The SPIRIT SAVES

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5).

by Lehman Strauss

The purpose of the Spirit's striving is to save. Paul wrote in his Epistle to Titus, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5). Observe the words, "He saved us, by the . . . renewing of the Holy Ghost." Salvation is God's desire for all men. He "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:4), and it is by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit that His saving work is accomplished. Now we know that all men will not be saved, but those who become saved do so by experiencing this saving work of the Spirit.

The plan of salvation could not be accomplished without the atoning work of Christ on the Cross and His bodily resurrection from death and the grave. But the mere fact that Jesus died and rose is not sufficient to save any one. The work of redemption must be applied to each individual sinner. This is the Spirit's ministry. He commences this work by bringing conviction. And when the heart responds in faith to the Word of God, the Holy Spirit at once regenerates. The work of both the Son and the Spirit in salvation is prophesied in the Old Testament. The Son's work is predicted in such passages as Isaiah 53. The Spirit's ministry appears in passages like Joel 2:28-32 cf. Acts 2:17-21.

Salvation is the result of the supernatural act of the Holy Spirit. It is a radical change which takes place instantly, not gradually. The sinner first hears the Word of God, which is in reality the Word of the Holy Spirit, the Third Person in the Godhead. It is the Word that quickens faith, for "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Even this quickening of faith is attributed to the Spirit. Faith is a gift of the Spirit (I Cor. 12:4, 9). Men like Stephen and Barnabas, who were full of the Holy Ghost, were likewise full of faith (Acts 6:5; 11:24). Paul reminded the Galatians that they received the Holy Spirit through faith that was quickened by the Spirit Himself (Gal. 3:2, 3). And we all need to be reminded that faith "is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). When a believing sinner acknowledges for the first time the Lordship of Christ, that confession is born of the Holy Spirit, for Paul wrote, "Wherefore I give you to understand . . . that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (I Cor. 12:3).

The Spirit's work in salvation produces a "new man" (Eph. 2:15), a "new creation" (II Cor. 5:17 R.V.), because of the impartation of the new nature which is the "Divine nature" (II Peter 1:4). Salvation is not an attempt to improve the old nature. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water [the word, cf. Ephesians 5:26; I Peter 1:23] and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. . . . Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John 3:5, 7). This new birth, called regeneration or salvation, is the specialized ministry of the Holy Spirit. No man can cause himself to experience the New Birth, nor can one person transmit this experience to another. The Bible
says, "But as many as received Him [Christ], to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: Which were born not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12, 13). The concept of the New Birth of Christians is common to the Gospel of Christ, but that Birth does not come from human stock, that is, it cannot be passed on from parent to child. Every true Christian knows that he does not owe his salvation to natural descent, from physical or biological causes, but to the saving work of the Holy Spirit. The grace of God does not flow in human veins. Regeneration is accomplished by the Holy Spirit applying the living and powerful Word to the believing heart.

The Bible speaks of regeneration as a translation out of death into life. Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24). The unsaved man is described as being "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). Can a dead person give life to himself? Hardly! This is where the Holy Spirit enters the scene. He is "the Spirit of life" (Rom. 8:2). More than this, "The Spirit is life" (Rom. 8:10). Thus He only can impart life, for "the Spirit giveth life" (II Cor. 3:6). This life is Divine life; it is His own life which He shares with all who will receive it. If man’s actions are to be changed, the source of his actions must be changed. The heart of the natural man is corrupt (Jer. 17:9). Like a foul spring that cannot produce pure water, the heart of the unsaved man cannot produce works sufficient for his salvation. He needs a new heart; he needs new life.

The Holy Spirit is the Author and Giver of life. We all owe our physical existence to Him. "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7). The distinctive element in man’s creation is this "breath of life," for the phrase is altered to read "the Spirit of life." Dr. Lockyer titled his fine book on the Holy Spirit, "The Breath of God." The Greek word for spirit [pneuma] means breath or wind. After Christ’s resurrection He met with the disciples, and John wrote, "He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John 20:22). The Breath of God is His own Holy Spirit.

All who have not been born again of the Spirit of God are unsaved because they are still dead in sins. God is not the Father of such persons nor can they claim Him. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. 8:9). No man can be saved without receiving the Holy Spirit. It is not correct to say that a person becomes saved, and then at some later time he receives the Holy Spirit. The receiving of the Spirit makes one a Christian. Receiving salvation and receiving the Spirit occur instantaneously, at one and the same time.

