

Where Does the Bible End?, Part 1

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: 1364

This morning we are going to begin a special series of studies that we've been anticipating for the past few months. We have finished the 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians last week. We are about to start the 14th chapter of 1 Corinthians. I met somebody the other day who said that they were gone for quite a long time from the church, very ill, and they came back, and they said, "We couldn't believe it. You were still in Corinthians." And so I said, "Right, and I'm going to be there for a while yet." But in the midst of studying this particular portion of 12 through 14, which deals with the spiritual gifts, the *charismata*, if you will, the Greek word, we have felt that because of your many, many questions and because of the rather rampant confusion relative to this particular subject, that it would be well worth our while to stop between the 13th and 14th chapter before we go into detail in the area of tongues, as it does in the 14th; to deal with the charismatic movement as a whole. And so I want to do a special series for several weeks. The Lord only knows how long, until we cover the ground that I have on my heart to cover; and I've generally outlined it all and worked it through pretty well, but I don't know how it'll divide up.

We want to cover the subject of what's wrong in the charismatic movement. Now this is going to be different than what you're used to from me. If you're a visitor here, this is a little out of character. Generally, we just study verse by verse and go right through a text, but we're going to be looking at something in a little different vein at this point. And I want to clarify a few things to begin with. Number one, it is not unloving to speak on this subject. I'm afraid that some people think that any time you speak on something that is an issue, you are purposely being unloving. But I trust and pray that you'll not think that of me, because my intention is not at all to be unloving. I think the most loving thing that you could possibly do is to defend the truth and the veracity of the Scripture, because that is the ultimate act of love toward God, to defend His truth and His Word.

Also, I think it is the most loving thing to do to teach His Word because when you teach His Word to people, then people who receive His Word find themselves in a place of obedience to the truth, and that's the place of blessing. So it is anything but unloving to teach the truth. It is not because we are antagonistic toward some other churches or groups in our area. It is not because we have a group of people in our church who are mixed up in the charismatic movement. It is not for any of these reasons that we do this, but it is simply because we must teach the truth. And as the apostle Paul said, "I have ceased not to warn and to teach every man that we may present every man perfect in Christ." And the charismatic movement, as we know it today, is of such scope and of such breadth, and it is so powerful and so dominating a force in Christianity, that it behooves us not to stick our

head in the sand, but to deal with it realistically and biblically and theologically at its very foundations. And so that's precisely what we want to do.

And I'm convinced that there will be some negative reaction. There already has been. I've been accused in the last two weeks of being unloving and divisive and so forth. That isn't my intention, my intention at all. Frankly, I was listening to a speaker the other night who was saying - I don't know. He was saying the same thing. It's strange to him and it is to me, why when there is already a division and you simply speak about the division and try to resolve it with the truth, you are accused of being divisive. There is already a rift in the church. There is already a very wide division on this issue. I am not making a division. I'm trying to clarify the issue with the truth, and I'm not having illusions about whether I know the truth and everybody else is wrong. I'm simply going to try to deal with it as I understand the Scriptures.

So I want you to take it in the right spirit. And as I told you last time, I don't want you to get these tapes and go running around like the green phantom and dropping them in brown envelopes in the charismatics' mailboxes and so forth. That isn't the intention. Our spirit of love is as important as our holding the truth, and so we want to keep a balance.

Having said that as just a preliminary, we want to talk about 20 different elements in the charismatic movement that are suspect when brought into the light of Scripture. We'll be doing that over the next few weeks, but as we look at the movement in general, some startling things are happening among Christians in that movement. If you have a television or a radio or you visit a Christian bookstore somewhere, or you go to a Christian concert or a meeting or another church or another service or any group or gathering of Christians, you are made very much aware of what is going on in terms of the claims that are being made today relative to the charismatic movement as it's known.

Amazing claims that God is doing signs, and He's doing wonders and miracles are being broadcast by word of mouth, by the printed page, by television, by radio, and at a rate that is so prolific that they can't even be catalogued, let alone be verified. Fantastic encounters with Jesus Christ. People have told me personally that they have had encounters with Jesus Christ in a physical form that are just very, very fantastic. The Holy Spirit meeting people in unique and strange circumstances. Healings of all kinds, some amazing and some not so amazing are reported in the Christian media.

God is busy correcting spinal injuries and lengthening legs and healing cancer and fixing up hearts and on and on and on it goes. You turn on your television to the various charismatic stations, and it's interesting that there is no television station – as far as I know, this was true two years ago. I don't think there's any change - there is no television station in America that is owned by Christians who are not charismatic. So they have captured the Christian media, and if you are at all aware of that and you look at that, you know that there are seemingly omniscient hosts on those charismatic TV programs who discern miracles and healings and various types of things that are happening right

while they're sitting there. And you've heard them say, "Somebody somewhere is being healed of this," and "Somebody somewhere is being healed of this, and I just feel that somewhere, somebody is being healed of this."

