

Pentecostalism Undermines The Authority Of The Bible

Intro: Pentecostalism is sweeping the country. They are growing by leaps and bounds. They make great claims of respecting the Bible and believing the Bible and that the Bible is literally true. For example, Walter Hollenweger (*The Pentecostals* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988), p. 291.) wrote, “‘The Bible is the inspired word of God and its content is infallible divine revelation.’ ‘It is the infallible rule of faith and conduct, and it is superior to conscience and reason, but not contrary to reason.’ Often remarks are even more specific. We believe in ‘the whole Bible,’ ‘Old and New Testament,’ ‘in verbal inspiration’ or even ‘in the supernatural plenary inspiration of Scripture.’” Can this claim be substantiated? When we examine it we will find that the opposite is true. What we will find is that if Pentecostalism is true, then we do not need the Bible.

I. THE BIBLE IS AUTHORITATIVE.

A. Authority is “the power or right to give commands, enforce obedience, take action, or make final decisions; jurisdiction.”

B. Man cannot direct his own way.

1. Isa. 53:6 “⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”
2. Jer 10:23 “²³ O LORD, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *it is* not in man that walketh to direct his steps.”
3. Pro. 14:12 “¹² There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death.”
4. Evidence is seen in our society.
 - a. We have as a nation rejected God.
 - b. The result: crime continues to rise, immorality, ungodliness, and wickedness abounds.

C. God is the only one who can provide adequate direction.

1. Because He is the Creator of man.
 - a. Gen. 1:1 “¹ In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”
 - b. Exo. 20:11 “¹¹ For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.”
 - c. Col. 1:16 “¹⁶ For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.”
 - d. As Creator, He knows man what is in man.
 - (1) He reveals what man should do that would be in the best long-term interest of man.
 - (2) His commands for our good; Deu. 6:24 “²⁴ And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as *it is* at this day.”

D. God gave His Commands (Word) to His Son.

1. Heb. 1:1-2 “¹ God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, ²Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;”

2. John 12:49 ⁴⁹ For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.”

E. Jesus gave these Words (commands) to the apostles.

1. John 17:8, 14, 18 ⁴⁸ For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received *them*, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me....¹⁴ I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world....¹⁸ As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.”
2. The apostles went everywhere preaching that Word.
3. They wrote that Word for everyone to read.
 - a. 1 Cor. 14:37 ³⁷ If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.”
 - b. Eph. 3:3-5 ⁴³ How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, ⁴ Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) ⁵ Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;”
 - (1) He received this directly from God; Gal. 1:11-12 ¹¹ But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. ¹² For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.”
 - (2) He wrote what he had received by revelation of Christ, so when we read what he wrote (by inspiration of the Holy Spirit) we can understand God’s Word; Eph. 5:17 ¹⁷ Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord *is*.”
4. They did this by inspiration of the Holy Spirit
 - a. John 14:25-26 ²⁵ These things have I spoken unto you, being *yet* present with you. ²⁶ But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”
 - b. John 16:12-13 ¹² I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. ¹³ Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.”

F. The Written Word is our standard of authority.

1. We will be judged by it.
 - a. John 12:48-50 ⁴⁸ He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. ⁴⁹ For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. ⁵⁰ And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.”
 - b. Rev. 20:12 ¹² And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”
 - c. Rom. 2:16 ¹⁶ In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.”
2. It contains everything man needs to acceptably stand before God and be judged.
 - a. It is God’s power to save.
 - (1) Rom. 1:16 ¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”
 - (2) Jam. 1:21 ²¹ Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.”
 - b. It reveals what to do to be saved.
 - (1) Christianity is a taught religion; John 6:44-45 ⁴⁴ No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁴⁵ It is written

in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.”