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"And the LORD said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years" (Genesis 6:3).

There is an urgent and imperative need in our churches for a scriptural knowledge of the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit, because He is the neglected Person of the blessed Holy Trinity. It is a matter of great concern to observe the appalling ignorance on the part of some Christians as to the basic and essential truths concerning the Holy Spirit.

It is not an uncommon error that He is referred to as a mere impersonal influence. Sometimes I hear Christians refer to Him as "it." This is wrong. The unfortunate use of the word "itself" in Romans 8:16, 26, in the Authorized Version, is corrected in the Revised Version. Had the translators given us the sense of the pronoun in its true meaning and theological correctness, the word would be rendered "Himself" in all versions. Unfortunately they took the neuter noun "Spirit," which, by the way, is neuter only as a matter of grammar, or syntax, and followed through with a pronoun in the neuter. But the Holy Spirit is a Person, and He must always be referred to and addressed as such.

It is possible that people have drawn a wrong inference from His name as translated in the Scriptures, "Holy Ghost." It is quite natural to associate the word "ghost" with a mere apparition, an impersonal, shadowy something or other, an intangible phantom. A friend of mine told me that the word for ghost in the old Anglo-Saxon was the same as the
word for guest. This is exactly Who He is, the Holy Guest. He is one of the three Persons in the Godhead, all three of equal rank and dignity, possessing the essential attributes of Deity. He is the One Who enters the believing sinner’s body to take up His residence. He will seek admittance to every heart unbidden, but He will not enter where He is not wanted. He comes as the Holy Guest, waiting for each individual to receive Him.

But a present tragedy lies in the fact that even in the lives of Christians who have received Him, the Holy Spirit goes unrecognized. The shabby treatment we sometimes render the Holy Ghost in our hearts we would not inflict upon even unholy guests whom we invite into our homes. Some time ago a minister said that he believed the programs in many local evangelical churches could continue as they are now, even if the Holy Spirit did not exist. Whether that be exactly so or not, he has brought to light an existing condition of which many Christians are completely oblivious, namely, the neglect of the Holy Spirit. Like the twelve disciples at Ephesus, many in our churches must confess, “We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost” (Acts 19:2). Yet there are few subjects more important and more necessary to the Christian than the biblical subject of the Holy Spirit.

Now there is not the remest thought in my mind that I shall have much to say about the blessed Holy Spirit in this brief series of messages. No finite mind will ever run the gamut of scriptural truth on the subject of the Infinite. What I have done is to arrange eight texts, each containing a verb beginning with the letter “s,” to present eight steps in the Holy Spirit’s ministry.

“And the LORD said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years” (Gen. 6:3). Here we learn two lessons. The first is that the Holy Spirit does carry on a ministry of contention and conviction against sinful men. The second is that God will not indefinitely continue this ministry. These are solemn thoughts. Let us consider them one at a time.

Ever since the fall of our first parents in the Garden of Eden, God the Holy Spirit has been striving with the sinner against his sin. He is “Holy” as His name states, and therefore He is sensitive to sin.

The dove is a well-known symbol of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:16, 17; Luke 3:22; John 1:32). Among the fowl family, the dove is known for its purity. Solomon, speaking of his bride, says, “My dove, my undefiled” (Song of Solomon 5:2). According to naturalists, the dove is known for its cleanliness. It was one of the animals acceptable as a sacrifice to the Lord. The mother of Jesus, after the days of her purification, went to offer a sacrifice according to the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtle-doves” (Luke 2:24 cf. Lev. 12). When our Lord found men in the temple prostituting holy things for their own personal gain, He “overthrew the seats of them that sold doves” (Matt. 21:12; Mark 11:15). John records that the Lord Jesus spoke directly to them that sold doves (John 2:16). Thus the Holy Dove is sensitive to all uncleanness and righteousness and therefore He strives against it.

