

ERRORS^{OF} THE WORD OF FAITH

Unveiling a Cleverly Concealed Lie



ABIODUN JEMILOHUN

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Dedication

Dedicated to all lovers of the truth of the Gospel worldwide

Acknowledgement

Thanks be to the Almighty God, the author of wisdom and understanding. I acknowledge every person who in one way or the other contributed to the success of the work. You are all treasured.

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Forward

**“See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant.”
(Jeremiah 1:10)**

“Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You. The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lords; Make His paths straight.’” (Mark 1:2)

We are in the time of preparation for the Lord. The end is near. God in His mercy is sending out His prophets, those who He has chosen from obscurity. Those who are of broken and contrite spirits, who walk in humility and whose focus is knowing the very Glory and Presence of the Lord. Those who honor Biblical truth and the Fear of the Lord over the accolades and honor of men. Those whose love for the truth drive them to “study and show themselves approved” and “to rightly divide the Word of Truth”.

To these men He has issued a call. He has “set them over nations and kingdoms to root out and to pull down, to destroy and throw down” the wrong doctrines and traditions of men, the doctrines of demons and seducing spirits, the

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divisions of denominationalism and the schisms caused by false teachers and false prophets. All of this must be done in order for the planting and building to begin. This is not a reformation or a changing of old things but a complete restoration, instrumented by Christ, the head and life source of the called out ekklesia, led by Holy Spirit, in order to prepare His Bride for the coming Bridegroom. We are to be cleansed and spotless and white as snow.

The Way is being prepared and restored for the coming of the Lord. In order to “make His paths straight” the Truth must be proclaimed. The lies must be exposed. The false doctrines must be pulled down and rooted out and the sacred Truth of the Sword of the Spirit must be restored to the Body of Christ. This task is not for the faint of heart or those who can be swayed by the opinions of men. It belongs to those He has chosen who have proven that pride and self, have no foothold in their lives. It belongs to those who have proven to be humble and faithful servants to the Lord. It is passed to those who have chosen, in obedience, to hone their skills at studying, interpreting and conveying the unadulterated and rightly divided Truth of the Word.

I was involved in the Word of Faith, Abundant Life (prosperity), everyone should be healed, no suffering or trials and positive confession movements for many years. I read all of Kenneth Hagin’s, Charles Capps’, some of E.W. Kenyon’s books and many others from the founders of these movements. I went to church at Eagle Mountain Church in Texas which was Kenneth Copelands church and attended

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Jerry Savelle Ministries Bible school in Crowley, TX. I have been to several Believers conventions and have been in the midst of many services where money was physically thrown at the feet on the altar of the so-called ministers of the prosperity and Word of Faith message. People were taught, through the errors expounded upon in this manuscript, that they could give their way to blessings, and healing and prosperity and new cars and houses and stuff by giving as the anointing was upon those who were preaching. They were taught that they were little gods and could speak their worlds into existence by positive confession. I have seen and heard the likes of Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland, Gloria Copeland, Creflo Dollar, Jerry Savelle, Jesse Duplantis, Dr. Leroy Thompson and others, twist and turn the scriptures to cause deception and error in the hearts and minds of the spiritually immature and those who have been “believers” for many years.

Being in the midst of this madness gave me firsthand knowledge and allowed me to see the destruction these errors caused in people’s lives, spiritually, mentally, physically, financially and in their relationships with their spouses and others. I watched the devastation take place as people tried to apply these “twisted scriptural” principles in their lives. I watched as many come to financial ruin and end up being angry with God when their healing did not come or the world they tried to create by positive confession did not manifest.

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Thankfully, Holy Spirit arrested me in the midst of it all and began to show me the error of these doctrines as I watched firsthand how the enemy twisted and deceived. One does not have to look far to see how these false doctrines and errors became the foundation for much of what the church of the last 30-40 years has become. When the reverence and Fear of the Lord are replaced with “God is your buddy” and we are “little gods” and that suffering and trials and tribulations were completed in Paul then you can understand why the emphasis on living a Holy and sinless life were relegated to a place of non-importance.

The errors described in this book are the very foundations upon which the prosperity message, hyper-grace, seeker friendly and New Age church movements of today were built. In understanding these errors, returning to a true scriptural foundation, applying the true foundations and pillars of the Word in our lives and once again placing God in His place of pre-eminence of reverence, holiness, fear and awe, we can properly seek His face and the presence of Christ as led by Holy Spirit and not just His hand from whence the blessing flow.

I would urge the reader to take the time to read this book and examine their own belief systems. Look closely at the theology upon which you have based your foundation. If these errors exist in your life or thinking, then pray that Holy Spirit will assist you in pulling down these strongholds of wrong doctrine and scriptural error and ask Him to replace them with a true understanding of the Word by His teaching.

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I am blessed to call Dr. Abiodun Jemilohun not only my brother and friend but also fellow bondservant in the Lord. The work that he has done here is well worth the reading and I pray that it shines the Light of Truth into your very being and sets you free from the errors of the past.

Roger Cornwell

Christ Follower

Christchurch, New Zealand

Introduction

This work is a continuation of the book entitled “Anatomy of the Prosperity Gospel”. The decision to make it a separate work was taken primarily to reduce the volume of the initial work for easy read and secondarily because the theology has a different origin and *modus operandi* than the Abundant Life Theology we examined in the first book.

Although the Word of Faith theology came into existence before the Abundant Life Theology, it became popular in less than 50 years ago (in the 1970s). Until then, it remained largely confined to the writings of E. W. Kenyon, an American Baptist Pastor.

The Word of Faith Theology espouses several concepts that were hitherto unknown in mainstream Christianity. These concepts have now become so popular that only someone who is well acquainted with church history can discern them as foreign to the Christian faith.

This volume is another genuine attempt to examine this theology under the searchlight of the holy scripture.

It is my prayer that you, the reader, would allow the Holy Spirit to use it to speak to you.

Happy reading.

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Chapter 1

Origin of the Word of Faith

We stated in the book entitled “Anatomy of the Prosperity Gospel” that the prosperity gospel is somehow difficult to define because it is not a systematized theological thought. It is often referred to as the "wealth and health gospel" by many theologians because of its disproportionate emphasis on material wealth and physical health as against the traditional Gospel that lays emphasis on deliverance from sin through the atoning sacrifice of Christ. It is also derogatorily called “name it and claim it” because it teaches that adherents can choose, claim and receive whatever they desire at will in as much as it is in tandem with the Word of God.

Also noted is the fact that there are two distinct movements that gave birth to what is now referred to as the “prosperity gospel,” though the younger generations of prosperity preachers may not be aware of this fact. These include the Abundant Life Movement, championed by Oral Roberts and the Word of Faith Movement which was pioneered by Essek William Kenyon (April 25, 1867 – March 19, 1948) but was popularized by Kenneth Erwin Hagin (August 20, 2019¹⁷ – September 19, 2003) [[1](#)]. E. W.

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Kenyon died about two decades and a half before the theology became popular. Both of these theological thoughts emphasize material prosperity and divine healing. Whereas the Abundant Life theology employs the seed-faith to obtain its goal, the Word of Faith employs positive confession to achieve its end.

Several individuals have attributed the origin of the Word of Faith theology to the New Thought or Mind Cure Movement pioneered by Phineas Quimby and the other New Age teachers because E. W. Kenyon once studied at the Emerson School of Oratory as a young person [[1](#)].

I initially hesitated contemplating the idea that E. W. Kenyon was influenced by the New Thought philosophy but I now have sufficient reason to believe that he was indeed influenced by the New Thought teachings because of the similarities between the two ideologies. Though Kenyon rebuked the New Thought teachers for their faulty “theology” because it isn’t based on Christ, he seemed to have incorporated the basic ingredient of the philosophy into his theology i.e. transmuting desires into their material equivalents through positive confession. Kenyon believed that positive confession is alright but it has to be founded on Christ finished work.

While E. W. Kenyon lived during the early stages of Pentecostalism, he did not embrace the theology. He was a Baptist by confession. It is also important to note that Kenyon taught other things that could be considered

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orthodox about the new creation realities apart from the Word of Faith doctrines.

While both positive and negative views about Kenneth E. Hagin exist, depending on the theological leaning of the commentator, he gets across to me as someone who in sincerity of heart ran fervently with what he considered to be the truth. To the best of my knowledge, he was not given to avarice and self-indulgence like many of the prosperity gospel preachers. He was not into the seed-faith like other prominent Prosperity-Pentecostal preachers. According to an article authored by Lee Grady, Kenneth Hagin made effort to correct some of the excesses of the prosperity gospel towards the end of his life by calling a meeting of his proteges but many of them were too neck-deep into the error to change [2]. It was after this he wrote a book entitled “Midas Touch” in which he addressed some of the elements of the movement he considered erroneous. Notwithstanding, he taught certain unscriptural things he did not correct before his departure which a diligent Bible student cannot easily overlook.

Chapter 2

Essentials of the Word of Faith?

The essential elements of the Word of Faith consist of positive confession, confessing the Word of God, not saying what is negative, love and the belief that the Christian is a god.

Positive confession is the mainstay of the Word of Faith. The theology teaches that the adherent can convert his desires to their material forms by confessing them repeatedly. For example, an adherent who is poor but desires to be rich has to repeatedly confess statements like, “I will be rich,” “I am rich,” or “I can never be poor” in order to translate his desire for wealth to reality.

The adherent also needs to select scriptural passages that are related to his desired object and repeatedly confess them in order to achieve his objective. So, the adherent who desires material riches has to look up relevant Bible passages and confess them repeatedly in order to obtain wealth. Also, he needs to refrain from saying negative things about his finance (negative confession) so as not to abort the materialization of his desire. In addition, the Word of Faith teaches that the adherent needs to maintain an attitude of

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love for this prescription to work. He needs to learn to quickly forgive when offended and show love to people.

Some faith teachers also say that the adherent needs to experience his desired object emotionally through creative

visualization. Although I am not aware that either E. W. Kenyon or Kenneth E. Hagin taught creative visualization, the popular South Korean preacher, Paul Yonggi Cho espoused the concept in his book entitled “Fourth Dimension”.

The bedrock of all these is the belief that the Christian is a god who also has ability to speak things into existence just like God.

Are these assertions truly consistent with the intent of the scriptures?

We know that the primary aim of the Christian faith is the establishment and maintenance of a steady relationship with God, irrespective of the circumstances of life- whether positive or negative.

“16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.” (Rom 1:16-17)

“38 “Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.” 39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but

of those who believe to the saving of the soul.” (Heb 10:38-39)

“35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written: “For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” 37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom 8:35-39)

The number one error that becomes apparent to a sincere inquirer is the fact that the Word of Faith changed this primary objective to mere acquisition of temporal objects (material wealth and health). Due to the undue emphasis it places on using faith to claim physical things from God, it invariably presents faith as an abstract force that is largely meant to be used to conjure the good things of life just like the seed-faith. This similarity, in my opinion, is the reason why prosperity preachers find it very convenient to combine the two concepts despite that they are of different origins.

We must admit that the recommendation to always maintain an attitude of love is commendable. However, love must be seen primarily as a Christian virtue and not a means

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of converting one's desire to reality as the Word of Faith presents it, otherwise it is no longer love

Chapter 3

Common Scriptures used to teach the Word of Faith

Just like the Abundant Life theology, the Word of Faith is also premised on several scriptural passages which are mostly taken out of context. Since the Bible says by the mouth of two or three witnesses a word shall be established, we shall exceed this figure by examining at least seven (7) of the common Bible passages upon which the Word of Faith is premised to see if they can truly be used as such.