- (2) Through that teaching one comes to believe; Rom. 10:17 ^{“17} So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”
- (3) He repents of his sins; Luke 24:46-47 ^{“46} And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: ⁴⁷ And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”
- (4) He will confess His faith in Jesus as God’s Son; Rom. 10:10 ^{“10} For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”
- (5) He is baptized in water for the forgiveness of sins to become God’s child.
 - (a) Mark 16:16 ^{“16} He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
 - (b) Acts 2:37-38 ^{“37} Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? ³⁸ Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”
 - (c) Gal. 3:26-27 ^{“26} For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”

c. It reveals what to do to remain saved, to live the Christian life.

d. The Bible is sufficient for man’s needs to attain heaven’s home.

- (1) 2 Tim. 3:16-17 ^{“16} All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: ¹⁷ That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”
 - (a) Use the Scriptures for their intended purpose (doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness).
 - (b) We have a threefold response.
 - (i) Man of God.
 - (ii) Perfect or complete.
 - (iii) Completely furnished to all works God ordained.
- (2) 2 Pet. 1:3-4 ^{“3} According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: ⁴ Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”
 - (a) We can escape the corruption in this world through a knowledge of God which comes through His Word.
 - (b) Through His Word He has given us everything pertaining to life and godliness.

3. If the Bible was lacking in any of these areas, it would not be authoritative.

II. PURPOSE OF MIRACLES.

A. The primary purpose of miracles was confirmatory.

B. Old Testament Evidence.

1. From the first recorded occasion of a person performing a miracle—Moses.
 - a. God called Moses to deliver the children of Israel.
 - b. One of Moses’ excuses for not going is they would not believe him.
 - (1) God’s response informs us of the purpose of miracles.

- (2) EXO. 4:1-9 ¹ And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee. ² And the LORD said unto him, What *is* that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. ³ And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. ⁴ And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand: ⁵ That they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee. ⁶ And the LORD said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand *was* leprous as snow. ⁷ And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again; and plucked it out of his bosom, and, behold, it was turned again as his *other* flesh. ⁸ And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign. ⁹ And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour *it* upon the dry *land*: and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry *land*.”
- c. We see that the miracles did confirm to the people that Moses was from God; EXO. 4:30-31 ³⁰ And Aaron spake all the words which the LORD had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. ³¹ And the people believed: and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.”
2. Elijah and the widow of Zarephath in 1 Kings 17.
- a. God send Elijah to be sustained by this poor widow.
- (1) When he arrives, he asks for a morsel of bread and a drink.
 - (2) She tells him that she only has enough meal for herself and her son and they would eat it and die.
 - (3) Elijah tells her to make him a cake first.
 - (4) She complies and he gives her the promise that the meal would not run out.
- b. He resides in the loft of her house.
- (1) The widow’s son dies, and she accuses him of slaying her son.
 - (2) He takes her son to his room and lays him on the bed. He stretched himself upon the child three times and cried out to God and the spirit of the child came into him and he revived.
 - (3) The miracle confirms Elijah as being from God; 1 Kin. 17:24 ²⁴ And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou *art* a man of God, *and* that the word of the LORD in thy mouth *is* truth.”

C. New Testament Evidence.

1. God showed that Jesus was His Son by miracles; Acts 2:22 ²² Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:”
2. John the Baptist sent two of his disciples to Jesus asking a question.
 - a. Mat. 11:3 ³ And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?”
 - b. Jesus answer; Mat. 11:4-5 ⁴ Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: ⁵ The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.”
 - c. John would know Jesus was the Messiah by the miracles.
3. Jesus healing the paralytic in Mark 2.
 - a. Four men brought a paralytic to Jesus for him to heal.
 - b. There was such a crowd around the house they could not gain access.

