

No. 19. Counterfeit Miracles

In the earlier section of this study on *The Miracle in Scripture* one of the major and important points made was that the Church possesses the complete canon of Scripture and therefore has an infallible rule for both faith & practice. God's word is complete, therefore it is sufficient.

One of the necessary conclusions of this truth of the sufficiency of Scripture is that any experience that is contrary to the written Word should be instantly dropped by the believer who wishes to please the Lord and who wishes to be preserved from error, including erroneous experiences. Scripture makes it clear that a believer can be detrimentally affected not only by erroneous teachings but by erroneous experiences. The Word of God warns the believer against counterfeit miracles; experiences that are Satanic in origin and are designed to delude and deceive. Our study on *The Miracle in Scripture* would be incomplete if we did not give some scope to this issue of the counterfeit and the spurious in the field of miracles. Note the following Scriptures that issue warnings to believers with respect to the counterfeit.

1. 1 Cor 14: 33

Since we have given much time in recent studies to this chapter, let us note this verse. Note that Paul states very emphatically that "*God is NOT the author of confusion.*" The problem in Corinth was one of confusion, especially in the area of the abuse of the gift of tongues. But, since the Lord was not the author of this confusion, then who was? There can only be one answer – Satan himself. Paul was uttering a very solemn warning to these Corinthian believers – there was confusion in their assemblies with respect to tongues speaking and it was not of God but of Satan.

As noted in these studies, the tongues-speaking experience is prolific, widespread and very popular. Yet many will not stop to consider the confusion that reigns. For example, the same experience of tongues-speaking is claimed in a variety of circles, yet what diversity of doctrinal views is represented within such circles.

Some who speak with tongues affirm the doctrine of the Trinity, while other tongues-speakers deny that doctrine vehemently. Some teach that baptism is necessary for salvation, others do not. Some, the majority actually, are keen supporters of ecumenism, while others are not. Some claim to believe the Biblical doctrine of the atonement, while Roman Catholic tongues-speakers claim that their experience makes them more devoted to the blasphemy of the mass. The same could be said for the truth of Christ's mediation. Many Pentecostals give credence to the truth expressed in 1 Tim 2: 5. But in Romanism, where the very same tongues-speaking experience is so widespread, devotion to Mary and a host of other "mediators" is increased by the tongues experience.

How alarming this should be to the Pentecostalist who would view himself as a Protestant or a Bible-believing Christian, for this is a demonstration of great confusion. Indeed, it needs to be recognised that it is especially this Pentecostal/charismatic experience of tongues-speaking that is giving life to ecumenism and union with the Church of Rome.

Take also the doctrine of Scripture. Within the historic Pentecostal churches, there is the position that Scripture alone is the only authority. But there are two problems for such Pentecostalists:

- (a) In their own practice of tongues-speaking they claim to receive messages from God, which is a denial of the final authority of God's Word.
- (b) Within Romanism where the same experience of tongues-speaking is widespread, Rome's traditions are put on the same level as Scripture and often above Scripture when the Word contradicts tradition.

Thus, the true believer caught up in Charismatism needs to recognise these irreconcilable situations and take the only Biblical step of repudiating the experience and its entanglements.

2. 1 John 4: 1

The believer is commanded to "*try the spirits...*" which would be needless if there were no danger to the believer from such quarters. Note in this verse that along with the reference to "the spirits" mention is also made of *false prophets*. Obviously the two are linked, they work in tandem. The teaching is that false prophets are imbued and impelled by "the spirits" – definitely not good spirits but evil. The false prophet does not operate under the power of the Holy Spirit but the power of Satan and his emissaries, evil spirits. These forces "*are gone out into the world.*" They are prevalent, thus the child of God is to test and try spiritual experience and teaching in order to discern between the *spirit of truth, and the spirit of error, v.6*. Note that v.6 essentially reveals that the means of applying the test is apostolic teaching, the Scriptures.

3. 2 Cor 11: 3, 4

Note that Paul expresses his fear that the Corinthians would be diverted from single-minded devotion to Christ, which is the meaning of his words in part (b) of the verse. Then in v.4 he expands on the fear that he had concerning the Corinthians. He speaks of situation where false teachers would come bringing a detrimental spiritual influence and yet be accepted – "*ye might well bear with him.*" These words do not mean that Paul was encouraging the Corinthians to bear with the false teacher but that he was afraid that this is what they would do. Note the terms that he uses: *another Jesus, another spirit, another gospel*. In the original there is the use of the two N.T. Greek words that are translated *another*. One means, *another of the same kind*; while the second means *another of a different kind*.

Take the words "another Jesus..." – another Jesus of the same kind. What does Paul mean? He is referring to the ploy of the false teacher in preaching a Jesus who seems to be the same Jesus as Paul preached but was not. But here is the subtlety – while the Jesus preached by the false teacher is made to appear to be the real Jesus he is not the Christ of God born of Mary. But then in speaking of *another spirit & another gospel* Paul uses the word that means *another of a different kind*. Thus, where men wish to have it appear that they are preaching the same Christ as Paul preached "another spirit" is at work, i.e., a spirit of a different kind. Who is that other spirit but Satan himself, the old serpent, see v.v. 3, 14. The outcome is that *another gospel* is preached, i.e., a completely different gospel, one that is not the genuine gospel at all.