The other approach that you hear, and I've heard this on several occasions, is "Tonight, there are 15 cancer healings available for the first 15 people who will claim them, and there are 5 healings for migraine available for the first 5 who will believe God to claim those healings," and so forth. Healings just seem to be floating around in the air for anybody who wants to throw up a net and grab one. Some of the miracles are bizarre. I've heard of puppies raised from the dead, washing machines healed, and I've heard of that on two or three occasions. Empty gas tanks filled by the Holy Spirit, stopped up toilets flush again by miracle power. People are knocked flat by God, and that is what is called slain in the Spirit. There are people who have visions and dreams and revelations and so forth. One lady reported receiving a new belly button. A man named Marvin Ford testified that he had actually been to heaven and come back in order to inform everyone as to what heaven was like.

Amazing experiences like that are fighting for prime time. You get the idea that God is hyperkinetic, that He's putting on a supernatural performance rivaled only by the six-day creation and the Egyptian plagues. He's never been this active in centuries. It's amazing that He can keep up with Himself at the rate that these things are being claimed.

A focal point of all of this, of course, seems to be the charismatic teaching that all Christians need to experience the feeling or the baptism of the spirit accompanied by speaking in languages or tongues. This is also known as the Second Blessing. It's sometimes called quote "Something More." There's even a book out by that title, *Something More*. It is supposed to be essential for every Christian who wants to know the fullness of divine miracle power in his life.

I was listening to a well-known charismatic preacher this week who was saying that to receive the Spirit of God, you must receive, you must receive tongues. And he was saying, "It isn't like you're seeking tongues. It's that you're seeking this fullness of the Spirit, and tongues comes with it." And he said, "The way to illustrate this," and it was interesting because he didn't really use Scripture, but he said is, "When you go to a shoe store, and you look in the window, you don't say, 'I'd like to buy those tongues.' You just want to buy those shoes, and the tongues come with them." And so he was saying that, "What you really want is to buy or to purchase or to gain the power of the Spirit of God, your spiritual walking shoes, and tongues come along with them."

Well, myself, I always buy loafers. So anyway, many Christians, many Christians are exposed to this and unfortunately, you remember when we studied the Book of Colossians, we were made very much aware, I think, of the fact that it is very possible for Christians to become intimidated by all of this. I believe many Christians are intimidated into the movement itself because they're afraid they're missing out on what God is doing. And it's a very difficult thing and frankly, they look around, maybe

very honestly and objectively, trying to find answers, and they can't. And hopefully, Lord willing, by the Spirit's power, we'll be able to suggest some answers that might help.

But if you're like I am, the natural question that comes to my mind is I'm a Christian, and I feel like I endeavor to live the Christian life, pleasing to the Lord. I don't always succeed, but I know what my motives are and that I'm in the ministry, and that I know the Word of God, and that I love the Lord, and why doesn't He fill my gas tank? And why doesn't He heal my washing machine? And why don't I get any special miracles? And why haven't I ascended to the highest level of spiritual bliss? And why haven't I received my spiritual walking shoes if this is the norm for anybody who reaches the place of spiritual usefulness?

Well, what happens in this thing is you divide the church into the spiritual haves and the spiritual have-nots. And this is the tragedy of the thing; the haves cannot help but feel a sense of superiority over the have-nots. It's just kind of built in. And even though they may resist it and fight it and some may succeed, the vast majority of folks cannot help but feel that everybody else is missing something that they're not missing. I guess I would have to say that I'm among the have-nots, and even once in a while, I get a little intimidated about that. But I've wondered if the intimidation doesn't even reach right into the charismatic ranks. I'm afraid that maybe some of them are intimidated. Some of them perhaps tempted to exaggerate or dramatize or fabricate miracles because of peer pressure or the desire to also belong in the group that's sharing rather strange and bizarre things.

Now such spiritual intimidation is very powerful, but it's hardly new. It's been going on for a very long time. As we saw in our study of Colossians, and I would draw your attention to the Book of Colossians in the second chapter, and I want to show you some things in that particular portion of Scripture that'll help you reinforce in your mind what we're saying. Colossians chapter 2 is a tremendous statement on the fact that you need Christ and nothing more; that Jesus Christ is sufficient, and nothing additional is needed. You'll remember that chapter 2 verse 10 says this, "And ye are complete in Him. Ye are complete in Him," and that is the thesis of this whole section of Colossians; that a Christian has Christ, and He has everything. He is the head of all principality and power, and you are complete in Him, and he goes on to define something of that completeness in verses 11 to 13. But the heretics who had come into the Colossian situation were telling the Colossians that they were not complete, that salvation and the fulfillment of the Christian life and maturity and spirituality and all of that was Christ plus something. Not Christ and nothing else, but Christ plus.