- c. Then went on the roof and let him down through the roof.
 - d. Mark 2:5 ⁴⁵ When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.”
 - e. Some believed He was blaspheming, so to prove that He was God’s Son he healed the man.
 - f. Mark. 2:8-12 ⁴⁸ And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? ⁹ Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, *Thy* sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? ¹⁰ But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) ¹¹ I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. ¹² And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.”
 - g. The text suggests that no miracle would have happened if there was not the need to give confirmation to Jesus and His Word.
4. Raising of Lazarus in John 11.
- a. When Jesus arrived, Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days.
 - b. Jesus raised him from the dead.
 - c. John 11:45 ⁴⁵ Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.”
5. Nicodemus in John 3.
- a. John 3:2 ⁴² The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.”
 - b. The Jews knew that Jesus and His message was true because of the miracle He did—they confirmed Him and His Word as being from God.

D. Affirmation of Scriptures.

- a. Jesus give the apostles the great commission; Mark 16:15-16 ¹⁵ And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. ¹⁶ He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
 - b. He had promised the Holy Spirit would be with them as they fulfilled this commission.
 - c. He reveals to them that they would be working miracles by the power of the Spirit; Mark 16:17-18 ¹⁷ And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; ¹⁸ They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.”
 - d. The apostles fulfilled what Jesus spoke; Mark 16:20 ²⁰ And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.”
 - (1) The miracles (even miraculous healing) were not:
 - (a) For the benefit of the recipient.
 - (b) To show the faith of the person through whom the Spirit performed the miracles (and the miracles were not dependent upon the faith of the recipient).
 - (2) Miracles were to verify what they taught—the Word of God.
2. Heb. 2:1-4 ¹ Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. ² For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; ³ How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto

us by them that heard *him*; ⁴ God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"

- a. In giving the Old Testament God spoke through angels.
 - b. We now receive God's Word from Jesus; Heb. 1:1-2 "¹ God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, ² Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;"
 - c. Jesus gave that Word to the apostles ("them that heard him") who spoke and confirmed it.
 - d. God confirmed them and the Word they spoke by the miracles.
3. Paul and Barnabas came to Iconium and preached.
 - a. Man believed their message.
 - b. Acts 14:3 "³ Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands."
 - c. God worked miracles to witness to or confirm the Word they preached.
 4. 1 Cor. 12-14
 - a. They used tongues as an exercise to exalt the speaker perverting a spiritual gift into an ego trip.
 - b. 1 Cor. 14:22 "²² Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying *serveth* not for them that believe not, but for them which believe."
 - c. They were for the purpose of confirming the man and his message being from God, not for self-exaltation.
 5. While miracles often benefitted the recipient, that was not their purpose.
 - a. They did not have a Bible in written form when they went preaching in the first century.
 - b. The miracles were the credentials (the evidence) that their message was from God.
 - c. The miracles confirmed the person and his message as being from God.

E. Scriptures have been Confirmed.

1. Legally when a high court confirms a decision of a lower court, it is for all time confirmed.
2. The Bible once confirmed does not need re-confirming, it is forever and eternally confirmed.
 - a. The miracles the apostles and holy prophets did confirmed the message which they wrote for us as being from God.
 - b. There is no need, or any means, for miracles today.

III. THE BIBLE IS NOT NEEDED.

A. God's Word has been revealed.

1. The purpose of miracles was to confirm the Word.
 - a. The Bible has been confirmed, thus there is no need for miracles today.
 - b. Pentecostal groups advocate miracles today.
 - c. If miracles are still being performed, then God must still be revealing His Word.
2. Jude 3 "³ Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."
 - a. *Delivered* is an aorist passive participle.

