

True and False Manifestations



Protection from Deception (Part 1)
by Derek Prince

There has been in recent years a worldwide explosion of signs and wonders. Some have been biblical and helpful. Others have been bizarre and unbiblical. Signs and wonders are not new. They are recorded in various passage of the Bible, and in different periods of church history. However, the current explosion extends more widely than any other particular church or denomination, and has attracted worldwide attention in both the religious and the secular media. I want to make it plain that I have no personal prejudice or anxiety concerning unusual manifestations. In actual fact, I have in my own lifetime experienced quite a number of them. They do not frighten me. I'm not negative about them.

As I recorded in my booklet Uproar In The Church, my own personal encounter with Jesus in World War II began in a very unconventional way. In the middle of the night in the barrack room of the British Army, I spent more than an hour on my back on the floor with my body first racked by convulsive sobs, and then filled with a river of laughter which grew continually louder. Next morning I found myself a completely different person. Changed, not by any act of my will, but by yielding to the supernatural power that had flowed through me.

I then looked up various passages in the Bible that speak about laughter. To my surprise I discovered that, for God's people, laughter is not primarily, as we imagine, a reaction to something comical, but rather an expression of triumph over our enemies. In Psalm 2:4 David actually depicts God, Himself, as laughing.

> "He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The LORD shall hold them in derision."

Here God's laughter is not a reaction to some comedy that is being enacted on earth. Rather it is His response to the ridiculous humans who have the effrontery to oppose His purposes. It is His expression of triumph over all the forces of evil. Sometimes God fills us with His own laughter, that we may share in His triumph over those who are both His enemies and ours.

Later I pastored a fellowship in London that met on the top floor of a five-story building. One evening a lame man was miraculously healed and threw away his crutches. We all burst into spontaneous praise. At that moment the building began to tremble and shake with the power of God. The praise and the shaking continued for about 30 minutes. I realized that something similar was recorded of the early church in Acts 4:31.

> "And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness."

At that particular time our fellowship was conducting several evangelistic meetings each week in the streets of London, and we certainly needed more than natural boldness.

But with regard to any kind of manifestation there are two questions that I always want to ask:

Number 1 Is it a manifestation of the Holy Spirit of God, or is it a manifestation of some other source?

Number 2 And this is related to it, is the manifestation in question in harmony with Scripture? In 2 Timothy 3:16 Paul says:

> "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God..."

In other words, the Holy Spirit is the author of all Scripture, and He never says or does anything to contradict Himself. Every genuine manifestation of the Holy Spirit will in some way harmonize with Scripture.

Now I want to begin with some warnings of Jesus, particularly related to the end-time period in which I believe we are living. These are warnings against deception. They are found in Matthew chapter 24, verses 4, 5, 11 and 24. In other words, four times in 21 verses, Jesus specifically warns us against deception in this period of the close of the age. The first thing Jesus said about the events leading up to His return in Matthew 24:4:

> "...Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' [the Messiah] and will deceive many. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. For false christs [false Messiahs] and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect."

So Jesus warns us four times against deception. Anybody who shrugs off that warning or treats it lightly, does so at the risk of his own soul.

The greatest single danger in this End-time is not sickness, nor poverty, nor persecution. It is deception. If anybody says, "It could never happen to me!" it has already happened to that person, because that person is saying something could never happen that Jesus said would happen. That is a sufficient indication that such a person is deceived.

Next I want to say something important about signs and wonders. They do not determine truth. It's very essential to understand that. Signs and wonders do not determine truth. Truth is already determined and established, and it is the word of God. In John 17:17, John chapter 17 verse 17, Jesus is praying to the Father and He says,

> "...Your word is truth."

In Psalm 119:89 the Psalmist says,

> "Forever, O, LORD, Your word is settled in heaven."

Nothing that happens on earth can ever change the smallest little sign or letter of the word of God. It is forever settled in heaven.

Now the Bible speaks about signs and wonders. It says some things about them that are good and some that are very frightening. I want to turn to 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 and read a few verses there, beginning at verse 9. 2 Thessalonians 2:9–12.

> "The coming of the lawless one [that's the title of the anti-christ] is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

So Paul says here that there are such things as lying signs and wonders. There are true signs and there are lying signs. True signs attest the truth. Lying sign attest lies. Satan is fully capable of supernatural signs and wonders. Unfortunately, many in the Charismatic movement had the attitude that if

something is supernatural it must be from God. There is no Scriptural basis for that assumption. Satan is perfectly capable of producing powerful signs and wonders to attest his lies. And the reason such people are deceived is because they did not receive the love of the truth. On such people, God will send strong delusion.

That's one of the most frightening statements in the Bible. If God sends you strong delusion, you will be deluded. I think that is one of the most severe judgments of God recorded in Scripture, sending these people strong delusion. They will be condemned, these people, because they did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. Therefore, signs and wonders are not a guarantee that something is the truth.

There is only one sure way to know the truth—it is the word of God. Jesus said in John 8:32:

> "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

There is no other way to be sure that we can escape deception in these days except that we know and apply the truth of God's word, the Scripture.

In 1994 for the first time, I was brought into fairly direct contact with one of the groups where these manifestations were occurring. A group of leaders went to some of their meetings, and returned all excited saying that they had experienced something wonderful, and we all needed to experience it. They said, "Now you don't test it. You don't try it out. You don't examine it. You just open up to it and receive it."

That was the first time that I really began to be suspicious of some of these things. Such a statement is directly contrary to Scripture. In 1 Thessalonians 5:21, Paul says to Christians:

Test all things; hold fast what is good.

So if we do not test things we are disobeying Scripture. Anybody who tells us not to test things is, himself, not in harmony with Scripture. Our hearts cannot be relied upon to give us the truth. Proverbs 28:26 says:

> "He who trusts in his own heart is a fool..."

So don't be a fool. Do not trust your own heart. Do not rely upon what your heart tells you, because it is not reliable.

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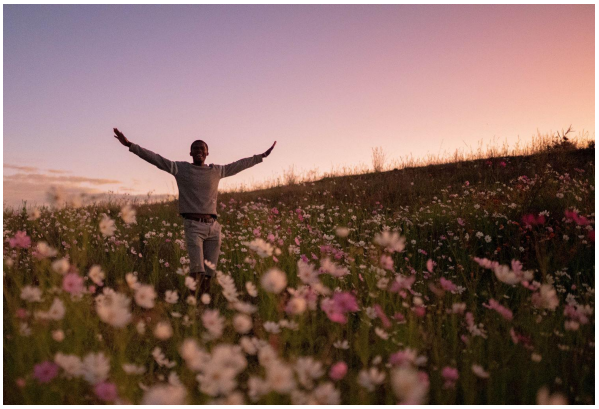

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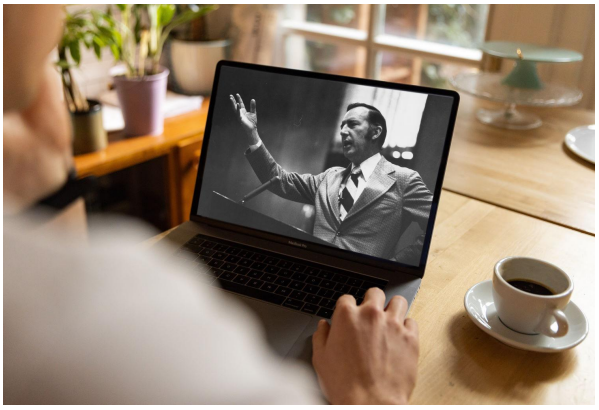

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