What they were saying was that you need Christ plus human philosophy, verse 8. And so Paul says, "Beware of vain deceit and the philosophy of men." You don't need that. And then they were saying, "It's Christ plus legalism," and Paul says in verse 16, "Don't let anybody judge you on the basis of food or drink or this feast or that feast or this new moon or that Sabbath." And others were saying – now watch this one, "It is Christ plus supernatural experiences." And Paul responds to that in verse

18, "Let no man beguile you of your reward in some kind of voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath seen." In other words, mystical experiences and visions, and we went into that in detail in all the Greek terminology there. You don't need mysticism. You don't need supernatural conversations with angels to complete your Christianity. You don't need strange and bizarre experiences.

And so it isn't Christ plus philosophy. It isn't Christ plus legalism. It isn't Christ plus supernatural mysticism. Paul is saying, "Don't you be threatened by any of that. Don't you be intimidated." And, of course, the Colossians were so intimidated that they were just about to throw out their whole commitment to Christ's completeness and to accept this heresy. And he says, "Don't do that. You don't need conversations with angels. You don't need secret experiences. You don't need deeper experiences. You don't need special visions. Don't be intimidated."

I heard this week, and I've been listening to a lot of things in preparation for this and reading a lot of things. But I heard one gentleman who said, "If you are losing out in your Christian life, if your Christian life is shot through with trouble, it is because you have denied God the avenue of working through the gift of tongues." Now that's a very intimidating thing to tell people that the reason their Christian life is a mess is because they're not speaking in tongues.

Now, that intimidation is, you see, not anything new. It went on back in the Book of Colossians, and it's not just from Colossians to here. It's happened before. Picture yourself seated in a room, and the room is full of very intense worshippers. The zealous singing is punctuated by cries of praise and fervent prayer. Suddenly, someone standing near you begins to speak in a rapid syllables completely foreign to any language you've ever heard. And then somebody else gets up, and they speak. And somebody else gets up, and they speak. Then someone stands up and, in a voice that is loud and dramatic, says, "Thus saith the Lord. Repent," and goes off on a prophecy, and several people slump to the floor, and look like they fainted.

Where are you? Well, possibly, you recognize the scene. You say, "Well, I know where that is, John. It's a charismatic prayer fellowship, because I've been to one very similar." It's typical of many charismatic meetings today. Well, as familiar as it may seem, that is not a modern meeting of the charismatics at all. Described for you was a meeting of a group called the Montanists in the second century. They did exactly the same thing. Following their leader Montanus, they believed that every believer was a means of special revelation, that God spoke through every believer specially. As proof, they exercised dramatic gifts of the Holy Spirit, including prophecies and tongues, claiming that they had been restored because it was the last days. Same claim that's being made today. Montanus taught a progression of revelation. He said, "God started to reveal Himself in the Old Testament prophets. He revealed Himself through the Lord's disciples, and He is continuing to reveal Himself and His Word in the new age of the Spirit." That's what he called it, the new age of the Spirit. And in the new age of the Spirit, which began in the second century, the Holy Spirit was speaking through

the mouth of Montanus and his prophetesses and prophets. And he had a tremendous impact on the church at that time, and he intimidated the church. He said, "The church is now full of two kinds of people, spiritual Christians," who followed his teachings and claimed direct revelation from God, "and carnal Christians who had only," this is a quote, "the dead letter of the Bible."

There were the haves and the have-nots in Colossi, and the people were intimidated by the people who claimed to be the haves. In the second century, you have the haves and the have-nots, the spiritual Christians who were still getting revelations, and the carnal ones; and they were carnal because they only had the dead letter of the Bible. You say, "What happened to the Montanists?" Well, they were outcasts of the church. They were branded as heretics. The Council of Constantinople in 381 AD decided that, even when Montanists repented and wanted to get back in the church, they were to be brought back into the fellowship very carefully with long periods of training and examination, because of such a serious heresy. And the modern charismatic movement, and I'm saying this honestly and objectively and from the standpoint of history, is Neo-Montanism. It is new Montanism. It is not historic Christianity. And by any name, it is a problem for the church, and we have to look at this movement objectively and honestly. Believe me, I have no axe to grind. I want to know what the Word of God teaches. I want what God has planned for me and for you. And it is not with any ulterior motive that I share this, other than the fact that I'm doing the best I can to understand the Word of God in its purity and in its intention. And so I want us to look at this subject.

