

## Is It the Holy Spirit or Is It Memorex?

Several years ago before CDs had replaced cassette tapes there was a well known commercial on television. The commercial would show a fine crystal glass and then an opera singer shattering the glass with the intensity of her high and sustained voice. But after the glass was shattered, the camera would pull back and reveal not an opera singer next to the glass, but a tape player with a Memorex tape being played—a man-made fabrication. The famous words were then uttered, “Is it live or is it Memorex?”

Many practitioners of religion today remind me of this commercial. Not unlike the commercial, the impression is given that these religious folks are dealing directly with the Holy Spirit in their religion. They speak of how the Holy Spirit moves them to do certain good works. They talk about how the Holy Spirit illuminates their understanding so that they can know God’s word. They may even display certain signs such as speaking in tongues or “falling out” – all attributed to the work of the Holy Spirit. However when you “pull the camera back” to see what is really going on we find not the Holy Spirit, but a man-made fabrication. How do we know these alleged practices of the Holy Spirit to be merely man-made fabrications?

First we can know that someone is fabricating if they speak or say something other than what the Bible says. Truth does not contradict itself. So if someone is claiming something to be true when the Bible says it is otherwise you can know it is a man made fabrication. A good example of this is the modern day ‘sign’ of tongues. The Bible nowhere states that a tongue is some kind of unintelligible gibberish. In fact it says the opposite—that tongues were languages that men could understand (cf. Acts 2:4, 8) and were a sign for the unbeliever (1 Corinthians 14:22). They were never intended to be used in the midst of the worship of Christians (14:23). The miracle of the tongue is speaking in a foreign language that one has never studied. To state that the Holy Spirit causes one to speak in unintelligible gibberish and to call that a “tongue” is contradictory to the Bible’s teaching and cannot be a product of the Holy Spirit, but rather a man-made fabrication.

Second, it is fascinating to me that two men can both claim “divine illumination” and yet contradict one another. One of these two would be without doubt lying. How could the Holy Spirit illuminate both men? He most certainly could and would not as God is not the author of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33). In fact the Bible teaches that we come to

understand the scriptures not through divine illumination, but through a study of the words which the apostles and prophets were inspired to write (cf. Ephesians 3:3-5). To claim that we cannot understand the scriptures without divine illumination is contrary to the writings of the Holy Spirit within the New Testament and hence not a product of the Holy Spirit, but rather a man-made fabrication.

Third, I recently heard a most interesting story regarding the practice of “falling out” where after one is “touched” by a preacher, the individual falls backward as his body somehow comes under the mysterious and alleged control of the Holy Spirit. It seems that a young man wanted to experience this “falling out.” The story goes that he accepted Jesus into his heart (thus he would be saved according to his religion’s teaching) but when he got up and the preacher touched his head, nothing happened. The preacher touched his head harder but still nothing happened. He displayed the same amount of “faith” that all the others displayed so why should he have been overlooked by the Holy Spirit? We know that God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34) so why would he be passed by? Could it be that those who practice such things are just substituting a man-made fabrication? In fact it must be so. We never read of such a practice in the New Testament. In fact, we read just the opposite. We see that it is BEFORE people were healed that they displayed bodily convulsions and uncontrollability not AFTER. In every case of a healing or exorcism we find the recipient of the miracle calm and reposed and in their right mind (cf. Luke 8:35; Matthew 8:14-16). Such claims of Holy Spirit possession that would cause one to fall back and wallow around on the floor are contrary to the teaching of the New Testament and are thus man-made fabrications.

No matter how good a Memorex tape is, it is still a man-made fabrication. It is obvious that the claims of Holy Spirit involvement in today’s religious world are false and contrary to Biblical teaching. They too are just man-made fabrications. So the next time you see someone “falling out” or hear someone speaking in tongues or claim divine illumination ask yourself, “Is it the Holy Spirit or is it Memorex?”