Mark 11:20-24

“20 Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. 21 And Peter, remembering, said to Him, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away.” 22 So Jesus answered and said to them, “Have faith in God. 23 For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. 24 Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that

you receive them, and you will have them.” (Mar 11:20-24)

Word of Faith teachers, also known as faith teachers, often use verse 22 to 23 of Mark 11 to teach positive confession. This seems to be the most important scripture used to teach the Word of Faith. However, it is difficult to make scriptural sense of the scripture unless we examine chapter 11 of Mark from verse 20 to 24 and the event that happened a day before Jesus made this statement in Mark 11:12-14.

A day prior to the event reported in this Mark 11 20-24, Jesus and his disciples went out in the morning. He became hungry and saw a leafy fig tree afar off. He approached the tree thinking He could find some fruits on it to pacify His hunger but found none. He then cursed the fig tree.

As they came out the following day, they saw that the tree had withered from the root. As Peter drew Jesus’ attention to it, He seized the opportunity to teach them an object lesson on faith.

In verse 23, Jesus went further to explain to them that they could command the Mount Olives (they were close to the Mount at this time) to be removed and cast into the sea. The sea here could either be the Mediterranean Sea or the Dead Sea. What was Jesus saying here? We know that it is practically impossible to cast a mountain by word of mouth into the sea. Therefore, whatever Jesus said here could not be taken literally.

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It is believed that “removing mountains,” and “rooting up of mountains” are phrases that are generally used to connote the removing or overcoming of great difficulties among the Jews. So, Jesus used the opportunity to paint a vivid picture of the common saying to drive home a lesson that no situation or difficulty in life is impossible to surmount by whoever has faith in God. He was teaching the disciples that they can change seemingly impossible situations if they could only believe in God. He then concluded in verse 24 by telling them to use this boundless faith He was espousing to them in prayer.

There are three basic lessons we can learn from the fig tree at the center of this Bible passage. First, it is dangerous to be unfruitful. Jesus cursed the fig tree because it had an appearance of fruitfulness while in reality it was unfruitful. The situation of the nation of Israel was similar to the situation of this fig tree at that time. Israel had the appearance of fruitfulness but she was an unfruitful nation. She obstinately refused to believe in the Messiah thereby receiving the grace of God in vain. This unbelief eventually led to the destruction of the nation about 40 years after (70AD) just like the fig tree withered.

Second, Jesus taught the disciples to use their faith by what I would call “word of command.” He didn’t teach them positive confession as the faith teachers do. An examination of the book of Acts shows that the apostles understood this lesson and did it exactly the way Jesus taught them. They used their faith to command sicknesses and evil spirits to

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depart from people and raised the dead exactly the way Jesus used it during His earthly ministry. We see no such thing in Acts and the apostolic epistles as positive confession like faith teachers teach. On all the occasions the apostles used the word of command, they made the pronouncement once!

“6 Then Peter said, “Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.” 7 And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. 8 So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God.” (Act 3:6-8)

“33 There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years and was paralyzed. 34 And Peter said to him, “Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed.” Then he arose immediately. (Acts 9:33-34)

“8 And in Lystra a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother’s womb, who had never walked. 9 This man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, 10 said with a loud voice, “Stand up straight on your feet!” And he leaped and walked.” (Acts 14:8-10)

“18 And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And he came out that very hour.” (Act 16:18)

“40 But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, “Tabitha, arise.” And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up.” (Acts 9:40)

The seven sons of Sceva the High Priest who tried to command an evil spirit out of a possessed man without a personal relationship with Christ got a beating of their lives (Acts 19:13-16).

Third, Jesus taught them to use their faith in prayer to do the impossible. This, to my mind, is the most important reason for this object lesson. It wasn't about positive confession as the faith teachers teach. Why do I believe this? Jesus concluded the lesson with a statement that begins with "therefore". This implies that the primary message of the lesson is the exercise of boundless faith in prayer.

From the foregoing, it is evident that a contextual interpretation of this Bible passage cannot be used to teach positive confession as the Word of Faith teaches.

Romans 10:6-10

“6 But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ ” (that is, to bring Christ down from above) 7 or, “ ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’ ” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 8 But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach): 9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For

**with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”
(Rom 10:6-10)**

The name “Word of Faith,” given to this theological taught, was actually taken from verse 8 of this Bible passage.

No one needs to go to a theological seminary to know this Bible passage isn’t talking about positive confession (repetitive confession of desires to bring them to realization), it is simply about how to obtain salvation. It is about justification which is obtained by a simple faith in Christ Jesus- that no one needs to labor to obtain salvation. All that is needed is a simple faith in the death and resurrection of Christ and the acknowledgment of His Lordship over one’s life. This is the “Word of Faith” Paul preached. He didn’t preach repetitive positive confession that is targeted at changing desire for the good things of life to their material equivalents. This scripture was completely taken out of context by the modern faith teachers to mean what it was never intended to mean.

In reality, Word of Faith is the same as the Gospel of Christ. Other phrases in the Bible which are synonymous with the Gospel of Christ like the Word of Faith includes Word of Truth, Word of life, Word of Righteousness, Word of His Grace. These phrases all mean the same thing.

Romans 4:17-22

“17 (As it is written, “I have made you a father of many nations”) in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls

those things which do not exist as though they did; 18 who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, “So shall your descendants be.” 19 And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb. 20 He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. 22 And therefore “it was accounted to him for righteousness.” (Rom 4:17-22)

Roman 4:17 is used to teach the Word of Faith because it says God calls those things that be not as though they were. Is this really about positive confession?

We have to consider verse 18 to 22 together with 17 in order to be able to interpret the verse correctly. The key statements that would help understand verse 17 are in verse 18 (“according to that which was spoken”), verse 19 (“the promise of God”), and verse 21 (“what he had promised”). Putting all these together, we see that verse 17 is not talking about any positive confession, it is simply talking about the promise of God to Abraham concerning the “seed” which He (God) reiterated on several occasions so as to reassure Abraham that He would do exactly as He promised.

Come to think of it, would it not have been ridiculous if God, who created the world by mere pronouncements of “let there be” had to make repeated positive confessions like faith

teachers teach before He could make Sarah conceive? The fact remains that God wasn't making any positive confession here. He was simply reassuring Abraham that He would do as He promised.

2 Corinthians 4:7-13

“7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. 8 We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed— 10 always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. 11 For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12 So then death is working in us, but life in you. 13 And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, “I believed and therefore I spoke,” we also believe and therefore speak, 14 knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you.” (2Cor 4:7-14)

Faith teachers also use verse 13 of this Bible passage to teach positive confession because it says “I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak.”

But what was Paul saying here? Paul was quoting the statement of the Psalmist in Psalm 116:10 where he affirmed his confidence in the promises of God despite all the

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afflictions he went through. So, Paul was comparing the believers' situation (especially his own condition) to that of David, that though we may pass through all kinds of afflictions, we would continue to proclaim the Gospel (good news) just like David proclaimed the goodness of God in his afflictions. Why? Because we believe God cannot lie. This is the "spirit of faith" Paul was talking about- an unwavering conviction in the goodness and promises of God in the face of trials and tribulations. He was not talking about positive confession as the faith teachers would have us believe.

Joel 3:10

"10 Beat your plowshares into swords And your pruning hooks into spears; Let the weak say, 'I am strong.'" (Joel 3:10)

Part B of Joel 3:10 is used to teach positive confession because it says "Let the weak say, 'I am strong'." A closer look at the preceding and succeeding verses of this verse of the Bible, however, shows that it isn't talking about positive confession. Really, one needs to read verse 28 to 32 of chapter 2 of Joel in conjunction with the whole of chapter 3 of Joel to get the message here. For the purpose of this discourse, we would here cite Joel 3:9-16.

"9 Proclaim this among the nations: "Prepare for war! Wake up the mighty men, Let all the men of war draw near, Let them come up. 10 Beat your plowshares into swords And your pruning hooks into spears; Let the weak say, 'I am strong.'" 11 Assemble and come, all you nations, And gather together all around. Cause Your mighty ones to go

down there, O Lord. 12 “Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; For there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. 13 Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; For the winepress is full, The vats overflow- For their wickedness is great.” 14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. 15 The sun and moon will grow dark, And the stars will diminish their brightness. 16 The Lord also will roar from Zion, And utter His voice from Jerusalem; The heavens and earth will shake; But the Lord will be a shelter for His people, And the strength of the children of Israel.” (Joe 3:9-16)

It is important to say at this juncture that various Bible commentators have interpreted Joel 3 in different ways. However, Joel 2:28-32 clearly indicates that the events predicted in chapter 3, namely Israel’s captivity, return to the Holy Land and a large-scale war with Gentile nations, would happen after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the conversion of a remnant of Israel which took place after.

“28 And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions. 29 And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. 30 “And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke. 31 The sun shall

be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. 32 And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the Lord Shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, As the Lord has said, Among the remnant whom the Lord calls.” (Joel 2:28-32)

Peter referred to Joel 2:28-32 in his sermon on Pentecost stating that the prediction of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit by Joel was being fulfilled on that day (Acts 2:17-21). The prediction about captivity has been fulfilled, the return to the Holy land from captivity started in 1948 and is ongoing. Left unfulfilled is the large-scale war. Therefore, it is safe to conclude that Joel 3:9-16 is a prediction of a future gathering and defeat of the enemies of Israel that would happen after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. From all indications this prophecy is yet to be fulfilled.

Now, reading verse 9 and 10 of Joel chapter 3 together, it becomes clear that God was neither talking to Israel nor the Church. Rather, He was addressing the enemies of Israel to convert their instruments of production (farm implements) to war instruments.

“9 Proclaim this among the nations: “Prepare for war! Wake up the mighty men, Let all the men of war draw near, Let them come up. 10 Beat your plowshares into swords And your pruning hooks into spears; Let the weak say, ‘I am strong.’” (Joel 3:9-10)

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God says the weak among the enemies of Israel should consider themselves strong and join the battle (“Let the weak say, ‘I am strong’”). Why did God say this? The purpose is disclosed in Joel 3 verse 12 and 14. God wants to judge the enemies in their multitude. In verse 13, God spoke figuratively of the destruction of the enemies comparing it to the harvest of grape.

So, we see that Joel 3:10 is not about positive confession, rather, it is about God’s intended judgment on the Gentile nations that would gather against Israel in the future.

Proverbs 18:21-22

**“20 A man’s stomach shall be satisfied from the fruit of his mouth; From the produce of his lips he shall be filled. 21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.”
(Prov 18:20-21)**

This Bible passage is another popular one used to teach the Word of Faith. However, an objective reader would easily see that it is not about positive confession but about judicious use of words in human interaction.

The first and second parts of verse 20 are essentially the same. The writer employed repetition for emphasis. It simply means that a man who speaks wisely will be satisfied with the results he gets from his words. Solomon went further in verse 21 to instruct that negative and positive use of words have their respective consequences. In other words, words are as powerful, if not more, as actions.

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From the practical point of view, we know that the outcome of a man's life depends to a reasonable extent on the way he uses his word. The outcomes of career, marriage, friendship, family, business and other forms of socioeconomic interactions depend largely on the wise or foolish use of words. Careers have been ruined, marriages destroyed, friendships ruined, children estranged from parents by wrong use of words. Nations have engaged in devastating wars because of careless use of words by leaders. In the same token, the converse of these negative experiences has happened by wise use of words. As a general rule, people who are too proud to say sorry or ask for help and those who talk too much usually have much difficulty in life.

We must bear in mind that the consequences of our words are not limited to us. The way we use our words can either build or tear people down. This is why the Bible enjoins circumspection in the way we use our words. We must see to it that we minister grace to people by the words we speak.

Although this Bible passage is primarily about human interactions, it is important to also keep in mind that our relationship with God also depends on the use of words to some extent. Apart from believing in Christ in our hearts, we need to confess him as our Lord with our mouths to be saved. Our prayers are conveyed to God through the words of our mouths and God speaks to us through inspired preaching and teaching by words of mouths of other people.