Now, I want to lay some ground rules, and this is a lot of introduction, so hang in there. I want to lay some ground rules. Number one, this is not an exhaustive study. My intention is not to examine and explain every single miracle and everybody's experience, but inevitably, that's what happens. Somebody will come to me and say, "Well, I know a lady who did this. Well, I know a man, and this is what happened." Look, after we're done with this situation of study, then my simple answer to that question is going to be, "Look, you take this information to them, or you filter this through your mind, and then you explain what happened." Because if it doesn't square with the Word of God, then there is another explanation for it outside the Word of God, and those could be myriad. There's no way that I can know every situation and why it happened and how it happened and was it God and so forth. But the only thing I want to do is lay down for you a ground of truth, and that can become the basis upon which we make a decision.

Now, Frederick Bruner in his very excellent book called *The Theology of the Holy Spirit* said this, "The test of anything calling itself Christian is not the significance of its success or its power, though these make the test more imperative. The test is truth," end quote. He's right. So first ground rule. This is not going to be an exhaustive study trying to tell you how I explain everything that happens.

Secondly, I realize that not all charismatic brothers and sisters will fall into all of the categories that I describe. Somebody's going to say to me, "Well, you know, I have some charismatic friends, and they don't do what you said." I realize that, and there's so much variation. One of the problems we're going

to get to in the movement is they have no theology. And because they have no theology, you can be anything from a Roman Catholic to the other end of the pole and anything in between that you want to be and still be charismatic, because there isn't any theology. And that's why a woman or anybody who wants to, a man or a child for that matter, can stand up in a service and speak anything he wants and nobody can really say whether it's good, bad, or indifferent because nobody's got any rules in terms of a systematized theology.

So I realize that not everybody is going to fall into the categories that I talk about, but I'm going to try to deal in the general categories. I realize there's much difference, much variation. But I want us to look, and this is what I want you to get, I want us to look at the face of the movement as it is seen by the world and by the church in general. What are we seeing? Sure, there will be exceptions, but this is the general face of this movement as it appears in the world.

Thirdly, this is the third ground rule. Some will criticize me because I haven't had the experience. That's already happened. Howard Irvin, who is a Baptist pastor who got into this movement and wrote a book on it, said this, "The attempt to interpret the charismatic manifestations of the Holy Spirit without a charismatic experience is as fatuous as the application of the Christian ethic apart from a regenerate dynamic. The Holy Spirit does not reveal spiritual secrets to the uncommitted," end quote. Now, that's how he covers his tracks, by eliminating anybody arguing against him who hasn't had the experience, knowing that anybody who's had the experience isn't going to argue against him, but I disagree. The issue is not experience. It is never experience. It is what? It's the Word of God. It doesn't matter whether I've had the experience or not. If the Spirit of God is a resident truth teacher, and the Word of God is in my hand, I have just as much right to interpret this Book as anyone else. And, incidentally, he is dead wrong about experience only happening to the uncommitted.

"Many shall say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not done this in Your name and done this in Your name and done this in Your name, and had all these experiences?' And He said, 'Depart from Me,'" What? "I never knew you." They were the uncommitted, and they had some experiences. My prayer is that we will hear God's Word, that's all. And that we will be like the Bereans, those noble Bereans in Acts 17:11, "Who searched the Scriptures to see if these things were so."

Now, I want to begin with the first of all these 20 points this morning, and we won't get even past this; but the rest will be faster. This is the basic one. I feel the first issue that the charismatic movement has to face, and they have to look at it very closely and very carefully, is the issue of revelation. Revelation. That's number one. Revelation. And by that I mean is God still revealing His Word today? You might call it where does the Bible end? Is God still giving us Scripture? All these visions and all these experiences and all these things that are happening. "God speaks to me, and Jesus speaks to me, and the Holy Spirit said, and the Lord spoke to me, and God told me." You hear this all the time. Is God still speaking? Is He still talking? Is He still giving absolutely binding Truth? Is He still laying out His Word, or is the Bible complete and finished? The problem of revelation.

I read a book this week entitled *God is Speaking to You*, subtitle, *How to Know the Voice of God*. What the book is saying is that God is still speaking, and here's how you can get in a position to have Him speak to you and how you can tell that it's Him. This is just another one of a multitude of books that claim God is giving revelation today, and I hear people say that all the time. "The Lord spoke to me. God told me. The Holy Spirit said to me." A man said to me not long ago. He said, "Jesus came into my bathroom while I was shaving the other day and put His arm around me and touched me on the shoulder and made my bursitis feel better, and we had a wonderful conversation, and the Lord revealed some things to me."

