

## Experience vs. Revelation

### 1. Personal Experience: Foundation of Charismatic Christianity

A. Central issue: Is direct revelation still given by God today?

1. Many charismatics flippantly say, “Jesus told me ...”; “the Holy Spirit spoke to my heart” etc. They then promise such personal messages to others; they ask for money to support grand schemes which God told them to do.
2. In a very real way, the charismatic movement has moved beyond tongues and healings; the **progressive nature** of this movement now includes wild tales of being taken to heaven; casual, daily conversations with Jesus, etc.

B. The belief that God is still communicating directly has the effect of undermining the written Scriptures.

1. Rather than allowing Scripture to define experiences, experiences now are used to define the Scriptures.
2. One preacher told, “ You resort to Greek translations and fancy words to explain away what the Holy Spirit is doing in the church today. Let me give you a piece of advice ... put away your Bible and your books and stop studying. Ask the Holy Ghost to come upon you and give you the gift of tongues. You have no right to question something you have *never experienced*” (MacArthur, p 23).
2. Obviously, this serves to protect the movement from objective analysis and criticism and allows people to continue to believe in the irrational. Ex: 1 Pet 1:8 - “*Though now you **do not see Him ...***”. This is what the **Bible says**, but not what charismatics say.

C. Thus, the charismatic movement has taken on the characteristics of *mysticism*: it emphasizes a spiritual reality apart from facts and reason; it relies on feeling and intuition rather than objective evidence. It is *religious humanism*, where man is the standard rather than God.

### 2. Did the Apostles Preach Their Experiences?

A. The unparalleled experiences of the apostles: Paul -

1. Refers to vision but “*saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come - that the Christ would suffer...*” - Ac 26:19-23.
2. Saw heaven - 2 Cor 12:1-4 - but was prohibited from revealing what he saw

and given a thorn in the flesh to keep him humble (2 Cor 12:7).

3. Paul did not preach his experiences but the gospel, **reasoning** its truth from the Old Testament: Ac 17:1-3, 10-12; 28:23.

B. Peter -

1. Present at the transfiguration, but his zeal without reason caused him to make an unacceptable suggestion - Mt 17:4-5.
2. He refers to the transfiguration in 2 Pet 1:17-18, but then indicates that the Scriptures ("prophetic word") is made more sure because of its divine origin (2 Pet 1:19-21).

C. The apostles had great experiences to qualify them as **eyewitnesses**, but their experiences were not the foundation of their message: they emphasized Scripture and preached the gospel. Fellowship is by what the apostles **declared**: 1 Jn 1:1-4.

### **3. The Sufficiency of the Scriptures**

A. God is **not** giving revelation today:

1. The mark of the NC is that God finally sent His Son to speak to men - Heb 1:1-2.
2. Jesus spoke part of His message in person, then appointed certain others to speak by His authority after ascension - Jn 14:25-26; 15:26-27; 16:12-15.
3. Paul said "we have the mind of Christ" through what the H.S. had revealed - 1 Cor 2:10-13, 16.

B. It is not necessary to have continuous revelation:

1. Paul said we can know what he knows - Eph 3:1-5.
2. The Christian is complete with the Scriptures - 2 Tim 3:16-17.
3. All things pertaining to life and godliness - 2 Pet 1:2-4, 12-15.

C. Anything contrary to previously revealed gospel is to be rejected - Gal 1:6ff.

**Conclusion:** The charismatic movement has adopted the spirit of the age: feelings and personal experience as a guide which rejects the revealed word of God. It is a dangerous emotional intoxication that will eventually leave the adherent unfulfilled.