

Spirit Slaying

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'Slaying in the Spirit' is a phenomenon which has become common place in many sectors of the Charismatic movement. It also plays a central role in the 'Laughing Revival.'

Consider the following description of a meeting conducted by Kenneth Hagin at the Winter Bible Seminar 1996 on the RHEMA campus:

'Waves of God's glory swept through the sanctuary, and people broke out in Holy Ghost laughter or dancing in the Spirit. Then Kenneth Hagin began laying hands on various people in the audience, telling them to 'Be blessed!' He was operating under such a strong anointing that ENTIRE ROWS OF PEOPLE WOULD FALL UNDER THE POWER OF GOD when Kenneth Hagin touched the first person in the row-or at times just walked by the row!

'Afterwards, Brother Hagin began to close the service-but the Holy Ghost arrested him, striking him dumb or mute by the power of God! For the next hour, Kenneth Hagin, unable to speak himself, walked throughout the audience, handing various ministers the microphone so the minister could speak as the Lord led him. But the moment Kenneth Hagin gave the microphone to someone, THAT MINISTER WAS EITHER STRUCK DUMB, FELL UNDER THE POWER OF GOD, OR WAS OVERCOME BY HOLY GHOST LAUGHTER' (The Word of Faith, RHEMA Bible Church, May 1996, p. 9).

The following commentary on slaying in the Spirit from biblical perspective is excerpted from Nader Mikhael's book *Slaying in the Spirit: The Telling Wonder*, copyright 1992, FO. Box 65, Punchbowl, 2196, NSW, Australia -

1. IN INSTANCES OF HEAVENLY ENCOUNTERS IN WHICH PEOPLE FELL DOWN, THEY WERE QUICKLY REVIVED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD, AN ANGEL OR THE LORD JESUS, AND WERE TOLD TO STAND UP Their falling was the natural human response-they were not thrown down by force. The divine touch brought restoration to full awareness to enable them to receive God's Word or instructions and to act on them, as the following incidents show:

'And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee. And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me. And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day' (Ezek. 2:1-2):

'Then the spirit entered into me, and set me upon my feet, and spake with me, and said unto me, Go, shut thyself within thine house' (Ezek. 3:24).

'Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground: but he touched me, and set me upright' (Dan. 8:18).

'Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me, And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me' (Dan. 10:18,19).

'And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid' (Matt. 17:6,7).

'And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do' (Acts 9:6).

'And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth, and was dead: and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter' (Rev. 1:17-18).

2. IN THE BIBLE, THERE WAS NO HUMAN AGENT MEDIATING OR IMPARTING THE POWER OF GOD. Contrariwise, most of the time, the modern-day falling happens as people come to the front to be touched by the leader.

3. WHEN PEOPLE FELL IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD IN SCRIPTURE, EVERYONE REMAINED UNDER ITS INFLUENCE FOR THE SAME LENGTH OF TIME. But when people are 'slain in the Spirit,' 'Some have stayed under the power for hours. Some have stayed for just a split second!' (Charles and Frances Hunter, *Since Jesus Passed By*, Time-Light Books, Van Nuys, Calif., 1973, p. 20). In addition, in the biblical accounts, when they fell, they fell together, not one after the other, and when they rose, they rose together (see Matthew 17:6).

4. IN THE BIBLICAL ACCOUNTS THE PERSONS AFFECTED MOSTLY FALL ON THEIR FACES, OBVIOUSLY IN AN ATTITUDE OF WORSHIP With the slaying in the spirit, however, most of the time people fall backward and not necessarily in an attitude of worship. (When those desiring to arrest the Lord Jesus fell, it does not say that they fell backward. Rather they first 'went backward,' then they fell (John 18:6). They went backward first so that there might be room for them to fall on their faces.)

