

The return of Christ is not simply a war story; it is a love story. We read of Christ's love, we accept the doctrinal veracity of His promise, yet how differently we would be both in faith and action if we truly lived in the fulfillment of His love!

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Prayer Study # 297

**SUPERNATURAL MANIFESTATIONS:
TRUE OR FALSE**

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(The following is a summary of the writings of Dr. Paul King of Oral Roberts University in a work entitled "*Supernatural Manifestations in the Evangelical and Holiness Revival Movements*." I have taken the liberty to, in many cases, quote him directly.)

The phenomenon of falling under the power of the Spirit occurred in the revivals of Jonathan Edwards who believed this happened because of the fear of hell or conviction by the Holy Spirit or due to a "foretaste of heaven." John Wesley recognized falling to the ground as a manifestation from God, and he records many such instances in his ministry. In fact, George Whitfield criticized Wesley for permitting the phenomena until it began happening in his own meetings. This phenomenon also happened in the 1800 revivals, which involved Baptists, Methodist, and Presbyterians, and in the Welsh revival in 1859. R.A. Torrey, an associate of Dwight L. Moody, A.B. Simpson who founded the Christian Missionary Alliance denomination, and Charles Price either reported having this experience or seeing others falling under the power in their meetings.

Holy Laughter occurred in early evangelical and holiness circles. Jonathan Edwards, E.M Bounds, John Wesley, Charles Finney, A.B. Simpson, Oswald Chambers, Praying John Hyde (the great intercessor and missionary to China), and A.W. Tozer reported experiencing laughing. In fact, Chambers believed that laughter could be a sign of revival. Tozer wrote this: "I once saw a man kneel at an altar, taking Communion. Suddenly he broke into holy laughter. This man laughed until he wrapped his arms around himself as if he was afraid he would bust just out of sheer delight in the presence of the Almighty God..."

Another phenomenon that often occurred in these meetings, including in the Welsh revival was spontaneous dancing for joy. Some of the holiness groups believed that this was an evidence of the Holy Spirit baptism.

Charles Finney said that his baptism in the Spirit was “like a wave of electricity, going through and through me.” The Christian & Missionary Alliance journals record many instances of physical sensations like heat, electrical shocks, or bright lights accompanying healing.

Along with fainting, such phenomena as trembling, shaking and convulsions occurred in the ministry of Jonathan Edwards and the Great Awakening. Quakers received their name because they shook. At the outset of the Welch revival of 1904, Evan Roberts experienced the manifestation of shaking on several occasions. Sometimes strange sounds accompanied some of these manifestations, such as groaning or weeping.

Other common manifestations in these meetings were trances, visions and dreams. Those who recognized the validity of some of these dreams and visions were Maria Woodworth-Etter; Praying Hyde who had a vision of the glorified Christ as a Lamb on His throne; Torrey, Amy Carmichael, Charles Spurgeon and F.B. Meyer.

On the other hand, not all such physical manifestations were automatically accepted among holiness leaders and some Pentecostals to be the result of the Spirit’s working. John Wesley’s counsel was: “Do not hastily ascribe things to God. Do not easily suppose dreams, voices, impressions, visions, or revelations to be from God. They may be from Him. They may be from nature. They may be from the devil. Therefore believe not every spirit, but ‘try the spirits whether they be from God.’”

Evangelical and holiness leaders recognize that some laughter is “fleshly excitement” and some may even be demonically inspired. John and Charles Wesley discerned that some manifestations were unholy laughter. In 1912 Jessie Penn-Lewis and Evan Roberts in their book *War on the Saints* also write of demonical inspired laughter with twisting and jerking, and some Catholic exorcists have cautioned that the devil may cause laughter to distract and disrupt.

Evan Roberts and Jessie Penn-Lewis comment, “No one can with safety accept all the supernatural manifestations which accompany Revival, or believe all seeming ‘Pentecostal power’ to be of God.” They recognized that gifts of the Spirit such as prophecy, healing, and tongues could be genuine or false, saying that counterfeit tongues were only a fraction of the counterfeit manifestations. Furthermore, Pentecostals like Carrie Judd Montgomery warned about unusual phenomena and motions which have been accepted in some Pentecostal circles are really a form of witchcraft.

Many animal-like sounds and behavior have been recognized throughout church history as demonic. Such exhibitions were often considered demonic, both by Pentecostals and non-Pentecostal holiness people. A.B.

Simpson said, "There have been many instances where [seeking for] the gift of tongues led the subjects and the audiences in to the wildest excesses and were accompanied with voices and actions more closely resembling wild animals than rational beings, impressing the unprejudiced observers that it was the work of the devil." Paul Rader, pastor of Moody Memorial Church and President of C&MA after Simpson's death, writes of casting out a demon from a man who came down the aisle of Moody Church barking like a dog. Pentecostal leader Charles Parham also described as demonic manifestations of barking like a dog, braying like a donkey, and crowing like a rooster, and contortions and fits. Woodworth-Etter admonished to "try the spirits," citing a woman who "commenced to go about on her knees, twisting about like a serpent" and speaking in tongues. She said, "Everyone knew it was not of God," and that the devil had gotten hold of her."

There may be occasions in which sounds are made that are from the heart and soul that cannot be articulated clearly, which may fall under the category of "groanings too deep for words" (Romans 8:26). Nonetheless, the preponderance of evidence would indicate that the vast majority of such animal-like manifestations are either demonically inspired or originate in the flesh. Those which are demonic in nature may be Satanic counterfeits meant to deceive, or they may be already existing demonic influences being exposed or brought to the surface by the moving of the Holy Spirit in revival...

This is a well-researched article by Dr. King. He looks at this very objectively and warns us again through John Wesley and others that we are to "try [or test] the spirits," as recorded in 1st John 4:1: *BELOVED, believe not every spirit, but test the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.* My own position on the Dr. King's article is that we should be very careful in our judgment of such phenomena. If the outward manifestations are distracting from the preaching of the Word, I do not believe they are from God. Also, do the manifestations have a scriptural precedence? Laughter, for example, is in the Word and is said to be a way of praising the Lord (Psalm 126:20). But *barking like a dog*? The noise of a dog, as described in Psalm 59, is the noise the enemies of the people of God make. Furthermore, Philippians 3:2 compares dogs to evil workers. Thus, I don't think barking like a dog signifies the moving of the Holy Spirit in someone's life. And do these manifestations glorify Christ Jesus or do they just feed our soul nature?