The ministry of the Holy Spirit, in the antediluvian world that was plunging to its doom, is seen in His striving with the sinful people of that day. He acted to throw restraint about their wickedness as they moved toward Divine judgment. As we shall see a little later on in our study, the Spirit’s striving against sin is sometimes resisted by the sinner, and therefore the conviction does not result in salvation. The instrumentality used by the Holy Spirit to convict of sin were the promise of the woman’s seed (Gen. 3:15); the witness of death (Gen. 5); the faithful preaching of Enoch (Jude 14, 15), and the preaching of Noah (Heb. 11:7; II Peter 2:5).

The first work of the Holy Spirit, which is essential for salvation, is the conviction of sin. Jesus said, “And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment” (John 16:8). Before a person can be regenerated, his heart must be prepared to receive salvation. This prepara-
tion is the Spirit’s work. Those of us engaged in preaching the Gospel make the mistake at times of taking His ministry out of His hands. We go about our work as though the results depended upon us. Then if we do not see results, we fret and become impatient and sometimes are critical of others. But the lack of fruit is a challenge to examine our own hearts.

The Holy Spirit dwells in every child of God (I Cor. 3:16; 6:19, 20); therefore, if our lives and labors do not produce results, it is because the Holy Spirit is being grieved (Eph. 4:30), or quenched (I Thess. 5:19) by us. On the Day of Pentecost there were added to the Church about three thousand souls (Acts 2:41), but never lose sight of the fact that it is written of that group of workers, “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:4). When we quit our sinning and give the Holy Spirit His way in our hearts, then we can expect Him to use our efforts to convict the unsaved. A book might appeal to the mind of the reader, a preacher might be able to stir up the emotions of his hearers, but none save the Holy Spirit can strive with the spirit and conscience of man against his sins.

There is no human explanation adequate to describe the work of the Holy Spirit upon the human conscience as He brings conviction to that soul and prepares him to receive the Lord Jesus Christ. But one thing we Christians can be certain, that is, before the Holy Spirit was to convict the world of sin, He had to come first to indwell Christ’s own and instruct them. Examine the four appearances of the promise of the “Comforter” in the Gospel according to John, and you will see borne out the statement I have just made. Jesus said, “And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever” (John 14:16): “...teach you all things” (John 14:26) “... testify of Me” (John 15:26). And then He added finally, “He will reprove the world of sin” (John 16:8). The Holy Spirit has come to indwell us who have believed, that through us He might reach others. He can accomplish this work only as we are in perfect communion with Him and in perfect harmony with His will for us. The word “reprove” in John 16:8 means conviction by demonstration, conviction by an answerable argument. There is no more convincing demonstration of the Spirit’s power than a Christian under His control.

But the awful and solemn truth is that God does not perpetually keep on with this ministry. He said, “My Spirit shall not always strive with man.” There comes a time when a man wearies God with his obstinate rejection so that God ceases to contend with him. A man is wise when he seeks the Lord “while He may be found” (Isa. 55:6). It is written of the Israelites, “Yet many years didst Thou forbear them, and testifiest against them by Thy Spirit in Thy prophets: yet they would not give ear: therefore gavest Thou them into the hand of the people of the lands” (Neh. 9:30). Ample time and opportunity had been afforded them, but all to no effect. “The longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing” (I Peter 3:20), but that too was to no effect.

Let the unbeliever beware. He who resists the Spirit’s working in his heart will one day discover to his utter dismay that there is no further conviction of sin within him. When a man persists in his rebellion and rejection of Jesus Christ, then the Spirit might turn from him, and if the Spirit does not draw him to Christ, he can never be saved. In the Epistle to the Romans we read that “God gave them up” and “God gave them over” (Rom. 1:24, 26). But God did not give up man until first man gave up God.

Stephen reviewed the history of Israel before the Jewish authorities and said, “Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye” (Acts 7:51). He reminded them that at every fresh revelation from God, they had opposed Him. This is a dangerous action on the part of any person. A Proverb says, “He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy” (Prov. 29:1). Yes, the Holy Spirit can be resisted to the eternal loss of those who resist Him. He invites men to take the water of life (Rev. 22:17), but He will not force them to drink. To the seven churches in Asia Minor, Jesus says, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches” (Rev. 2 and 3).