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There are several other references in Proverbs and other books of the Bible that either encourage wise use of words or warn against careless or negative use of words. Some of them are cited below.

“23 A man has joy by the answer of his mouth, And a word spoken in due season, how good it is!!” (Prov 15:23)

“13 Righteous lips are the delight of kings, And they love him who speaks what is right. 14 As messengers of death is the king’s wrath, But a wise man will appease it..” (Prov 16:13-14)

“11 A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold In settings of silver.” (Prov 25:11)

“13 The wicked is ensnared by the transgression of his lips, But the righteous will come through trouble. 14 A man will be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth.” (Pro 12:13-14a)

“2 A man shall eat well by the fruit of his mouth, But the soul of the unfaithful feeds on violence. 3 He who guards his mouth preserves his life, But he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction.” (Prov 13:2-3)

“13 Wisdom is found on the lips of him who has understanding, But a rod is for the back of him who is devoid of understanding. 14 Wise people store up knowledge, But the mouth of the foolish is near destruction.” (Prov 10:13-14)

“19 In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, But he who restrains his lips is wise. 20 The tongue of the righteous is choice silver; The heart of the wicked is worth little. 21 The lips of the righteous feed many, But fools die for lack of wisdom.” (Prov 10:19) “27 He who has knowledge spares his words, And a man of understanding is of a calm spirit. 28 Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; When he shuts his lips, he is considered perceptive.” (Prov 17:27-28)

“10 For “He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit. 11 Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it.” 1Peter 3:10-11)

“29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.” (Eph 4:29)

“2 For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. 5 5 Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!” (James 3:2,5)

I believe the reader should have seen by now that Proverbs 18:20-21 is not about positive confession but about wise use of words.

Numbers 14:28

“26 And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 27 “How long shall I bear with this evil congregation

who complain against Me? I have heard the complaints which the children of Israel make against Me. 28 Say to them, As I live,' says the Lord, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: 29 The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above. 30 Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in.'" (Num 14:26-30)

Numbers 14:28 is used to teach positive confession because it says, "As you have spoken in my hearing, so will I do to you."

Again, it is impossible to interpret this Bible verse in isolation without misconstruing it. In chapter 13 of Numbers, the Israelites were about to enter the promised land. God then instructed Moses to send twelve spies to survey the promised land as a prelude to their takeover. Ten of the spies gave an evil report about the land while the remaining two (Joshua and Caleb) gave a good report. In chapter 14:1-4, the Israelites murmured against Moses and Aaron bitterly and muted the idea of going back to Egypt.

"1 So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. 2 And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we

had died in this wilderness! 3 Why has the Lord brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?” 4 So they said to one another, “Let us select a leader and return to Egypt.”” (Num 14:1-4)

God was very displeased with the Israelites. He considered their murmuring against Moses and Aaron as murmuring against himself. He told Moses to allow Him destroy them but Moses pleaded for mercy on their behalf. God heard Moses but He declared His verdict on the people: they would not all die instantly but those who were above 20 years among them would die in the wilderness over a period of 40 years.

Why did God declare that verdict on the Israelites? A close look at Numbers 14:11-12; 20-29 shows that it was because of their persistent lack of faith in God. It wasn't because of a slip of mouth in an unguarded moment or an acknowledgement of a challenge (giants in the promised land) which faith teachers refer to as negative confession. It was their reaction to the challenge that was the problem. The older Israelites murmured against God primarily because they never at any point believed in the ability of God to take them to the promised land. God said they had tried Him ten times and did not heed His voice despite all the signs and wonders He performed before them. Isn't it incredible that a generation that was miraculously preserved from the ten plagues in Egypt, walked through the Red Sea on dry land, heard the voice of God in the midst of fire on the Mount, ate

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manna from heaven, drank water from the rock, ate miracle meat etc. could not believe that God would help them to overcome the giant inhabitants of the promised land?

“11 Then the Lord said to Moses: “How long will these people reject Me? And how long will they not believe Me, with all the signs which I have performed among them? 12 I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they.” (Num 14:11-12)

“20 Then the LORD said: “I have pardoned, according to your word; 21 but truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD— 22 because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded My voice, 23 they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it. 24 But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it.....29 The carcasses of you who have complained against me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above.” (Num 14:20-24, 29)

At this point, their cup of unbelief was full. God would have none of it again. God saw they would never believe Him no matter what He did. It was of no use forcing them to

believe Him. So, He had to dispense with them and wait for another generation that would believe Him in order to fulfil His purpose. That is, to build a nation through which the Messiah would come to the world.

What lessons can we learn here? We should not test Christ or murmur against Him through unbelief like the Israelites did in the wilderness, no matter the circumstance we find ourselves.

“9 Nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; 10 nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer.” (1Cor 10:9-10)

We should also not reject Christ either by persistently living in sin or by outrightly renouncing Him. We must always bear in mind that there is still a future rest for the people of God which only those who endure through faith to the end would enter.

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?” (Rom 6:1)

“26 For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.” (Heb 10:26-27)

“38 Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.” (Heb 10:38)

“THEREFORE, SINCE A PROMISE REMAINS OF ENTERING HIS REST, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. 2 For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. 3 For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: “So I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest,’” although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. 4 For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all His works”; 5 and again in this place: “They shall not enter My rest.” 6 SINCE THEREFORE IT REMAINS THAT SOME MUST ENTER IT, AND THOSE TO WHOM IT WAS FIRST PREACHED DID NOT ENTER BECAUSE OF DISOBEDIENCE, 7 again He designates a certain day, saying in David, “Today,” after such a long time, as it has been said: “Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts.” 8 For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. 9 THERE REMAINS THEREFORE A REST FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD.” (Heb 4:1-9)

We see, again, that this Bible verse (Number 14:28) is not about positive confession, it is a warning to all to guard against FAITHLESSNESS which could prevent us from entering the final rest.

Certainly, there are other biblical references which faith teachers use to teach the Word of Faith. Nevertheless, it is

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evident from the seven popular ones we have examined that the theology cannot stand the scrutiny of sound biblical exegesis. An objective mind cannot but agree that it is mostly premised upon out-of-context interpretation of the Bible

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Chapter 4

The Dilemma of the Trial of Job

If there is any book the Word of Faith teachers wouldn't want to be in the Bible, it is the book of Job. Why? Because it confounds their implicit teaching that a Christian can't go through life's adversity without being responsible for it either because he has sinned or because he allowed the devil to afflict him. I surmise that the second book they would like to expunge from the Bible is the epistle of James. Why? Because James commended Job and cited his trial as an example for Christians to follow.

“10 As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 11 Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.” (James 5:10-11; ESV)

Despite Faith teachers' misgivings about the trial of Job, the Bible clearly states in other books, apart from James, that Christians would go through various adversities in life

not because they have done anything wrong but primarily for their faith in Christ Jesus.

“2 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” (James 1:2-4; ESV)

“5 Who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:5-7; ESV)

”3 Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.” (Rom 5:3-5; ESV)

Faith teachers are in the habit of blaming Job for his trial. They claim he opened the door to the devil to afflict him because he was fearful, according to Job 3:25.

**“For the thing I greatly feared has come upon me,
And what I dreaded has happened to me.” (Job 3:25;
ESV)**

In reference to Solomon’s word in Ecclesiastes 10:8, Faith teachers assert that Satan had access to Job’s life because he broke the hedge God put around him through fear.

**“He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso
breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him.” (Ecc
10:8; KJV)**

**“He who digs a pit will fall into it, and a serpent will
bite him who breaks through a wall.” (Ecc 10:8;
ESV)**

Is this assertion congruent with the intent of the Scripture?

In order to answer this question, we need to firstly know what Job feared. Thankfully, Job 1:4-5 gives us insight into Job’s fear.

**“4 And his sons would go and feast in their houses,
each on his appointed day, and would send and
invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them.
5 So it was, when the days of feasting had run their
course, that Job would send and sanctify them, and
he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt
offerings according to the number of them all. For
Job said, “It may be that my sons have sinned and
cursed God in their hearts.” Thus Job did
regularly.” (Job 1:4-5)**

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Job feared that his children may somehow curse God in their hearts during their regular banquet thereby provoking God's Judgement on them. It wasn't a morbid fear of unprovoked calamity. This was why he offered prophylactic sacrifices to God on behalf of his children to avert God's judgment.

It is important to bear in mind that the book of Job is one of the oldest books of the Bible. Some Bible scholars actually believe that it is the oldest. During the patriarchal dispensation when the book was written, people didn't know much about the devil and his activities. All life events, both good and evil, were attributed to God. This also applied, to a reasonable extent, in the dispensation of the Law (Mosaic Covenant). We see this notion played out throughout the book of Job and the other Old Testament scriptures. This is why Job attributed his predicaments to God unbeknownst to him it was the devil who was responsible, though with God's permission.

Is Ecclesiastes 8:10 referring to breaking of God's hedge around a believer by fear? No! Not at all! The first part of that Bible verse says he who digs a pit will fall into it i.e. he who secretly plans evil for another person will be overtaken by evil. The second part says he who breaks through a wall (breaks the hedge) will be bitten by the serpent. This implies that a thief who breaks through the fence of another man's farm will be beaten by a snake i.e. nemesis will catch up with a thief. This has nothing to do with fear as the Faith teachers would have us believe.

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The reality of life is that we all exhibit certain fears in our hearts at different stages of life but these fears seldom come to pass. This would not have been the case if the Word of Faith assertion were true. We also need to know that the devil is not omniscient like God. He can't know what is in our hearts like God does except we say it out or God permits him. However, this is not an encouragement for us to live in morbid anxiety or fear through life as this would be tantamount to unbelief.

“6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Phil 4:6-7; ESV)

If fear is not the reason why Job went through his trial, what is it then? We are thankful the Bible didn't leave us in the dark in this regard. God allowed Job to be tried, according to Job 1:6-12. Why did God do this? To prove to Satan that Job did not serve Him for material gain (economic prosperity).

“7 The LORD said to Satan, “From where have you come?” Satan answered the LORD and said, “From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.” 8 And the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?” 9 Then Satan answered the LORD and said, “Does Job

fear God for no reason? 10 Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. 11 But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face.” 12 And the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand.” So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.” (Job 1:6-12; ESV)

Again, God permitted Satan to touch Job’s health in Job 2:2-7 to prove to him (devil) that Job did not serve Him (God) because of good health. God said categorically in this second encounter that Job did nothing wrong. It was Satan who incited Him (God) to destroy him (Job) without a reason!

“2 And the LORD said to Satan, “From where have you come?” Satan answered the LORD and said, “From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.” 3 And the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil? He still holds fast his integrity, although you incited me against him to destroy him without reason.” 4 Then Satan answered the LORD and said, “Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for his life. 5 But stretch out your hand and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse you to your face.” 6 And the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, he is in your

hand; only spare his life.” 7 So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and struck Job with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.” (Job 2:2-7; ESV)

As far as God is concerned, Job was a blameless man. In fact, God said there was none like him on the face of the earth at that time. Where then did the Word of Faith teachers see the breaking of the hedge by fear as they are wont to teach?

We see how God compensated Job with a double portion of everything he lost at the end because he stayed faithful to Him despite the odds (Job 42:12-17).

What lessons can we learn from the trial of Job?

1. It is meant to be a model for Christians' trial. Christians do go through various trials in life not because they have sinned but because of their faith in Christ.
2. We shouldn't have faith in God because of physical things- wealth and health. We should believe God for His sake as God and the giver of ETERNAL LIFE like Job did.

