evil. It will not be long until they get run over by one of these.
3. Kindly point out the contradictions in the teachings of their leaders.

V. Additional Material on branches within the Pentecostal Movement

A. The Prosperity gospel

Robert Tilton is normative. On a Trinity Broadcasting Network program in 1990 he said:

"Being poor is a sin, when God promises prosperity. New house? New car? That's chicken feed. That's nothing compared to what God wants to do for you" (*Charismatic Chaos*, p. 285).

Fred Price on a similar broadcast explains how it works:

"If you've got one dollar faith and you ask for a ten-thousand dollar item, it ain't going to work. It won't work. Jesus said, 'According to your [faith],' not according to God's will for you, in His own good time, if it's according to His will, if He can work it into his busy schedule. He said, 'According to your faith, be it unto you'" (*Charismatic Chaos*, p. 286).

Of course, the road to prosperity somehow always leads to the offering plate of the Word-Faith Movement. Gloria Copeland (Kenneth's wife) pulls no punches in her book *God's Will Is Prosperity*:

Prosperity:

"Give \$10 and receive \$1000; Give \$1000 and receive \$100,000 ... give one house and receive one hundred houses or a house worth one hundred times as much. Give one airplane and receive one hundred times the value of the airplane. ... In short, Mark 10:30 is a very good deal" (p. 54).

B. The Vineyard Movement.

The Vineyard movement teaches that signs and wonders were the essential ingredient for success in first century church evangelism (a claim which is not supported anywhere in the Book of Acts), and that for today, the only way to get people to believe the Gospel is to startle them into believing through healing, prophecy, and the casting out of demons. (This is called "power evangelism," and is officially defined as a presentation of the gospel that is rational, but also transcends the rational -- a gospel presentation with a demonstration of God's power through signs and wonders; i.e., a spontaneous, spirit-inspired, empowered presentation of the gospel that is preceded and undergirded by supernatural demonstrations of God's presence.) The Vineyard teaches that only by startling the world by demonstrations of clairvoyance and powerful healings will the gospel message receive respectful attention, because (apparently) by itself, the Gospel is

too weak and powerless to break the stubbornness and rebellion of the human heart (Peter Masters, *The Healing Epidemic*, pp.74-75).

The Vineyard Fellowship, which numbers more than 500 churches worldwide, prospered under the leadership of the late John Wimber (1934-1997). In 1977, Wimber started a church in Anaheim, California, which eventually grew to 6,000 members and became the mother church of the Vineyard Association. These churches have exercised an influence far beyond their numbers. They have promoted a radical ecumenism and a charismatic-style experience orientation among evangelicals who do not claim to be charismatics. A large part of this experience derives from the use of powerful rock music to help create a sensual worship experience. The Vineyard music has gone around the world and is very influential in the contemporary praise and worship movement. Recently, for example, I [David Cloud] obtained a Vineyard tape that was produced in India and was sold in a bookstore in Kathmandu, Nepal.

John Wimber opened the floodgates to many errors by downplaying the importance of Biblical discernment. He warned against being "too rigid" and "too heavily oriented to the written Word" (*Counterfeit Revival*, p. 109). He warned against "worshipping the book" and mocked those who judge everything strictly by the Bible, saying they have "God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Book" (*Ibid.*). One would say something like that only if he were attempting to promote things which were not in accordance with the Word of God. The Psalmist said the written Word "is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (Psa. 119:105). It is impossible to be *too strongly oriented* toward the Bible!

In his healing seminar, Wimber made the following statement: "It's evil when you hide behind doctrinal beliefs that curtail and control the work of the Spirit. The Church today is committing evil in the name of sound doctrine. And they are quenching the work of the Holy Spirit" (Wimber, Healing Seminar Series, cited from *Testing the Fruit of the Vineyard*, by John Goodwin). - A Visit to the Vineyard Church by David Cloud

There will be more source material added to our website for this class at:
<http://www.aubeacon.com/BibleClasses2011/AStudyOfReligiousBeliefs/AStudyOfReligiousBeliefs.htm>