Let us return to our text for one final thought. When God said, “My Spirit shall not always strive with man,” it is possible that He was referring to the end of the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. When the present age of grace comes to its close and the true believers are translated to Heaven, the Holy Spirit too will leave the world. Presently He is the Restrainer. Who holds back the flood tide of iniquity until the Wicked One, the antichrist, is revealed (II Thess. 2:7-10). When the Divine Restrainer is removed, there will be no further striving against sin, and then the world will see the full revelation of the Man of Sin. The power of the Holy Spirit is greater than the power of Satan. Presently He is holding back the forces of evil, striving against them, but at the Rapture of the Church, the Spirit of God Who indwells the Church, will also be taken out of the world. This will mean a reversal of Pentecost. The very removal of both the Church and the Spirit from the earth, the dwelling place of man, will result in no further striving against sin. That day is imminent, thus it behooves all men everywhere to stop resisting God and surrender to Him at once.

EDITOR’S NOTE: This discussion concerning the Holy Spirit is first in a series that will continue for several months. Dr. Lehman Strauss has authored numerous Bible study and devotional books. The most recent one concerns "THE PROPHECIES OF DANIEL."
Three times in the New Testament we read of our being sealed with the Holy Spirit (II Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30). More accurately, it is not that the Holy Spirit seals us, but that He Himself is the Seal.

Harold Barker reminds us that we must be careful not to confuse being born of the Spirit with being sealed. The two things are quite different. We are born of the Spirit in order that we may become the children of God; we are sealed with the Spirit because we are the children of God. When a calf is born on a cattle ranch, the rancher proceeds to brand the new-born creature, not that the calf may become his possession, but because it is already his. It is so with the believer. Having been bought with the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Christian is Christ’s possession by redemptive right. And because he is Christ’s, God puts the seal or brand of Divine ownership upon him by giving him the Holy Spirit to dwell within him. The sealing takes place immediately upon the sinner’s acceptance of Jesus Christ. I do not believe that there is a time element involved between the saving and the sealing. When Paul wrote, “After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise” (Eph. 1:13), he was not speaking of chronological sequence in reference to time. The sequence is a moral one. A preferable reading would be, “having believed, ye were sealed.” The seal, then, signifies ownership. “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His...” (II Tim. 2:19).

When the people sought Jesus for the loaves and fishes, He said, “Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed” (John 6:27). I take it that this sealing refers back to the time of His baptism at Jordan when He received the Spirit (Matt. 3:16, 17). The Father put His approval upon His Son by sealing Him with the Holy Spirit. The seal was the testimony to His Sonship. Christ had come to present Himself as the Son of God, first to die as the Sacrifice for sin and then to become the daily Portion for the believer. Throughout the remainder of John chapter 6, He claims repeatedly that He is “the Bread of God” (vs. 51). It was because of such claims that the Jews murmured against Him (vs. 41), and from that time on He was under their strictest surveillance. Thus He reminded them that the Father sealed Him with the Holy Spirit as their Messiah sent from Heaven, thereby endorsing Him as God’s own Son.

In this experience the Christian is like his Lord. We are sealed, then, because we are the children of...
God. As redeemed ones, we stand in the efficacy of the shed and sprinkled blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Indwelt by the Spirit, we have the stamp of fitness as sons and servants of God. We may be sure that God will never put His Seal upon one who is not His. On the other hand, we may be equally sure that all who are His have been sealed. God's sealing of His children, then, is His gracious communication of the Spirit to them.

The seal is the mark of security. Once sealed, the child of God is sealed forever. Paul wrote, “... ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30). This statement does not refer to the redemption of the soul, for that day is already past for the believer in Christ. But rather does it speak of a redemption still future, “the redemption of our body” (Rom. 8:23). Being subject to death and decay, our bodies have not yet been redeemed. But the day is coming when “we shall be changed” (1 Cor. 15:52), and “we shall be like Him” (1 John 3:2). At that day the last trace of fallen Adam’s likeness will be removed from us. This is the redemption for which we are still waiting, and until that day we have been sealed.

The seal can never be broken nor the believer’s position in Christ altered. This is illustrated for us in the case of Darius the king and Daniel. The presidents and princes persuaded Darius to establish a decree that all persons asking a petition of any god save the king, should be cast into the den of lions. The king executed and sealed the decree, not knowing that the presidents and princes had plotted against Daniel. But, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, the seal had given finality to the decree so that there was no altering the matter (Dan. 6). It is so with our spiritual sealing. The moment God seals the believing sinner with His Holy Spirit, a relationship is forever established. The seal guarantees eternal security for the child of God.