“25 For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. 26 And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, 27 whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!” (Job 19:25-26; ESV)

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“27 Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.” (John 6:27; ESV)

3. We should learn to endure trials like Job. Our faith should not be circumstantial. It should be constant irrespective of circumstances.
4. We should bear in mind that God would not allow us to be tried beyond our strength. God knew Job could bear the calamities that befell him before He allowed it.
5. Trials, temptations and persecutions are essential parts of the Christian faith. Each has almost the same effect compared to the others on our faith. Let's prepare our minds for them because they would come in various ways to test the genuineness of our faith.
6. If unlike Job we fail during a particular adversity, we should not despair. We should stand up and reaffirm our faith in Christ like Peter did after he denied Jesus.
7. Those who endure the adversities of faith (trials, temptations and persecutions) to the end would be rewarded for their steadfastness just like Job. However, the reward may not necessarily be here on earth like Job's but it is certain we would get it in the hereafter.

Now, the thoughts expressed here should not be taken to mean that every difficulty we face in life is a trial of faith.

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There are times we run into trouble either because of carelessness or due to an attack from the devil. It is important that we seek God's help in prayer, check ourselves to see if we are not in the wrong or utilize our authority in Christ as occasion may demand. We may also need to seek for godly counsel or practical solutions to our problems. If the problem persists after we have done all these, what is left is to rest in God trusting Him to take care of us as He knows best

Chapter 5

The *Rhema-Logos* Dichotomy

There are two main Greek words which are translated WORD in the English Bible as used in relation to God's Word. These are *Rhema* and *Logos*. For some decades, the Word of Faith theology has been teaching emphatically that these two Greek words have two distinct meanings. For the Word of Faith,

- *Rhema* is the spoken word while *Logos* is the written word.
- *Rhema* is the activated word of God in the heart while *Logos* is the word in black and white on paper called the Bible.
- *Rhema* is the specific or personal word while *Logos* is the general word.
- *Rhema* is the word for the now while *Logos* is the eternal word.
- *Rhema* is personal revelation while *Logos* is the general revelation.
- *Rhema* is effectual while *Logos* is passive until it is activated to *Rhema*.

Does this dichotomy truly exist in the Bible?

In Greek, *Rhema* literally means "utterance" "things said" or "saying(s)" while *Logos* means "something said", "word",

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"speech", "thought", "communication", "opinion", "account", "plea", "expectation", "doctrine", "intent", "discourse", "treatise" etc.

While *Rhema* seems to have a more restricted meaning and usage, *Logos* has a broader meaning and usage.

Concerning the biblical usage of these words in reference to the Word of God, reliable theological authorities say the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) called the Septuagint uses the terms *Rhema* and *Logos* as equivalents and employs both for the Hebrew word *Dabar*, God's Word.

In the New Testament, *Rhema* appears in 73 places whereas *Logos* appears in 325 places. The Strong's Concordance reference number for *Rhema* is 4487 while that of *Logos* is 3056.

Despite the restricted meaning and usage of *Rhema* compared to *Logos* in the New Testament, both words are used interchangeably to convey the same concepts in reference to the Word of God. For example, both words are used to connote "utterance" or "spoken word" in the New Testament. The two words were used interchangeably in different accounts of Peter's denial of Christ.

"And Peter remembered the word (*Rhema*) of Jesus who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So he went out and wept bitterly."(Mat 26:75)

"And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word (*Logos*) of the Lord, how He had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times" (Luke 22:61)

In 1Corinthians 12:8 where Paul mentioned the word of knowledge and the word of wisdom, he used *Logos*. Going by the Word of Faith teaching one would have expected him to use *Rhema* because these are utterance gifts but he did not use it. He used *Logos* instead.

"For to one is given the word (*Logos*) of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word (*Logos*) of knowledge through the same Spirit" (1Cor 12:8)

Also, it is natural to expect Paul to have used *Rhema* in 1Thesslonians 4:15 since he was referring to an utterance from the Lord but he didn't use it. He used *Logos* instead.

"For this we say to you by the word (*Logos*) of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep." (1Thess 4:15)

Other examples of places where *Logos* is used instead of *Rhema* for "utterance" include Mat 8:8, Mat 8:16, Mat 12:32, Mat 12:37, Mat 15:23 etc.

Ephesians 6:17 and Hebrews 4:12 both describe God's word as a sword. Whereas Ephesians uses *Rhema* for the word, Hebrews uses *Logos*.

"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word (*Rhema*) of God." (Eph 6:17)

"For the word (*Logos*) of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Heb 4:12)

According to the Word of Faith teaching, this usage of the words would mean God has two types of sword, one which is *Rhema* and the other which is *Logos* but we know this is not true. There is just one sword. The word of God is the same.

We also know that the two words, *Rhema* and *Logos*, are used interchangeably to refer to the Gospel of Christ. We see this in Romans 10:8 where *Rhema* is referred to as "the word of faith" which is essentially the Gospel of Christ.

"But what does it say? "The word (*Rhema*) is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach)." (Rom 10:8)

Also, the two words are used interchangeably in 1Peter 1:23-25 to refer to the Gospel of Christ.

"23 Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word (*Logos*) of God which lives and abides forever, 24 because "All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, 25 But the word (*Rhema*) of the Lord endures

forever.” Now this is the word (*Rhema*) which by the gospel was preached to you.” (1Pet 1:23-25)

Other scriptural references where *Rhema* is used to refer to the Gospel of Christ include Acts 5:20; Acts 10:37, Acts 13:42, Acts, Hebrews 6:5, Jude 1:17 etc.

Examples of scriptures that use *Logos* in reference to the Gospel of Christ, among others, include Acts 13:26; Acts 14:3; Acts 15:7; 1 Cor1:18 , 2 Cor 4:2; 2 Cor 5:19; 6:7; Gal 6:6; Eph1:13; Philip 2:16; Col1:5; 1Thess 1:6; 1Thes 1:8; Heb 5:13.

Apart from the foregoing, *Logos* is used as the Personified Word of God, who is Christ (John 1:1-18). *Rhema* is never used in this respect.

"1 In the beginning was the Word (*Logos*), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made....." (John 1:1-18)

Contrary to the Word of Faith assertion, *Logos* is used remotely in connection to the written Word of God only once in the New Testament in Acts 1:1 to the best of my knowledge.

"The former treatise (*Logos*) have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach." (Acts 1:1).

The reader would agree this is not talking about the whole Bible. It is primarily about the Gospel according to Luke.

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The Greek word that is used in reference to the written Word of God is *Graphe* which is translated as scripture(s). This word has 51 occurrences in the New Testament. It means "a document" or "a writing".

We have made allusion to the fact that E. W. Kenyon was the originator of the Word of Faith theology while Kenneth E. Hagin popularized it. It is unclear why Kenyon created this dichotomy despite there is no such evidence in the Bible. Let the reader note that this is not an attempt to cast aspersion on these men. Rather, it is an attempt to set the record straight. We can't shy from reality. The truth of the Gospel has to be spoken even when it is not convenient. I have benefited from the teachings of these men but the fact remains that they taught certain things which are contrary to the truth of the Gospel.

As a result of this dichotomy, we now have diverse interpretations of the same portions of the Bible by different authorities, especially in the Pentecostal circle, which they call *Rhema* or personal revelations from God. Some also go as far as teaching personal revelations that are not based on any scripture. Many of these so-called personal revelations in reality assault the very foundation upon which the Gospel rests, which is the finished work of Christ.

Apart from this, elaborate ministries have been built on the concept of the spoken word (*Rhema*) in different parts of the world where their major preoccupation is this unbiblical theology.

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It is true that the Holy Spirit does illuminate the written Word of God (the Scripture; *Gk- Graphe*) in the believer's heart but such illuminations don't go contrary to the contextual meaning of the Scripture. It is also true that God by His Spirit does show the believer how to apply the scripture practically. Again, this is also within the contextual boundaries of the Scripture. It is wrong to force extraneous meanings on scriptures in the name of personal revelation or the so-called *Rhema* as we find today. This aberration has become so ubiquitous and should give any serious Bible student considerable concern.

We have seen that *Rhema* has a more restricted meaning and usage compared to *Logos* but in reference to the Word of God both Words are used interchangeably. The dichotomy created by the Word of Faith is artificial and has no scriptural basis. It is erroneous. It is an unnecessary burden to the body of Christ. It's unprofitable to continue in the error.

Chapter 6

Does God truly need Faith like man?

The Word of Faith teachers are in the habit of saying people should have God-kind of faith. This is premised on the Greek rendering of Jesus's statement in Mark 11:22b, "Have faith in God" (*echo pistis theos*). This can be fairly translated to "Have the faith of God" or "Have faith in God" but the Word of Faith teachers translate it to "Have God-kind of faith."

With this phrase, the Word of Faith teachers say God exhibited faith at creation when He spoke the world and its contents and the planetary bodies into existence (Gen 1:1-30). They also say He used this faith to give a child (Isaac) to Abraham in reference to Romans 4:17, **"(As it is written, I have made you a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead, and calls those things which are not as though they were."**

They say God used repetitive faith confessions to "call those things which are not as though they were."

Does God truly need faith like man as these people claim?

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We need to be aware that the Greek language is different from the English language in a variety of ways. In several places in the New Testament, there are no conjunctions like "of" or "in" between "faith" and "God" or "Christ" when these words are used together. It is usually the translators that supply these conjunctions with discretion. This is why many modern English Bible translations now exchange "of" with "in" in such places in contrast to what obtains the old King James Bible.

Here are five examples to buttress our argument.

"For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the FAITH OF GOD (*pistis theos*) without effect?" (Rom 3:3; KJV)

"Even the righteousness of God which is by FAITH IN JESUS (*pistis Iēsous*) Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference." (Rom 3:22; KJV)

"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the FAITH OF CHRIST (*pistis christos*), and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." (Gal 2:16)

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the FAITH OF THE SON (*pistis uihos*) of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal 2:20; KJV)

"And be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the FAITH OF CHRIST (*pistis christos*), the righteousness which is of God by faith." (Phil 3:9; KJV)

So, in line with this thought, it is correct to translate Mark 11:22b to "Have faith in God" like we have it in most English translations of the Bible.

Christ was not telling the disciples to have God-kind of faith like the Word of Faith teachers say, He was simply telling them to have faith in God as we have it. So, it is of no use making a doctrine of a mere grammatical issue.

Roman 4:17 can also not be used to teach that God was making faith confessions to Abraham like the Word of Faith teachers say. If we consider Romans 4:17 in conjunction with verses 18-22 of the same chapter, we would see clearly that God wasn't making any faith confessions here. Rather, this scripture refers to the repetition of God's promises to Abraham as we have it recorded in Genesis to reassure him that He would do as He promised. It was a reassurance thing and not a faith confession issue.

"17 (As it is written, "I have made you a father of many nations") in the presence of Him whom he believed - God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; 18 WHO, CONTRARY TO HOPE, IN HOPE BELIEVED, so that he became the father of many nations, ACCORDING TO WHAT WAS SPOKEN, "So shall your descendants be." 19 And not being weak

in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. 20 He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. 22 And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness." (Rom 4:17-22)

It was not God "who against hope believed in hope". It was Abraham who did that. Would it not have been ridiculous if God, who created the world by mere pronouncements of "let there be", had to make repetitive faith confessions to make Sarah conceive a child?

This type of teaching results from lack of understanding of the nature of God and the use of words. Man is finite but God is infinite. Faith is only needed when a person is limited either by knowledge or ability. For example, a Christian does need no faith to collect money he has in his bank account but he needs faith for provision when he is broke. Unlike man who needs faith for tomorrow because of his limitations, God does not relate with time the way humans do. The past, present and future are the same with Him in terms of His knowledge. He is all-knowing. Not only is God all-knowing, He is also all-powerful. So, God doesn't need any faith. God is infinite. He is sovereign. "In him we live, move and have our being." The Sovereign Lord needs no faith. It is finite beings like man that needs faith.