You see, that's very intimidating to me because I've been around a long time, and it never happens to me. I told you some time ago about a letter that was written to Bill Gaither, who is the songwriter. And I just want to mention it, because I think here it fits as a helpful illustration. Bill Gaither has written much wonderful music that we love and enjoy. And I don't mean to implicate him in the charismatic movement in any way, but I just want to use it as an illustration to show you this kind of thing. A letter was written to Gaither to ask him to clarify, if he could, the theological position of the song "The King Is Coming." Now, we all know "The King is Coming." "The marketplace is empty, dah, dah, dah." And we all get excited about that song because it's about the Second Coming of Christ and so forth. But the theology of it is a little muddled if you study it, and of course, me, I got to do an exegesis on songs as well as Bible verses. So I'm sitting there thinking, "Now this whole theological thing doesn't hang together properly. It's a little confusing."

So some others felt the same way and, apparently, they got so many letters on it, that they had a form letter which they sent out in response to inquiries about the theology of "The King Is Coming." Well, I happened to receive one of those because somebody else wrote and asked about it, and this is what the letter said. "Regarding," this is a quote, "regarding the interpretation of the song, 'The King Is Coming' of all songs, that song has been a gift from God. Bill and Gloria do not profess to be theologians. The song came quickly to them, and they do not care to discuss the theology of it. In fact, they feel that to dissect the song would be tampering with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit who inspired the song." End quote.

Now, in many respects, that is a startling reply. The idea that the song quote "came quickly." The idea that it is inspired by the Holy Spirit could easily lead to the conclusion that the Gaithers received divine revelation of a supernatural kind, and that song is really Revelation 23, and should be added to the end of the Bible. The idea that discussing the theology of the song would be tampering with the work of the Spirit is close to claiming some kind of infallibility for the song. And the fact is, beloved, the song doesn't make it biblically. It's not biblically sound. You say, "Well, did they intend to claim that?" I doubt it and, please, I don't want to dishonor them or detract from the wonderful contribution they've made. But it's just that they're being swept up in a mentality today that is using terminology that is allowing the loss of the uniqueness and the absoluteness of the authority of the Word of God.

We've got everybody now who is more interested in getting some direct message from God than they are in looking at His Word to see what He's revealed there. They did not receive that song through divine revelation. That song is not inerrant and infallible and authoritative. That is not Scripture, and yet they use all those terms that would allow us to think that that's really what it was.

You see, it's just a clear illustration of the confusion today when the free use of revelation and inspiration is thrown around. So we ask ourselves, "Are Christians still receiving inspiration of the Holy Spirit? Are we still receiving revelation from God when we write our books, when we preach? Are my sermons inspired?" I could say to you, "Oh, the Spirit of God has inspired me, and I'm going to – I have a message from God," you know. And if I said that too often, you might get a little confused about where God's Word ended and John MacArthur began. The only time I have a message from God is when I happen to be biblically accurate. The rest of the time, it's a bunch of baloney, and I'm aware of that. I edit that out on Monday. The tape people get the pure stuff.

Is God still speaking? Well, the charismatic people say, "Yes." And see, to me, this is a very vital issue. For example, Rodman Williams, who is the president of Melodyland School of Theology, and that is a very fast-growing, rapidly becoming the most significant charismatic seminary in the country. He is the president of it, and he is an avid charismatic. This is a quote from his book, *The Era of the Spirit*. He says this, "The Bible truly has become a fellow witness to God's present activity." Now did you hear that? The Bible is just another witness to God's present activity.

Further, he says, "If someone today has a vision of God, of Christ, it is good to know that it has happened before. If one has a revelation from God to know that for the early Christians revelation also occurred in the community. If one speaks a 'Thus saith the Lord,' even going beyond the Scripture, this was happening long ago. The Spirit, as the Living God, moves through and," listen to this one, "and beyond the records of past witness, however valuable such records are as a model for what happens today." You know what the Bible is then? End quote.

The Bible is one of the many witnesses to God's activity. "How wonderful," he is saying, "that the Living God moves beyond this record." He is claiming then that the Bible is not the final source of God's revelation, but it is simply a quote, "witness to additional revelation that He's giving today." It happened before, and it's still going on today. We can add to the Bible. The Bible is only a quote, "model" for the kind of revelation that the Spirit is doing today.

Now, friends, to me, that is a fearful thing to say. That is so fearful that it is basically tearing apart the foundations of the absolute authority of the Word of God. We better stop and look at the meaning of inspiration. Look at 2 Timothy 3:16. In 2 Timothy 3:16, it says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." Now the term there, "inspiration." We need to look at that. Bill Gaither says his song is inspired. Rodman Williams says people in the congregation are inspired. All Scripture is given by inspiration.