After our Lord’s crucifixion, the chief priests and Pharisees came together in Pilate’s chamber to discuss the prediction Christ had made concerning His resurrection. They were determined that His body would remain in the grave. They said to Pilate, “Sir, we remember that that deceived said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch” (Matt. 27:63-66). By sealing the sepulchre, they sought to make it “sure,” that is, they sought to keep the body of Jesus securely sealed in the tomb. Now we know that those enemies of our Lord did not succeed in making the sepulchre sure, for the one reason that the Lord Himself broke their seal, His power being greater than theirs. But since it is God who seals His children, and there is no power as great as His to break His seal, our security can never be imperiled.

The Apostle Paul write, “Now he which establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts” (II Cor. 1:21, 22). If language means anything, we are taught here that the believer in Christ is established in Him by means of the indwelling Holy Spirit. That God has taken sinful, weak and defeated men, and saved them and established them forever in Christ is a miracle in human experience.

Those who are established in Christ are also “anointed.” The anointing of the Holy Spirit is the common symbol of Divine approval for services. Jesus said, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18, 19 cf. Acts 4:27; 10:38). In the Old Testament, prophets, priests and kings were anointed when appointed to their several offices. God was announcing them as qualified men for their respective offices. In like manner Christians are spoken of as anointed (1 John 2:20, 27).

Our right to sonship and service is authenticated by God’s sealing us with the Holy Spirit. He who bears the Seal of God upon him is marked as belonging to God and as one called to represent God. The word earnest (Gr. arrabou) was used to describe the deposit or down payment made by a purchaser as a guarantee that the balance would be forthcoming. In II Corinthians 5:5, Paul uses it of the Spirit as the guarantee of the Christian’s immortality, that one day he shall arrive in Heaven and never be liable to death again.

In the last of his writings, Paul uses the word seal. “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity” (II Tim. 2:19). Hymenaeus and Philetus were false teachers seeking to lead others astray, but God was not deceived. God knows His own by virtue of His Seal upon them, and the sealed ones respond by recognizing their relation to God with its corresponding call to holiness. KB
The False Teachers: Benny Hinn

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Articles

April 23, 2014

A few weeks ago I set out on a series of articles through which I am scanning the history of the church—from its earliest days all the way to the present time—to examine some of Christianity's most notable false teachers. Along the way we have visited such figures as Arius, Joseph Smith, Ellen G. White and Norman Vincent Peale. Today we turn to one of the most outrageous charlatans of our time, a man who claims to have healed countless people. His name is Benny Hinn.

Benny Hinn

Toufik Benedictus Hinn was born on December 3, 1952 in Jaffa, Israel (modern-day Tel Aviv), the son of a Greek father and Armenian mother who had immigrated from Greece. He was raised in the Greek Orthodox tradition but educated in Roman Catholic schools. After the Six-Day War, he and his family emigrated to Canada and at the age of nineteen he professed faith in Jesus Christ. He immediately became involved in the Pentecostal movement in Toronto and was mentored by Dr. Winston Nunes of Broadview Faith Temple.

In December 1973 Hinn traveled with other Christians to Pittsburgh to attend a miracle healing service led by Kathryn Kuhlman, the foremost faith healer of that day. Though Hinn never met Kuhlman personally, she left an indelible impression on him, and at that service he had a life-changing religious experience. Shortly after, he received a vision of people falling into a roaring fire and heard the words: “If you do not preach, every soul who falls will be your responsibility!” Later that year he began to preach and claimed that at this time God miraculously cured him of a terrible stutter. He soon began to imitate Kuhlman and even to sponsor services endorsed by the Kathryn Kuhlman Foundation. In 1979 Hinn moved to the United States of America, settling in Orlando, where he met Suzanne Harthern, a pastor’s daughter who would become his wife.

1983 Hinn founded Orlando Christian Center and began to perform miracles and conduct healing services, claiming that God was using him as a conduit for these supernatural deeds. Soon his “Miracle Crusades” were being held around the world and, by 1989, were being televised across America. The daily talk show “This Is Your Day” followed, and is now broadcast in over 200 nations around the world. In 1999 he handed the leadership of Orlando Christian Center to Clint Brown so he could focus entirely on travel and crusades. Millions, or even tens of
millions, attend his crusades each year. The largest event to date took place in Mumbai, India, where over seven million people attended over a three-day period.