Again, faith does not exist in isolation. Faith is a relational word. It is the lesser being that exhibits faith in the higher

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being. We know God is the Highest. There is no one above Him. If God needs faith indeed, in whom will He have it?

Chapter 7

Is Faith truly a Force?

In a bid to make faith an independent concept that can be used by man at will without due reference to God, the Word of Faith espousers coined the terminology God-kind of faith. They went further to say FAITH IS A FORCE.

Based on twisted interpretation of some scriptural passages we have dealt with in this book, they teach that as the believer listens to the *Logos* it generates a spiritual force in his heart which he can then speak out as the *Rhema* to accomplish things just like God created the world by His word. In a way, they place themselves at the same level with God. This is why they say God needs faith. In fact, they say it openly they are in the class of God, as if words no longer have meaning. Knowing that those who are in the same class are equals, how can man be in the class of the all-powerful God?

Is faith truly a force as these people claim?

We have already dealt with the *Rhema-Logos* dichotomy in chapter 5 and found it to be nonexistent. We know faith is a noun and not a verb. The verb form of faith is "believe". So,

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it is grammatically wrong to say you are "faithing" something like the Word of Faith people do.

We also know that faith is a relational word. To have faith is to believe someone. To have faith is to trust someone. Therefore, biblical faith is a belief or trust in God. If this is true, then biblical faith implies a vital relationship with God.

To help our understanding, there are basic things we need to know about the Christian faith. First, the Christian faith is a trust in God and not a spiritual force to accomplish man's desires unlike the Word of Faith says. The Christian faith can't be exercised without due regard for the will of God. God is its object.

" But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." (Heb 11:6)

Second, the Christian exercises practical faith to accomplish the will of God on earth. It is not about his will but about the will of his Heavenly Father.

"9 In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. 10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven." (Mat 6:9-10)

In prayer and in issuing commands against perceived oppositions of the enemy, he is totally dependent on God's love for him and the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish the will of God concerning the situation. He has no

confidence in the so-called force that is generated from his heart like the Word of Faith says.

Third, the Christian faith is not all about getting "positive" results like the Word of Faith makes it seem. This is because God's will may actually be the opposite of the Christian's desire. So, the Christian faith firstly seeks to know the will of God concerning every situation and then complies. It does not conform to man's wishes. It complies with the will of God. The Divine will is its ultimate object.

“He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.” (Mat 26:39)

"35 Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. 36 Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— 38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth." (Heb 11:35-38)

Fourth, the Christian faith does not grow by repetitive positive or scriptural confession as the Word of Faith claims. We find no such prescription in the Holy Scripture. Rather, the Christian faith grows by understanding God and His care for the believer. Our faith grows as we gain scriptural

understanding through hearing, study and meditation. This is the faith that comes by hearing. (Rom 10:17, Eph 1:17-23)

" 2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, 3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." (2Pet 1:2-4)

" 14 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." (Eph 3:14-19)

The Christian faith also grows through obedience or practical application of the Word. (Like 17:5-10). No one grows by passive repetitive confession in real life. We grow by practice.

Whereas Christ specifically commanded that we should avoid vain repetition in prayer, this theology says we should

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engage in vain repetitive confession which is largely self-dependent.

“7 And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 “Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.” (Mat 6:7-8)

The Christian needs to be aware that the goal of all the esoteric terminologies and scripture twisting of the Word of Faith is one- to confer deity status on man. Let the reader note that this is pagan. Many of the people preaching these erroneous doctrines don't even know the origin.

Chapter 8

You are gods

The main pillar on which the Word of Faith hangs is the thought that the Christian is a god! Faith teachers teach that since the Christian is a child of God, he is also a god because like begets like. They claim that the man in Christ is in the class of God by virtue of his faith. He has a creative ability like God and can speak things into existence just like God spoke the world into existence in the book of Genesis. All these they premise on John 10:34-35 and other scripture which have been taken out of context.

“34 Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your law, ‘I said, “You are gods””? 35 If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken).” (John 10:34-35)

Is it true that the man in Christ is a god?

We have to start by firstly comparing the characteristics of the true God to those of the man in Christ.

First, there is only one God, according to the Scripture. All other gods are false. So, the man in Christ cannot be a god. Though he has the Spirit of God in him, he is a man.

“Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.’” (Mar 12:29; ESV)

“5 For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth-as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”- 6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist. (1Cor 8:5-6; ESV)

Second, God has no beginning and end. He was not created and He does not die. Though the man in Christ has eternal life by faith, he was created and “recreated” by God and he dies. Therefore, he is not a god, he is a man.

Third, the true God is all-powerful (omnipotent), all-knowing (omniscient) and present everywhere (omnipresent). We know that the Christian does not possess any of these attributes. Hence, he is not a god, he is a man.

Forth, God is perfect. He has no flaws. We know that the Christian man is imperfect. Though he is legally righteous before God, practically he makes mistakes. Thence, he is not a god.

Fifth, God is autonomous. He is self-existing. He acts independently. He does not derive His authority from anyone. The man in Christ is dependent. Though he has a reasonable level of latitude to act, he will give the account of his actions to God one day. His authority is a delegated one. Christ gave it to him. This simply shows that he is not a god.

What message was Jesus getting across to the Jews in John 10:34-35?

The event that led to Jesus's comment in that Bible passage happened after He healed the man who was born blind in John chapter 9. One must at least read from verse 22 to 36 of John 10 to get Jesus' message clearly. For the purpose of this discourse, we would cite verse 30-36 of John 10.

“30 I and My Father are one.”31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. 32 Jesus answered them, “Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?”33 The Jews answered Him, saying, “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.”34 Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your law, ‘I said, “You are gods””? 35 If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), 36 do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’?” (John 10:30-36)

The Jews came to Jesus asking Him to tell them in clear terms if He was the Messiah. Jesus answered that He had told them in the past that He is but they would not believe. He reprimanded them that the works (the miracles) He performed in His Father's name bore witness to His Messiahship but they would not believe. In verse 30, Jesus stated categorically that the Father and Himself are one. This

offended the Jews because they interpreted it to mean that He equated Himself with God. They picked up stones to kill Him for blasphemy. Jesus then quoted Psalm 82:6 to educate them.

“I said, “You are gods, And all of you are children of the Most High.” (Psalm 82:6)

Again, we have to examine the whole of Psalm 86 in order to understand what God said through Asaph the Psalmist here.

“1 God stands in the congregation of the mighty; He judges among the gods. 2 How long will you judge unjustly, And show partiality to the wicked? Selah 3 Defend the poor and fatherless; Do justice to the afflicted and needy. 4 Deliver the poor and needy; Free them from the hand of the wicked. 5 They do not know, nor do they understand; They walk about in darkness; All the foundations of the earth are unstable. 6 I said, “You are gods, And all of you are children of the Most High. 7 But you shall die like men, And fall like one of the princes.” 8 Arise, O God, judge the earth; For You shall inherit all nations.” (Psalm 82:1-8)

The Hebrew word translated “gods” in this Bible passage is “*Elohiym*”. It occurs 2,601 times in the Old Testament part of the KJV Bible. *Elohiym* is a plural word (gods) that is generally used for the supreme God. It is also used for false gods and occasionally used in deference to magistrates (judges). For example, *Elohiym* is translated as “Judges” in Exodus 21:6, Exodus 22:8 and Exodus 22:9.

“If the thief is not found, then the master of the house shall be brought to the JUDGES (*Elohiym*) to see whether he has put his hand into his neighbor’s goods.” (Exo 22:8)

God also used the word metaphorically in reference to Moses in Exodus 7:1 because he stood as a representative of God before Pharaoh.

God’s message in Psalm 82 is very clear. He addressed the corrupt Judges of Israel who perverted justice. They could have done this as a result of bribery and corruption.

We know that justice primarily belongs to God. Judges are God’s delegates in the dispensation of justice to man. Therefore, God referred to them as gods because they perform a function that primarily belongs to Him. This is the sense in which the word “gods” was used in the Mosaic Law and Psalm 82 in deference to men. Apart from these few examples already cited, the word is generally used in reference to deities in the Old Testament. God didn’t refer to them as “gods” who are in the class of the supreme God as the faith teachers teach. God stated this without ambiguity in verse 7 as he reminded them of their humanity and mortality. A simpler translation will help to shed more light on this Bible passage.

"5 They neither know nor understand; they walk about in the dark while all the foundations of the earth are shaken.6 “Indeed I said, ‘You are gods, and all of you are sons of the Most High. 7 However,

as all human beings do, you will die, and like other rulers, you will fall.” (Psalm 8:5-7; ISV)

An objective reader can see from this simpler translation that verse 7 is a simple reminder that these Judges were humans that would die one day.

What is it that these Judges do not know as verse 5 stated? The laws they were meant to dispense. Not only did they not know nor understand, they were also not willing to learn. This is what is meant by walking about in the dark: the judges who were supposed to be the custodians of the law were ignorant. The ignorance of these Judges and their perversion of justice have now disrupted the legal institutions of the nation (foundations of the earth). These statements are figurative expressions that can be easily decoded if we read them in context of the discourse.

“How ignorant you are! How stupid! You are completely corrupt, and justice has disappeared from the world.” (Psalm 82:5; GNB)

Juxtaposing Psalm 82 with John 10:34-36, we see that Jesus was not referring to the man in Christ in this Bible passage as faith teachers often assert. His reference was to the corrupt Judges of ancient Israel to whom “the word of God came” through Asaph the Psalmist. That if God could refer to human Judges as gods, what is the big deal in referring to Himself, whom the Father separated apart and sent to the world as the Messiah, as the Son of God?

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We see clearly here that Christians are not gods who are in the class of the supreme God as the faith teachers assert. They are humans who have the life of God in them.

Some argue that we are gods because the Bible says “He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit (1Cor 6:17).” But the Bible also says the man and his wife shall become one flesh after marriage (Mat 19:5), so also is a man who has sexual relation with a harlot (1Cor 6:16). Does the man and his wife or the harlot possess the same genetic composition after their union? No! Such statements are metaphorical and not literal. They portray the deep level of intimacy generated by these relationships.

Another scripture which the proponents of this false doctrine use to support it is 2Peter 1:3-4.

“3 As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” (2Pet 1:3-4)

What are the exceedingly great and precious promises Peter was talking about? They are the promises of salvation from sin brought about by the atonement of Christ and the promise of the Holy Spirit as documented in the Old Testament scriptures.

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The Greek word translated as partakers in verse 4 of this scripture is *koinonos* which also means *partners, companions or fellowship*. It is the same word translated as fellowship in 1Corinthians 10:20.

**“Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons.”
(1Cor 10:20)**

Therefore, 2Peter 1:3-4 is not saying that we have been absorbed into the godhead and become a god like the faith preachers would have us believe. Rather, it says that through salvation from sin and the gift of the Holy Spirit we have escaped worldly corruption and now share in God’s holiness. In other words, we do not become god by the conversion experience. Rather, we partake of God’s holiness through the regeneration of our spirits and the indwelling Holy Spirit. This is the main import of this scripture. The idea that God is everything and everything is God, called Pantheism, is pagan. We would never lose our individuality. There must always be a clear difference between the creator and the creature.

Words have meanings. The word "god" simply means deity. Even after the resurrection, man would never be all-in-all like the godhead. When we say something is in the class of something, it simply implies they have the same status. Those who say they are in the class of God by virtue of their faith are invariably saying they possess the same status as God by their faith. This, to my mind, amounts to blasphemy.