The Greek word is *theopneustos*, comes from two Greek words: *theos*, God. And *pneustos* really means breath, to breathe out. What it says is the Scripture is the very breath of God. Scripture is God's very breath. It is God speaking.

To Moses at the burning bush, God said, "Go, and I will be with thy mouth and teach thee what thou shalt speak." To Jeremiah, God said, "Whatsoever I shall command thee, thou shalt speak. Behold, I have put My words in thy mouth." To Ezekiel, God said, "Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel. All My words that I shall speak unto thee, receive in thine heart, hear with thine ears, and go and speak unto them." And throughout the Scripture, 3,808 times, the claim is made that Scripture is the very Word of God. And to be inspired in the biblical sense means to be uttering the very words from the mouth of God.

Now, that's a far cry, beloved, from what's going on today. God has already written His Scripture. In 2 Peter, again, you find in 1:21, another indication about this concept of inspiration. "For the prophecy came not at any time by the will of man." He's talking about Scripture here. Verse 20, he calls it the prophecy of the Scripture. "It came not at any time by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

You ever throw a stick in a stream and watch it go? Well, that's how it is. Carried along, borne along, moved along. They were writing because God's Spirit was taking them. They were writing because God's Words were coming into their mouth. All Scripture. You say, "Well, how do you know that's not going on today? God's still carrying along holy men of God. God's still breathing out." I'll show you. Look at Jude verse 3, a little epistle right in front of the Book of Revelation. It says this, Jude 3, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you and exhort you," now listen to this, "that you earnestly contend," and here's the way the Greek reads, "for the once for all delivered to the saints' faith, for the once for all delivered to the saints' faith." Look at the words "earnestly contend." It is the word in the Greek *epagniz*. The root word is *agniz*, and that means to strive and to agonize and to fight. And you add a preposition on the front of it, ep. And it means to fight with intensity, to strenuously defend, to pour out your blood if need be, as Jesus sweat in agony great drops of blood. It is to fight for the purity of the revelation of God, and what is it? It is the once for all delivered to the saints' faith.

Now, let me ask you a simple question. How many times had it been delivered? Once. The total content of Scripture is the faith. The term "the faith" is used in Galatians 1:23, in 1 Timothy 4:1. And there it speaks of the objective faith, the truth, the content of revelation, the inspired Word of God. And it is once, for all, *hapax* in the Greek. It refers to something done once, for all time, with lasting results, never needing repetition and never needing addition. The faith has been once for all, never to be done again, delivered to the saints.

Now, that verse says that God breathed out Scripture and gave it through holy men, says Peter; and then He put it in a body, and He delivered it once, for all time, and for all saints, never to be added to. It is the once for all delivered to the saints' faith. Beloved, it starts in the beginning, and it ends at the end, and that's it. Can you imagine the absolute, utter, hopeless chaos if we allow for all kinds of revelations through all history? We won't even know where we are anymore. Who's right? Who's wrong?

That book I told you about, *How to Know the Voice of God Is Speaking to You*, the last chapter is titled "How to Differentiate Between the Voice of God, Satan, and Self." And he spends ten pages, and when he's all done, he says, "I really don't know, but just be careful." That's right. Just be careful? That doesn't help. What are the criteria? Whether it's the Book of Mormon or the *Science and Health and Key to the Scripture* or charismatic revelations or whatever it is, when we start adding things to the Bible, then we get into confusion. Who's right? Who's wrong? It has been delivered. That is an aorist passive participle. It happened one time. It is a past act with no continuing element. That's what an aorist passive means. The Scripture is God's final complete body of teaching. It cannot be added to. It cannot be diminished.

What confusion and chaos when everybody keeps getting revelations from God. What do we do with these modern claims? How do they relate to the final authority of God's Word? Is "The King is Coming" on a par with Scripture? Is somebody's vision in the church on a par with Scripture? Boy, that's a confusing thing.

Dewey Beagle is a modern theologian, and he is a neo-orthodox. That is, he's not an evangelical and a fundamental believer in biblical inspiration. He says that he believes in continued inspiration and revelation. It just keeps going. He's neo-orthodox, and neo-orthodox people believe that way. They deny the matters of historical reality. They deny the history of the Bible. They want to deny the reality of certain miracles in the Bible. They deny infallibility. They deny inerrancy. They deny verbal inspiration. They deny plenary inspiration. They say, "Well, when this Bible speaks to you, it's inspired. Something kind of zaps you."