He claims to have preached the gospel to over a billion people, either face-to-face or through television.

In recent days Hinn has been the subject of scrutiny on a number of fronts. In 2010 his wife filed for divorce citing "irreconcilable differences." This was shortly after the National Enquirer published photographs of Benny Hinn and fellow televangelist Paula White walking out of a Rome hotel hand-in-hand. However, nearly three years later, Benny and Suzanne were remarried at The Holy Land Experience theme park in Orlando. His claims of miracles remain unverified despite a host of programs and publications that have looked for evidence. He has also been widely criticized for his lavish lifestyle, which includes a private jet, a multi-million dollar mansion, and regular stays at hotels costing thousands or tens of thousands of dollars per night. This extravagance led to United States Senator Chuck Grassley announcing that the United States Senate Committee on Finance would be investigating Hinn's ministry.

False Teaching - Faith Healing

~rituics of Benny Hinn can span a multitude of areas—his Word-Faith theology, his "little god" theology, his claim that each person of the Trinity is actually his own trinity, his outright lies about his accomplishments, and much more besides. But for our purposes, we will recognize him as the world's most recognized faith healer.

Hinn teaches that God intends for everyone to be healed of all of their diseases. If people simply have the faith to believe they can be healed, God will heal them through the agency of a healer like himself.

Hinn's crusades are carefully constructed to lead and manipulate those in attendance, with singing and repetitive music that build a particular atmosphere and sense of anticipation. These crusades crescendo in a time where he announces that God has begun to heal people and he then invites those people to come to the stage to tell what God has done, a technique that was mastered by Kathryn Kuhlman and has since become a staple of faith healing. Hinn claims that God is working powerfully through him to heal others and begins to list those miracles, usually starting with ones that are invisible and unverifiable at the moment—diabetes, depression, and the like. As the healings begin, many people come forward, hoping for their own miracle. Generally, though, only people who claim to have already been healed are showcased on the stage where Benny speaks to them and then often "slays" them in the Spirit.

In this way he has manipulated countless people to give money to his cause, believing that giving money will be key to activating their miracle. Not a single one of Hinn's miracles has ever been verified, though many have been proven to be temporary or false.
Followers & Adherents

Hinn’s television show “This Is Your Day” is broadcast around the world and remains regular viewing for millions. He speaks to millions more each year through his crusades. He has also perfected faith healing techniques that have been imitated by a host of others. He is the world’s best known and most notorious faith healer.

What the Bible Says

While the Bible clearly presents a God who is capable of healing and a God who at times does heal miraculously, it never tells us that it is always God’s will that we be healed. In fact, it may be God’s will that we suffer for a time. Never does the Bible tell us that our healing is dependent upon the quantity or the activation of our faith. And most Christians hold that even while God does still heal people today, he no longer does so through the agency of a healer (see James 5:13-16 and read about A Presbyterian Healing Service).

Hinn’s theology of healing is laid out in his book Lord, I Need a Miracle. Richard Mayhue points out eight grave errors: Benny Hinn holds it is wrong to pray “Lord, Thy will be done” even though Jesus Christ did (Luke 22:42); Hinn believes that God always intends for believers to be healed, even though some great saints of the Bible were unhealed (the apostle Paul among them); Hinn teaches that believers should command God to heal, while the Bible instructs them to ask (1 John 5:14-15); Hinn suggests that miraculous healing from God is gradual, while the miraculous healings of the New Testament were instantaneous; Hinn teaches that faith on the part of the sick person is essential to healing, while a man like Lazarus could not have exercised faith when he was healed since he had been dead; Hinn believes that we must do our part before God can heal, while the Bible teaches that God is sovereign; Hinn believes that Christians should not be sick, while the Bible teaches that Christians can be sick and will all eventually die; Hinn implies that a person’s healing can be lost and that the healed person must do certain things to keep the healing, while such a notion is completely foreign to the Bible.

In the final analysis, Benny Hinn is a dangerous deceiver, a fraud and charlatan who enriches himself at the expense of countless others.

A La Carte (April 23)