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It suffices to say that the believer in Christ is a spirit who resides in a body that also houses the Spirit of God, but to designate him as a god gives a sense of deification which God frowns at. Let's be careful how we interpret the Bible lest we fall into error. The deification of man is pride of life. It was the temptation the devil used to get Eve. He played the same trick on Christ in the days of His flesh but failed. He wanted Him to act independently of Father-God. This is an idea that is well-established in occultism and paganism. We have to be humble enough to accept that Christianity did not begin with the Word of Faith Movement. This concept of man-god was foreign to mainstream Christianity until the advent of the Word of faith Movement.

Man is not God and he would never be. Any doctrine that suggests man is God's equal or encourages him to act independently of God is satanic. It was for this same reason Lucifer was cast out of his first estate. It's amazing to me that men could in their wildest imagination think themselves equal to God. Thank God He's not a man. Many of these vain boasters would have been long consumed.

Chapter 9

We are Christ

This doctrine is a variant of “You are gods” which some adherents of the Word of Faith teach. It is also premised on a misinterpretation of scriptures. I am not sure if E. W. Kenyon taught it but Kenneth Hagin did in his book “Zoe: The God-Kind of Life” based on 2Corinthians 6:15.

“And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?” (2Cor 6:15)

A close look at this scripture shows that it isn't saying Christians are Christ. Rather it says there is no accord between Christ (whom Christians belong) and Belial or Satan (whom the unrighteous people belong).

It is important to note that the doctrine of deification of man is not new. It originated from Lucifer who is the father of all lies. It seems to me that many of the espousers of this doctrine don't even know the meaning of the word Christ? How can the saved become the Savior? This makes no scriptural sense.

One of the scriptures those who believe they are Christ often reference is an excerpt from 1John 4:17- **"as he is, so**

are we in this world." The reality, however, is that the scripture in question has been taken out of context to say what the writer never intended in a bid to establish their hifalutin "revelation".

A closer examination of 1John 4 from verses 15 to 18 easily gives the intent of the writer out, that we have been perfected by the love of God through Christ and we need not be afraid of the day of Judgement like those who don't know Christ.

"15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God. 16 And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him. 17 In this is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear: because fear has to do with punishment. He that fears is not made perfect in love." (1John 4:15-18)

Our becoming like Christ in this world implies that we have been made righteous like Christ through faith. That is, we have been perfected through faith in Christ. This provision is made available by the love of God through Christ's death and resurrection. Therefore, we have no need to be afraid or panicky because of the day of judgment. This is the context in which John the beloved wrote. That scripture has nothing to do with the deification of believers like some are now teaching.

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Some of the biblical statements the espousers of the doctrine employ to establish it are metaphoric statements that are being wrongly used in a literal sense. For example, the scripture says **"we are one with the Lord."** They take this literally to mean we have become Christ. Some even say we now have the same DNA with Christ. But the same Bible says **"the one who is joined to a harlot is one with the harlot"**. Does this imply that the one who is joined with the harlot now has the same DNA with the harlot?

These statements simply portray the deep level of intimacy involved in the relationships. They are not in any way saying the two parties involved have become literally one. One wonders where they got the concept.

Those who claim they have now become Christ by reason of their faith are quick to quote Obadiah 1:21 to support their claim

"And saviors shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mountains of Esau, and the kingdom shall be the LORD'S." (Obadiah 1:21)

A closer look at the book of Obadiah, however, shows this is another clear case of scriptural misinterpretation engendered by a violation of the historical-grammatical principle of biblical interpretation.

Historically, the book of Obadiah is a prophecy about the impending judgment of God on the Edomites (children of Esau) because of their cruelty towards the children of Israel. Verses 1 and 10 of the one-chaptered book clearly shows this. It is not a prophecy about the Church.

"The vision of Obadiah. Thus says the Lord GOD concerning Edom; We have heard a message from the LORD, and an ambassador is sent among the nations, Arise you, and let us rise up against her in battle." (Obadiah 1:1)

"For your violence against your brother Jacob shame shall cover you, and you shall be cut off forever." (Obadiah 1:10)

Grammatically, the word SAVIOR in verse 21 of Obadiah in the KJV Bible was translated from the Hebrew word *yâsha* which means "to be saved", "to be delivered" or "to be liberated". In essence, it is better to translate *yâsha* to SURVIVORS rather than SAVIORS in this Bible verse. So, we see this is a mistranslation in the KJV and some older English versions of the Bible. Several newer translations of the Bible have now corrected this error as we can see in the four examples cited below.

"The victorious men of Jerusalem will attack Edom and rule over it. And the LORD himself will be King." (Obadiah 1:21 GNB)

"Those who have been delivered will go up on Mount Zion in order to rule over Esau's mountain. Then the LORD will reign as King!" (Obadiah 1:21; NET)

"And those who have been kept safe will come up from Mount Zion to be judges of the mountain of Esau, and the kingdom will be the Lord's." (Obadiah 1:21; BBE)

"Those who have been saved will go up on Mount Zion to judge the mountains of Esau, and the kingdom will be the LORD's." (Obadiah 1:21; NHEB)

What exactly is Obadiah 1:21 saying? This scripture is essentially a prophecy about the future survivors of the Jewish Babylonian exile who would return to build Jerusalem and rule over the children of Esau.

Historically, this prophecy was partly fulfilled in the post-exilic returnees like Zerubbabel, Ezra, Nehemiah and all the other unnamed people who rebuilt Jerusalem and Judah. It was fulfilled in full in the Maccabees, the Hasmonean family of priests, who joined the priesthood to the State and literally ruled over Edom (the children of Esau).

The Hasmonean priests led a revolt of the Jews against their Greek colonial masters (the Seleucids) and ruled Judea semi-autonomously between 140 to 116 BCE. From 110 BCE, the Hasmoneans ruled Judea (Judah) and the neighboring regions of Samaria, Galilee, Iturea, Perea, and Idumea (Edom, the children of Esau) independently until 63 BCE when the Romans, led by General Pompe, invaded Judea and ended their independent reign over Israel and the surrounding nations. So, we see that this prophecy has been literally fulfilled.

Like I mentioned earlier, this pernicious doctrine is premised upon a crop of poorly interpreted scriptural passages. It cannot stand the scrutiny of sound biblical exegesis. Take each of the scriptures the doctrine is premised upon one by one and subject them to thorough biblical

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exegesis, the doctrine won't have any scriptural foundation to stand upon

.

Chapter 10

Jesus died spiritually

We are not too sure why the Word of Faith teachers say that Jesus died spiritually. E. W. Kenyon, Kenneth E. Hagin and Charles Capps taught this concept [3]. Many preachers today also teach it. Some of the prominent ones include Kenneth Copeland, Frederick K. C. Price and Joyce Meyer [3].

There are several versions of this teaching but it can be summarized thus:

1. Jesus was separated from God on the cross
2. Jesus did not finish the atonement on the cross
3. Jesus went to hell and suffered there to finish the atonement
4. Jesus was born again like us

Are these positions truly biblical?

Faith teachers say Jesus was separated from Father-God on the cross because of the statement He made in Mathew 27:46.

“And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” that

**is, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”
(Mat 27:46)**

Does this truly imply that Jesus was separated from the Father?

The truth is, Jesus could not be separated from the Father because He is of the same essence as the Father. Separating Him from the Father would mean that He ceased to be God at that moment. This couldn't have happened because God would be God forever.

Jesus quoted the exact words of David in the Psalm to show the Jews that the prophecy was about Him. It is evident that David wrote Psalm 22 at a time when he was in trouble. Though he felt God forsook him at that time, we know God could not have forsaken him because God does not forsake the righteous. So, in the same vein God could not have forsaken Jesus in the real sense of the word. The utterance was a demonstration of Jesus' humanity. It was an expression that summed up His experience and feeling at that time as a man and not as God. Truly, God had to allow Him to be delivered into the hands of His enemies to suffer for the sins of mankind. He had to bear the full weight of God's wrath against sin on the cross because He bore the sins of the whole world in his body. This is the import of the forsaking in that scripture. It is not that Christ was separated from the divine essence in the godhead. This can't happen.

How do we know what we are saying is correct? Jesus Himself spoke about the time of his suffering that all His

disciples would be scattered and desert Him but His Father would not leave Him alone.

“Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.” (John 16:32)

Moreover, Jesus committed His spirit into the Father’s hand before He gave up the ghost. He could not Have been able to do this if He was truly separated from the Father.

“And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.’ ” Having said this, He breathed His last.” (Luke 23:46)

So, we see that it is not correct to say Jesus died spiritually because He was separated from the Father on the cross.

Is it true that Jesus did not finish the atonement for sin on the cross? From all scriptural indications, the answer is a capital NO! Jesus himself said **“it is finished”** on the cross (John 19:30). The phrase “it is finished” was translated from a single Greek word *teleo* which could also means fulfilled, accomplished or concluded among other meanings. So, in Jesus’ word, all the Old Testament prophecies concerning the redemption of mankind were brought to a close on the cross.

Hebrews 10:5-10 says we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Christ ONCE AND FOR ALL.

“25 Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me. 6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. 7 Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come— In the volume of the book it is written of Me— To do Your will, O God.’ ” 8 Previously saying, “Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them” (which are offered according to the law), 9 then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.” He takes away the first that He may establish the second. 10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” (Heb 10:5-10)

Again, Colossians 2:14-15 says the handwriting of the ordinances that was against us was nailed to the cross and the principalities and powers were disarmed and made a public spectacle by the cross of Christ.

“14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.” (Col 2:14-15)

So, we see clearly from these scriptures that the price for the redemption of mankind was fully paid and sealed on the cross.

Did Christ truly go to hell after his death on the cross to suffer? The scriptures that speak about Christ between the time he died on the cross and his resurrection would give us insight to what happened then.

1. **"And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43)**
2. **"For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption." (Acts 2:27)**
3. **"He, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption." (Acts 2:31)**
4. **"8 Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men." 9 (Now this, "He ascended"—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)" (Eph 4:8-10)**
5. **"By whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, 20 who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water." (1Pet 3:19-20)**

What deductions can we make from these scriptures?

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1. That Christ went to hades, the place of the dead, as prophesied by the scriptures so that he may fill all things. We are told Hades contains compartments for both the righteous and the wicked.
2. That he preached the Good news of his accomplishment on the cross to spirits in prison.
3. That he led captivity captive. We are not given a detailed explanation whom these captives were but this could be in reference to the principalities and powers in Colossians 2:15.
4. That God did not allow his body to decay in the grave. He resurrected on the third day.
5. Most importantly, that Christ went to Hades as a victor and not as a victim as the Faith teachers would want us to believe.

Nothing in all these scriptures suggests that he went to hell to be tormented by demons and the fire of hell for the sake of humanity as taught by the faith teachers. Really, he had no reason to do this because the price of redemption was fully paid and sealed on the cross.

Faith teachers also claim that Christ had to be born again just like us because he bore our sins on his body. This seems to be the most ridiculous of all the false claims. From all scriptural indications, Jesus never committed sin. He is the only sinless person that ever lived. That he bore the sins of the whole world on his body does not mean that his nature

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has been corrupted by sin like other humans. So, there is no reason for him to be regenerated or born again like us. What was needed was for his dead body to resurrect from the grave which the scriptures say happened.

It seems to me that many of the people who propagate these doctrines don't know the implication of what they preach. They are invariably saying the cross of Christ is not sufficient for the atonement of sin. This, to my mind, contradicts all scriptural evidence.

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” (1Cor 1:18)

“But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” (Gal 6:14)

Chapter 11

New Thought and Word of Faith

Since it is believed E. W. Kenyon, the architect of the Word of Faith theology, contracted the elements of the New Thought during his study at the Emerson School of Oratory which he later incorporated into his theology, I believe it is expedient at this juncture to examine this philosophy (New Thought) so as to draw a parallel between the two ideologies.