He claims, for example, Beagle claims that certain hymn writers and their hymns are more inspired than Bible writers. He says, "For example, if Isaac Watts was around at the same time Solomon was, Isaac Watts' hymns would've been in the Bible and not Solomon's 'Song of Solomon.' It's more inspired." Now that's heresy. That, to me, is just pure heresy, and what is so fearful is that his views, the views of Dewey Beagle, are identical to the views of Rodman Williams, who's the president of the Charismatic Melodyland Seminary. And, actually, the reason the two can get along so well, the reason the charismatic organization could have that kind of a president is because, actually, they both have the same view. It's really the same view.

Charismatics have myriads of claims that God speaks to them, and the neo-orthodox say the same thing. Someone told me, a pastor told me this, that God had given him a vision of the future of his church. God told him, "You're going to have this area right here." So he took an airplane up, flew it, photographed it. Flew over it, photographed the area, put it up on a board and said, "This is claimed for God." Now, I said, "How do you know that?" He says, "God gave it to me through a revelation." This goes on all the time. Everybody getting revelations from God.

Now, Rodman Williams is charismatic. He also, incidentally, is a stated and avowed neo-orthodox. He's made that public. Dewey Beagle is side by side with him, because both of them are arguing for continuing revelation. Listen to this. This is Rodman Williams, the charismatic. "Now let's speak further about the startling element in prophecy. Namely, that in it, God's Word is directly spoken." That's contemporary. God is giving His Word still. "In prophecy, God speaks. It's as simple, profound, and startling as that. What happens in the fellowship is that the Word may suddenly be spoken by anyone present, and so variously a 'thus says the Lord' breaks forth in the fellowship. It is usually in the first person, though not always, such as, 'I am with you to bless you,' and has the directness of an I/thou encounter. It comes not in heavenly language, but in the native tongue of the person speaking, and with his accustomed inflections, cadences, and manners. Indeed, the speech may even be coarse and ungrammatical. It may be a mixture of King James and modern. It may falter as well as flow. Really it doesn't matter, for in prophecy, God uses what He finds, and through frail human instruments, the Spirit speaks the Word of the Lord."

He further says, "What is distinctive in prophecy is that the words do not issue from human reflection or premeditation. Indeed, there may have been much time given to prayer, study of Scripture, waiting on God. But when the Word of God goes forth, it is the operation of the Spirit upon and within the human mind, so that the message spoken, while in the language of man, is the direct utterance of God." Now, people, that is scary. God is actually still speaking. "The prophet actually does not know what He will say in advance of saying it, nor can he be sure just when the moment will come, or even if it will come; but he speaks when and as God wills. Thus, in the fellowship, there is no scheduling of prophecy. It just happens."

That's ridiculous in the light of 1 Corinthians 14, which says, "Let the spirit of the prophets be subject to the prophets." Totally contrary to that. Further, he says, "All of this, to repeat, is quite surprising and startling. Most of us, of course, were familiar with prophetic utterances as recorded in the Bible and willing to accept it as the Word of God. Isaiah's or Jeremiah's 'Thus says the Lord,' we were accustomed to. But to hear Tom or Mary today in the 20th century speak the same way, many of us also had convinced ourselves that prophecy ended with the New Testament, until suddenly through the dynamic thrust of the Holy Spirit, prophecy comes alive again. Now we wonder how we could have misread the New Testament for so long." End quote.

Now, that is clearly a claim that current instances of charismatic prophecies and revelations are divine inspiration, equal to Scripture. When Tom and Mary stand up, it's as good as when Isaiah and Jeremiah stood up. And that from the man who's the head of the leading charismatic seminary. Do you know what that's going to do? That is going to undermine the credibility of Scripture in the minds of his students. You say, "But we still believe in the Word of God." Yes, but like Francis Shaeffer says, "Wait until the next generation comes and doesn't have the hold that we have to biblical authority. That will undermine him." And I believe if the charismatic movement stays around very long and holds that kind of a view of Scripture, they will go into a heresy far beyond anything we've ever seen yet.

I'm where the Reformation was when the reformers came by and said, "Sola scriptura," and they said, "If you go beyond the sacredness of the Scripture, you are in trouble. You pulled the rug out from under biblical authority." Once you begin to see that Scripture is less than the final authority for faith and practice, you have opened the door to heresy. You have opened the door to chaos. You have opened the door to confusion. You have opened the door to Satan.

Melvin Hodges is pastor in the Assembly of God. He wrote a book called *Spiritual Gifts*, which I purchased in Seattle one time, and I read. It was a most interesting book. And my heart went out to this dear man because he's in the movement, and he's very confused as he writes the book, because he has these people jumping up and giving revelations from God. And he is saying, in effect, that somehow in this movement, he's calling on other pastors, and he's saying, "Somehow in this movement, men, we have got to get this chaos resolved, because we," he says, he made the statement, "when someone stands up in your church and gives a word from God, you know one of two things. It either is or it isn't." Imagine that confusion, and he says, "Chaos has resulted."