5. WHEN PEOPLE FELL IN THE BIBLICAL ACCOUNTS NO ONE WAS STANDING BEHIND THEM TO CATCH THEM. God obviously knew what he was doing. Francis MacNutt tells of an incident in one of his conferences. A woman he had prayed for was slain in the Spirit and fell down on the concrete floor-hitting the back of her head with a horrendous cracking noise ... Obviously injured; naturally we gathered 'round and started praying. After a while she smiled and got up, saying she would be fine. But that night her roommate came knocking at my door saying that a lump was rising on the back of her friend's head and asking if she would be lacking in faith if she took her to a doctor. I encouraged her to do that immediately. She was taken to the emergency room where she was diagnosed with concussion and was immediately hospitalized' (MacNutt, *Ibid.*, pp. 170,171).

He also tells of another incident:

'More recently [1989] a federal jury has ordered evangelists Charles and Frances Hunter to pay \$300,000 in damages to a 67-year-old woman who was hurt when she fell over backward during one of their healing services. Evelyn Kuykendall of Maxville, North California, fractured her back and spent two months in the hospital following the accident' (*Ibid.*, p. 171).

Francis MacNutt then added:

'I learned to be cautious and to ask for catchers to stand by anytime I think that people might fall' (*Ibid.*). Note that in none of these incidents could the healers heal the injured person after the fall! When the Spirit of God transported Philip, nobody cushioned Philip's landing (if the process was actually one of transporting). When Eutychus fell from the third story (not from a standing position), Paul was able to revive him. but those who practice the slaying in the spirit, apparently feel that God needs a hand, hand,

lest someone breaks his back or suffers concussion conditions which would apparently be difficult to heal in a healing service!

6. IN EVERY CASE WHERE THE GLORY OF GOD IS MANIFESTED IN THE BIBLE WE NOTICE THAT THE MAN OF GOD IS ALSO AFFECTED. But with those who practice the slaying in the spirit, the man of God, the preacher or the healer, never falls. If the glory of the Lord fills the place, we would expect the leader to be the first to fall. However, these leaders seem to be immune to the influence of that power. Why is this so?

Kenneth Hagin, considered to be one of the most prominent preachers in whose meetings the slaying in the spirit occurs, says that sometimes there appears what he calls a 'cloud of glory.' When it appears, he claims he does not have to touch people but as he waves his hands, rows of people fall flat on the floor (Kenneth Hagin, *How You Can Be Led by the Spirit of God*, 1987, p. 30). Even when the cloud envelops him as he preaches he remains standing, continuing to preach (Hagin, *The Glory of the Lord*, 1987, pp. 12,13). This is contrary to the biblical cases, where people could not remain standing, or where they were stunned as if dead when the glory of God was manifested.

7. THE FREQUENCY OF THE SLAYING IN THE SPIRIT IS ASTOUNDING. Frances MacNutt says that he personally had fallen about fifteen times, but had never had a significant healing or spiritual experience (MacNutt, *Overcome by the Spirit*, p. 33). The Apostle Paul fell only once. Today, however, one person can experience this falling many times more than Daniel, Ezekiel, and Paul put together, but with no significant spiritual experience! Francis MacNutt also tells us of many instances in which people fell as he prayed for them. This did not happen only in meetings, but also in between meetings, when he didn't even have time to pray. The falling seems to happen with such ease and frequency that one cannot help but ask why it did not occur when the Lord Jesus touched people, or when Paul prayed for them?

Francis MacNutt tells of another incident in which - "One priest who had been to a Kathryn Kuhlman meeting in Pittsburg was so sensitive to this power that he couldn't even get near her, but repeatedly fell down in the aisle as he tried to approach the platform" (MacNutt, p. 18).

Why do we not read of anything like this happening with the Lord Jesus? No one was so full of power as He was, and yet people moved around Him and touched Him freely, without falling down! Why is it that nothing like this happened to Paul, Peter, or John?

8. IN THE BIBLICAL ACCOUNTS, NOT ONE CASE OF PHYSICAL HEALING OCCURRED WHEN SOMEONE FELL. Today, though, it is claimed that healing seems more likely to occur when people are slain in the spirit (MacNutt, p. 22).