The New Thought Movement (Higher Thought) is a metaphysical philosophical movement that started in the USA in the 19th century [1] It is generally believed that the basic tenets of the movement are derived from the unpublished writings of Phineas Quimby.

Quimby was an American mesmerist and metaphysical healer who believed and taught that illnesses originate in the mind as a result of erroneous beliefs and opening the mind to infinite intelligence (God) wisdom is the cure for any illness [1, 4, 5].

Quimby was diagnosed with tuberculosis early in his life at a time when there was no medical cure for the disease. He began to ride carriage through his hometown, Lebanon, New Hampshire. Fortunately, he recovered from the disease in

the process. This event prompted him to study "mind over body" and develop his metaphysical healing philosophy [1].

In his words, "The trouble is in the mind, for the body is only the house for the mind to dwell in and we put a value on it according to its worth. Therefore, if your mind had been deceived by some invisible enemy into a belief, you have put it into the form of a disease, with or without your knowledge. By my theory or truth, I come in contact with your enemy, and restore you to health and happiness. This I do partly mentally, and partly by talking till I correct the wrong impression and establish the Truth, and the Truth is the cure" [6].

Put in other words, Quimby taught that illnesses result from wrong or negative thinking and they are cured by right or positive thinking. This is why the philosophy is also called "Mind Cure".

Beyond cure for illnesses, which was the primary design of Quimby's philosophy, the New Thought Movement applies the belief system to the general wellbeing of man. It is seen as the solution to disease, poverty and human relationship problems. Adherents of the belief system now hold that through the proper use of their minds, people can attain liberty, prosperity, health, power and enjoy the good things of life in general. In essence, people can control their health and circumstances through the constructive use of their minds. This concept has been systematized to what is called the Law of Attraction.

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The Law of Attraction teaches that people can attract positive or negative experiences into their lives by focusing their minds on positive or negative thoughts. Essentially, the law teaches that people and their thoughts are both made from pure energy and since “like energy attracts like energy” an individual can improve his health, wealth, and personal relationships by allowing positive thoughts to dominate his mind.

Proponents of this metaphysical ideology combine cognitive reframing techniques with affirmations (positive confession) and creative visualization to exchange negative or limiting thoughts with positive or empowered thoughts. The philosophy holds that for a person to effectively change his negative thinking pattern, he has to emotionally experience the desired change through creative visualization before experiencing it in reality. It is believed that this combination of positive thought and positive emotion allow the person to attract positive experiences and opportunities since they make him attuned with the law.

According to the Law of Attraction, an affirmation is a carefully arranged statement which is repeated to one's self and written down frequently. To be effective, affirmation needs to be positive, in present tense, personal and specific.

The New Thought Movement is not monolithic. Adherents of the philosophy belong to smaller groups with varying characteristics which are incorporated into the umbrella body, the International New Thought Alliance [4,7]. Various religious organizations such as the Unity Church, Church of

Divine Science, Religious Science, Christian Science, Jewish Science, Centers for Spiritual Living, Japanese Seicho-no-Ie etc. also share the key components of the philosophy.

The New Thought is largely propagated through the print. Many of the popular success and self-help books either directly espouse the philosophy or borrowed some of its ideas. The term "Law of Attraction" appeared in print for the first time in 1877 in a book (*Isis Unveiled*) written by the Russian occultist, Helena Blavatsky. However, Prentice Mulford was the first to articulate the Law as a general principle. Mulford discussed the Law of Attraction extensively in his essay "The Law of Success" which was published from 1886-1887. Other New Thought writers like Henry Wood (author of *God's Image in Man*, 1892) and Ralph Waldo Trine (author of *What All the World's A-Seeking*, 1896) also espoused the philosophy.

Interest in the Law of Attraction increased substantially in the 20th century engendering the writing of many books about it. *Think and Grow Rich* (1937) by Napoleon Hill and *You Can Heal Your Life* (1984) by Louise Hay are two of the best-selling books of all time that espouse the philosophy. The popular American success writer Orison Swett Marden (1848–1924) incorporated the elements of the philosophy into his writings in addition to his common-sense approach to success. A popular American Pastor and success teacher, Norman Vincent Peale, also espoused the tenets of New Thought through his book "The Power of Positive Thinking," albeit in a subtle way. Though Peale was a supposed minister

of the Gospel, he was also a member of the Free Mason lodge. According to some sources, Pale “was a member of the Woodbridge Lodge in Brooklyn, grand chaplain of the grand lodge in NY, life member of the crescent shrine temple in Trenton N.J. and past imperial grand chaplain of the shrine” [8, 9], He believed Jesus is just one of the ways and not the only way to God. Robert Schuller the originator of the Possibility Thinking theology acknowledged Peale as the greatest influence on his thinking and theology [10].

Again, the Law of Attraction received a lot of attention in 2006 with the release of the film “The Secret”. The film was developed into a book of the same title by Rhonda Byrne later in the year. It is said that the book has sold at least 30 million copies worldwide and has been translated into 50 languages [11]. By 2009 the film and the book had grossed \$300 million [12]! Byrne has written two other books following The Secret, Power (2010) and The Magic (2012), based on the same philosophy.

In regard to its origin, the New Thought is an assorted utopian ideology derived from various sources such as the New England transcendentalism, Hermeticism, Berkeleyan idealism (the doctrine that material things do not exist), spiritism, evolutionary science, a twisted interpretation of portions from the four Gospels, Hinduism and personal inspiration of the leaders [13, 14]. It also has some elements of psychology.

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Though the New Thought movement is not monolithic, adherents have some core beliefs that can be summed up as follows [7, 15]:

1. Infinite Intelligence or God is omnipotent and omnipresent.
2. Spirit is the ultimate reality.
3. True human self-hood is divine.
4. The highest spiritual principle is unconditional love
5. A divinely attuned thought is a positive force for good.
6. All disease is mental in origin.
7. Right thinking has a healing effect.

Other important features of the New Thought include emphases on the subconscious mind as the controller of human experience and faith in self as expressed in the popular phrase “believe in yourself” rather than faith in God.

Although the adherents of the New Thought may deny the philosophy is a religion, a discerning mind can easily appreciate that it is indeed a religion that enthrones the individual self as its god.

The New Thought has been criticized and labeled as pseudoscience because it runs tangentially to reality. For example, the philosophy claims that illnesses originate from the mind but we know that illnesses have diverse causes such as infection with microorganisms, cell mutations leading to cancers, unhealthy lifestyle, use of social drugs like cigarette and alcohol, genetics and environmental factors. Though mind disposition (positive or negative) can influence illness

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perception and the rate of recovery to some extent, it is not the cure for most illnesses.

I believe the reader can now see clearly the similarities between the New Thought and the Word of Faith, in particular, the belief that man is a god.

We can see why the Word of Faith emphasizes love as a means of staying attuned to God to get material blessings from Him. Though the Christian faith emphasizes love, it is different from a love that is used for material gain.

We also see why some prosperity gospel preachers teach creative visualization in addition to positive confession like the New Thought.

When someone asks you to go and write down “I am healed” in one thousand places to receive your healing he is asking you to practice the Law of Attraction.

In a nutshell, the Word of Faith theology is a Christianization of the tenets of New Thought. The ideas were simply forced on the Gospel message through out-of-context interpretation of the scriptures.

Herein is wisdom for every sincere child of God that is reading this article. We have allowed different types of unbiblical and pagan ideologies to invade the Gospel message because of our complacency and timidity in the past several decades. It is about time we stood up in the defense of the glorious Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ which is the only hope for the dying world. How are we going

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to defend our stewardship before the Master on that day if we allow this invasion to continue unabated?

These are indeed perilous times. Christian beware!

Chapter 12

The Law of Attraction and The Gospel

In the course of writing the materials that eventually became this book, someone asked this question, “Is the law of attraction poisonous ultimately the soul of man, or it is just that it is different from the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and thus the distinction should be clear to the believer?”

I believe my response would benefit the reader.

Your candid observation is correct. A substantial part of what we call faith in Pentecostalism today, not only in Nigeria, is the Law of Attraction.

You have asked two questions. I will start with the second question.

Is the Law of Attraction different from the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ?

The answer to this question is Yes. The Law of Attraction is a metaphysical ideology that has its origin in different pagan religions and occultism. It is centered around self. Self is its god. Its primarily about releasing the "energy" of the human mind (the subconscious mind) to accomplish things

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for man. Whereas the Gospel is about what Jesus accomplished for man through His death and resurrection.

The first question is more difficult to answer but the Bible would guide us.

Is the Law of Attraction ultimately poisonous to the human soul?

What we currently have as the Gospel in the Pentecostal circle is a mixture of the Gospel of Christ, the Law of Attraction and Judaism. In essence, it is syncretism and not the Gospel. In that case, we can say the mixture is a poison to the human soul because the Bible explicitly warns against mixing the Gospel with any other form of religion or human philosophy. The Gospel of Christ alone is sufficient for the salvation of man. No addition is needed.

"7 Rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. 8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. 9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." (Col 2:7-9)

"9 But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? 10 You observe days and months and seasons and years. 11 I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain." (Gal 4:9-11)

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In order to underscore the seriousness of this matter, the Apostle Paul calls the mixture of the Gospel with another religion or human philosophy "ANOTHER GOSPEL" and places a curse on whosoever propagates such, including man and angel.

" 6 I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, 7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed." (Gal 1:6-9)

Why did Paul do this? It is because whoever adds to the Gospel is directly or indirectly saying what Jesus accomplished for man through his death and resurrection is not enough. Something else must be added to it like the Judaizers and heretics of old claimed.

Some people may have done this in the past out of ignorance. The truth, however, is that God is not pleased with the development. God is a jealous God. He won't tolerate forever whatever diminishes the accomplishment of His Son Jesus. This, to my mind, is why all these errors are now being exposed by the least of the brethren.

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The Gospel of Christ is simple and we must do all we can to maintain its purity and simplicity. Many a time, the love for the spectacular and special revelations is what leads people to add these occultic and pagan philosophies to the Gospel.

" 2 For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. 3 But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. 4 For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!" (2Cor 11:2-4)

" Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent." (Acts 17:30)

Let those who have ears listen to what the Spirit is saying.

Chapter 13

Manifest Sons of God

Manifest Sons of God is primarily a teaching of the post-World War II Latter Rain Movement but it seems it has been incorporated into the Word of Faith theology in varying degrees depending on the teacher.

The Latter Rain Movement was started in October 1947 by a group of 70 students of the Sharon Bible College, North Battleford, Saskatchewan, Canada, who sought for a deeper Christian experience because they believed the Pentecostal movement was sliding into dry intellectual formalism like other evangelical movements before it [[16](#), [17](#)].

The teaching is based on an erroneous interpretation of Romans 8:19-22. Proponents of the doctrine teach that as the end of this present age approaches “Overcomers” known as “Joel’s Army”, based on Joel 2:1-11, or the “Triumphant Church” would arise. Based on a twisted interpretation of Ephesians 4:13, these overcomers would attain to the full stature of Christ and have the Spirit without measure like Christ. They would be endowed with supernatural power to wage spiritual warfare and gifts such as divine healing and working of miracles. Such individuals would then help to

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restore man to his original position in Genesis before the fall and usher in the millennial reign of Christ. These manifest sons would also be responsible for defeating the army of the enemy at the battle of Armageddon. An extreme version of the doctrine says these manifest sons would attain to immortality even before Christ's second coming!

Manifest Sons and the Word of Faith have a common ground in the man's deification doctrine, "You are gods", we previously considered. This may be why it is being incorporated into the Word of Faith theology.