Well, you can imagine the situation. Let's say you're trying to decide on a pastor. The congregation is meeting to decide on this pastor, and somebody stands up and says, "Thus says the Lord, 'This is not the man. Woe be unto you if you chose him.'" You know it is either of God or it is not. How do you know? That's his agony. That's his struggle. He doesn't know how you know. Neither do the men who wrote the book on in the chapter of differentiating. He didn't know either, so he said, "Be careful."

I'll tell you one thing. The Scripture writers knew when God spoke. They knew it. They knew it. Equating modern so-called prophetic utterance with revelation produces a hopeless muddle. Who's right? Why, I've had people say, "Well, you know that verse? Oh, God spoke to me, and He told me that verse means this and this and this," and it doesn't mean that at all. But then somebody else will get there and say, "Oh, how wonderful." I'll say, "Where's your integrity? Don't you have any guidelines at all?"

Listen, God gave us a revelation. You want to hear something interesting? God gave us a revelation, right? And when He finished the first part of it, the Old Testament, do you realize there were 400 years of silence, and God never spoke? And God was setting up a model for us, an analogy. There is

a time for revelation, and then there is an end to revelation, and God is silent. And He was silent for 400 years, and there was no prophet in Israel, says the Old Testament. And, at the end of 400 years, God broke the silence with a prophet. Who was it? John the Baptist. And God, from John the Baptist to 96 AD, John the apostle, gave us the New Testament, and then God was silent. And God's silence will be broken again in Revelation chapter 11 when in the end time two prophets appear, and they begin to speak again the utterance of God. But we are in the silent time. The Scripture is once for all delivered.

Listen to Hebrews 1:1, "God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets." That's the Old Testament. "Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." That's the New Testament. And those are the two times that God spoke, those two times, and in 96 AD became silent.

Beloved, the Bible is sufficient. It is sufficient, and I'm afraid that our dear charismatic friends with their continual revelations are not only destroying the authority and the absolute character of Scripture, but they are opening themselves up to error after error after error after error in terms of interpretation and in terms of practical judgment, doing things that may not be God's choice for them. Listen to this. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be –" what? "– perfect." What do you need to be perfect? All what? Scripture. You need something else? You need somebody's vision? Somebody's revelation? Somebody's tongues? Somebody's experience? Somebody's interpretation? No, you don't.

I'll tell ya, I got enough trouble trying to learn the Word of God without trying to run around the world and find out every other thing God may have said that's valid and try to figure out how that applies. Listen to this. I'm going to say it again. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God that the man of God may be what? Perfect. This is all you need. It is sufficient, beloved. And people who seek something more, I'm so afraid get something more, but the something more they get is not the something more they expected.

Verse 15 of 2 Timothy 3 says this, "And that from a child, Timothy, you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation." Wise unto salvation, perfect in maturity, all from the Scripture. I don't think charismatic people mean to undermine the Scripture. You hear them talk about how much they love the Word. I don't think they mean to do that; but when they allow for continuing, progressive revelation, they are going beyond the Bible. Now listen to me. I'm going to say something significant, and then I'm going to stop. They are doing exactly, identically what the Roman Catholic Church has done through the ages. They are making up an extra-biblical tradition. They are building actually what amounts to a charismatic tradition that is as binding on believers as the Word of God is.

Now some charismatics will say I am unduly alarmed, I misunderstand. No effort is being made to change Scripture, only clarify it, personalize it. People, those are word games. Those are just word games. You cannot hold to biblical absoluteness, you cannot hold to biblical authority, and allow for a whole lot of other revelations.

Now, I want to pound the pulpit in defense of the fact that the Holy Spirit works marvelous in the believer. I think He quickens the Scripture. I think He works in me as I preach and teach and write and talk and witness and think and live, and in you too and oh, it's great. And He's marvelous, and He's miraculous, and He's divine. But to call it revelation, and call it inspiration and say, "God spoke to me, and Jesus said to me," confuses the truth and plays right into the hands of the error that denies the uniqueness and authority of Scripture, and you've done just what Rome did. You've got Scripture and tradition, and both of them are binding.

All false systems that have ever been spawned out of Christianity, all of them, every single one, and I'm going to list them for you next week, and show you how – all of them that have been spawned out of Christianity that are false systems are based on this: the Bible plus an extra revelation. All of them. Very dangerous. Beloved, let's try to help our friends in that movement see this is sufficient, okay?

Father, thank You for just getting us off to a start this morning. Help us to be loving, and help us to fight earnestly, contending for the once for all delivered to the saints' faith. Satan wants to cloud the picture. Help us to keep it clear. In Jesus' name, for His glory. Amen.

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