In recent times, Manifest Sons seems to have merged with Dominionism, a movement that began in the 1970s, teaching that Christians should take dominion over all the earth, including civil government and law. Dominionism is also being used to push the prosperity gospel with emphasis on the need to have abundance of financial wealth in order to exercise dominion.

Are these assertions scripturally proven?

First, Romans 8:19-22 isn't talking about earthly dominion in this current age. Rather, it is about the consummation of our redemption which would happen at the second appearing of Christ. Romans 8:23 says the manifestation that all the creation and the believers earnestly await is the redemption of our bodies (the resurrection of the saints). It is not a superhuman manifestation of Christians as it's being erroneously taught. Reading Romans 8 from verse 19 to 25 easily gives this out.

"19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing (manifestation) of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; 21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. 23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. 24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance." (Rom 8: 19-25)

Other scriptural references that support this interpretation include 2 Cor 5:1-5, Phil 3:20-21 and 1 Cor 15:51-54

"1 For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, 3 if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. 4 For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. 5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is

God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.” (2Cor 5:1-5)

Second, a closer look at Joel 2:1-11 in context of the other verses in the chapter shows that the army in that prophecy is not the Church.

“1 Blow a trumpet in Zion; sound an alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming; it is near, 2 a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness there is spread upon the mountains a great and powerful people; their like has never been before, nor will be again after them through the years of all generations.” (Joel 2:1-2; ESV)

Prophetically, the phrase “the day of the Lord” is commonly used for a day or a period when a major divine judgmental event would happen such as a devastating war of retribution, the rapture and the final judgment day. So, this scripture is basically warning the Israelites about the impending invasion of their country by a terrible foreign army because of their disobedience to God.

In Joel 12-17, God appealed to Israel to return to Him in repentance with a promise of restoration in verses 18-27.

“12 Yet even now,” declares the LORD, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;13 and rend your hearts and not your garments.” Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and

abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster.” (Joe 2:12-13; ESV)

“I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter, MY GREAT ARMY, which I sent among you.” (Joe 2:25; ESV)

So, we see that Joel’s army is not the Church. Rather, it is an army of the enemy that was to invade Israel by God’s permission because of the nation’s disobedience. Specifically, it was a prophecy of the invasion of Judah by the Babylonian army of Nebuchadnezzar.

Third, it is unscriptural to say God would give His Spirit without measure to humans like Jesus since God didn’t make such promise in the scriptures. “We have all received one gracious gift after another from his abundance (John 1:16; ISV).”

“11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” (Eph 4:11-13)

Since Ephesians 4:11-13 says the five-fold ministry of the Word will continue to exist till we have come to the measure of the fullness of the status of Christ, it follows that these ministry gifts will continue to exist until the second advent of

Christ since no one can attain perfection in the real sense of the word until that time. The Manifest Sons just took this scripture out of context to say what was not intended by the writer.

“9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.” (1Cor 13:9-10)

Forth, Jesus categorically stated that He did not come to build a physical empire on earth in His first advent. He flatly declined on the occasions they wanted to crown Him king. He stated that His kingdom is invisible, it is not of this world in the current age. The apostles of Christ and the early church also followed Christ's example. They did not dominate any earthly kingdom. In fact, they were subject to the earthly rulers. Their primary focus was to convert the souls of the people in the known world of their time to Christ. Many of them were molested and eventually killed by the earthly rulers.

It is alright to encourage Christians to be good citizens of their countries and participate in the political processes because the Bible says we are the light of the world. However, to teach that the Church should shift her focus from soul winning and exerting positive influence by godly character to the domination of the earth and its kingdoms is totally out of sync with the intent of the Gospel of Christ. We would be wise to steer clear of this misadventure bearing in mind the outcome of the previous one that happened in the Middle Ages.

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Just like "You are gods", Manifest Sons and Dominionism appeal strongly to the human ego but they have no scriptural backing. We are not called to exalt ourselves or dominate people like the rulers and princes of this world. Rather, we are called to minister (serve) the grace of God in humility to the dying world freely as we have received.

Chapter 14

A Balanced Approach

Nothing that has been said so far should be taken to mean that a Christian should be careless with his words. We have made it abundantly clear that this is not to be. Since the Bible gives us a template on what to think, it is a given that our words also ought to follow our thought pattern since we speak out of the abundance of our hearts.

“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is fair, whatever is pure, whatever is acceptable, whatever is commendable, if there is anything of excellence and if there is anything praiseworthy—keep thinking about these things.” (Phil 4:8; ISV)

More so, there are numerous scriptural instructions on the appropriate use of words, some of which we have earlier cited. Our point of emphasis is that there is no scriptural backing for the repetitive positive confession the Word of Faith espouses.

A Christian ought not to be given to negativity or pessimism whether in thought or by word as this would amount to unbelief. However, being positive or upbeat about

life does not amount to a denial of reality as the Word of Faith implicitly teaches. An honest evaluation of life issues is necessary for the exercise of true faith. Faith is not a denial of fact. Rather, it is a belief in the ability of God to overrule facts just like Abraham believed God despite acknowledging the two odds against the promised seed- his old age and Sarah's barrenness.

“18 In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, “So shall your offspring be.” 19 HE DID NOT WEAKEN IN FAITH WHEN HE CONSIDERED HIS OWN BODY, WHICH WAS AS GOOD AS DEAD (SINCE HE WAS ABOUT A HUNDRED YEARS OLD), OR WHEN HE CONSIDERED THE BARRENNESS OF SARAH'S WOMB. 20 No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, 21 fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.” (Rom 4:18-21; ESV)

For example, adherents of the Word of Faith are in the habit of saying they are rich when in reality they are in lack. This kind of practice precludes an honest evaluation of the cause(s) of financial lack, hinders the initiation of the practical steps necessary to improve people's financial situation in general and prevent help-seeking from the brethren who could easily render assistance to take care of legitimate pressing needs. The same is true in cases of ill-health where adherents of the Word of Faith are in the habit of saying they are strong when in reality they are sick. It goes

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without saying that many who ought not to die have died prematurely because of this practice as quick medical interventions that could have saved their lives were hindered due to the time wasted in the exercise of positive confession.

Contrary to the “say no negative” dictum of the Word of Faith, we see examples of the so-called negative statements made by men of faith in the Bible to give an honest evaluation of their situations. Examples include Abraham’s confession of his childlessness before God (Gen 15:2), Paul’s confession of his despair to the Corinthians (2Cor 1:8-9), Paul’s mention of Timothy’s stomach problem (1Tim 5:23) etc.

**“8 For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. 9 Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead.”
(2Cor 1:8-9)**

It does no harm to confess the Word of God but this should be primarily about agreeing with God. It shouldn’t be to use His word to achieve a selfish aim or a purpose that runs contrary to His will. For example, the Bible says that the believer in Christ is a new creation. It may not be wrong for a Christian to confess that he is a new creation as some do, although it remains to be proven whether such confessions truly make any difference in regard to people’s walk with God.

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Whereas Jesus expressly instructed us to ask for whatever we need in prayer, the Word of Faith says to obtain our needs through repetitive confessions. This is a major pitfall of the theology because it relegates prayer to the background.

“7 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!” (Mat 7:7-11)

Primarily, our authority in Christ is exercised by issuing of commands against the enemy and his work as we earlier stated. It is not by repetitive positive confession. This is another pitfall of the Word of Faith. It is important we bear in mind that the authority we have in Christ is a delegated one. None of us have inherent authority like God. Though we have been given a reasonable latitude to use this authority to effect appreciable change as occasion may demand, it must be borne in mind that this is dependent on the leading of the Spirit of God. This is why Paul suffered a thorn in his flesh despite that he petitioned God twice to remove it. He couldn't command it to go away like he cast a demon out of the soothsaying maid. It is the same reason he couldn't heal his close companions Timothy, Epaphroditus, and

Trophimus of their sicknesses despite the enormous spiritual authority he wielded.

“7 And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. 8 Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.” (2Cor 12:7-8)

“25 Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need; 26 since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. 27 For indeed he was sick almost unto death; but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.” (Philp 2:25-27)

“20 Erastus stayed in Corinth, but Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick.” (2Ti 4:20)

Again, we have to be aware that God does not answer prayer arbitrarily. Our prayers have to be in conformity with the will of God as written in the Scripture before we can receive answers to them. For example, those who are in the habit of praying that their human enemies should die are merely wasting their time since God expressly says in His word that we should love our enemies and leave vengeance to Him. Such prayers won't receive any answer.

“14 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.” (1John 5:14-15)

Our motives play an important role in obtaining answers to prayer. Prayers that are offered for selfish reasons won't get answers from God.

“And when you ask, you do not receive it, because your motives are bad; you ask for things to use for your own pleasures.” (James 4:3; GNB)

The sovereignty of God also has its place in obtaining answers to prayer. Even when we have the right motives and enough faith, and have prayed in line with the Scripture, God in His wisdom (sovereignty) may decide not to grant our petition. Does this imply that God is unfaithful? No! This is just to tell us that we do not exist by ourselves. God sees what we do not see. He knows what is best for us.

We need to bear in mind that many things in life don't happen without action. No matter how long one confesses, most things won't happen until definite actions are taken.

“17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. 18 But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works” (James 2:17-18)

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This is another major pitfall of the Word of Faith. Some of the adherents have been confessing riches for as long as they can but they are not wealthy. Whereas, those who know next to nothing about the theology but are diligent at what they do through innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship have become stupendously wealthy. If indeed they could create things with their words exactly like God as the Word of Faith teachers claim, there wouldn't have been any need for the adherents to work again. They would just sit in the comfort of their homes and create things as they will but we all know this is not the reality.

Epilogue

The closer an error is to the truth the more power it has to deceive. The overtly heretic is not the problem, the real problem is the one who conceals falsehood in a shell of truth.

In this volume, we have seen how an assortment of pagan ideologies have been covered with a Christian garment. Although no one, except God, truly knows E. W. Kenyon's motive in propounding the Word of Faith doctrines, a combination of inadequate scriptural knowledge and unbridled desire for highfalutin revelations may have been responsible. Irrespective of the motive, it is certain that the theology is a bundle cleverly concealed satanic lies that seek to put man in a position that belongs to God.

For close to five decades, faith has been reduced to a magic wand that is meant to be used to get physical or material things from God. Those who find themselves in negative circumstances of life like poverty or illness are said to lack faith. However, we know from the Scripture that positive or negative circumstance of life is not a measure of true faith. The Christian faith is an unshakable trust in God irrespective of the circumstance of life, whether positive or negative.

“11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” (Phil 4:11-13)

The multiplicity of strange doctrines plaguing the body of Christ today necessitates that we get acquainted with God through His Word. We have to as a matter of urgency eliminate the cliché "My personal conviction" from our vocabulary concerning biblical interpretation because the Bible cannot be accurately interpreted subjectively. It has to be interpreted by objective analysis of its content and context under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Once subjectivity is introduced to biblical interpretation, errors like we discussed in this book are inevitable.

The general disdain for rigorous biblical scholarship has been the Achilles tendon of Pentecostalism. Pentecostals often violate the basic principles of biblical interpretation. One of such is the historical-grammatical principle of biblical interpretation. This implies that Pentecostals are in the habit of separating the meanings they read to scriptural passages from their historical and grammatical backgrounds. It goes without saying that many of the Pentecostal giants have done great violence to the Gospel message because of this pitfall.

Those who have been called to teach the Word need to take time to study the principles of biblical interpretation (biblical hermeneutics) so as to prevent falling into

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unnecessary errors. The onus is also on everyone to pay attention to what they believe.

May the Lord keep us till the end. Amen.

I remain His humble servant.

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Other Books by the Author

1. Tithe and Giving in the Christian Church- Setting the Record Straight: A biblical Exposition on the Doctrine of Tithe and Christian Giving
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