- b. Troy M. Cummings (“The Book of Hebrews: The Greek Text, Translations, Exegesis—No. II,” *Studies In Hebrews*, ed. Dub McClish (Denton, TX: Valid Publications, 1983), p. 296.) wrote, “In the Greek Testament the aorist participle’s principal use is to denote antecedent (past) action in relation to the main verb. The reason for this is that the aorist tense pictures the verbal action in summary, as a single whole, complete, *not* going on. This fact caused the Greeks to use the aorist participle predominantly to represent a preceding and past action in relation to the main verb.”
 3. Heb. 2:3 ⁴³ How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*.
 - a. *Was confirmed* is also an aorist passive participle.
 - b. Rubel Shelly (“What Is The ‘Perfect’ Thing Of First Corinthians 13:10?” *What Do You Know About The Holy Spirit?* ed. Wendell Winkler (Hurst, TX: Winkler Publications, 1980), p. 234.) wrote, “An aorist tense does not necessarily denote past time, but it does signify something accomplished at a set time rather than a continuing process. The unnamed author of Hebrews appears to have viewed the gospel message as revealed and confirmed.”
 4. If miracles are still occurring, then these writers were wrong.
- B. We are not to add to or take anything away from that already revealed, confirmed, inspired Book.**
 1. Deu. 4:2 ⁴² Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish *ought* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.”
 2. Pro. 30:6 ⁴⁶ Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.”
 3. 2 John 9 ⁴⁹ Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.”
 4. Rev. 22:18-19 ¹⁸ For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: ¹⁹ And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.”
 5. Pentecostals must and do add to God’s revealed Word, because the miracles confirm the word as being revealed from God.
- C. Some Pentecostals recognize the undermining of the authority of the Bible by their teachings.**
 1. Walter Hollenweger (*The Pentecostals* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988), p. 298.) wrote “Pentecostal Quakers regard the Bible as secondary. For example, the Full Salvation Union regards the people who wrote the Bible as having been inspired, but not the book. The Union is clear that some passages of the Bible have no direct significance for the individual reader of it. Although the Union recognizes that the Bible is necessary for a clear recognition of the will of God in certain situations in life and that it is a pointer and a stimulus for worship and practice, on the other hand it asserts that the Bible should never have to compete with God’s direct guidance of an individual.”
 2. Dub McClish (“The Destructive Consequences of Pentecostalism,” *Denominationalism Versus The Bible* ed. Terry M. Hightower (San Antonio, TX: Shenandoah Church Of Christ, 1992), pp. 262-263.) points out: “By this principle, each individual becomes his own authority and the authority of God’s Word falls victim to any clash between the two rationales. To apply the Lord’s

accusation of Pharisees of old, we would say of the Pentecostals of today, 'And ye had made void the word of God because of your feelings and emotions' (Matt. 15:6). Any belief that substitutes feelings for faith and romanticism for revelation is utterly destructive, representing a rejection of God Himself."

3. Their leadings, not the Bible, become their standard.
 - a. Full Salvation Union, *Manual*, p. 20 (Cited by Hollenweger, p. 298) says, "God has not confined himself to the written word. He still speaks direct to his children as the Bible plainly teaches he has done in the past. He does not direct anyone contrary to the standard of righteousness as taught in the Bible, but in his direct leadings, he often makes known his will to a person entirely apart from any written statement of scripture known to that person."
 - b. Dub McClish ("The Destructive Consequences of Pentecostalism," *Denominationalism Versus The Bible* ed. Terry M. Hightower (San Antonio, TX: Shenandoah Church Of Christ, 1992), p. 262) wrote of that by such beliefs "the Pentecostal advocate cuts himself loose from God's revealed-for-all-time body of faith—the New Testament, accepting in its stead the ever-fickle, ever-fallacious 'rule' of experiential 'testimony.' By this 'rule' God's acceptance of the worshipper is 'proved' by the feelings or experiences of the worshipper, rather than by the revelation from God of what pleases Him."
4. The Bible becomes a trivial book devoid of any power within their lives.

Conclusion: The Pentecostals vehemently proclaim the inspiration of the Scriptures and their belief of them as their rule of faith. However, they deny such by their practice. They rely instead upon their feelings and experiences. They do not teach the one church and its terms of entrance, worship, organization, etc., as found in the Bible. Instead they opt for what they desire and what feels good to them. By their doctrine they have no way to deny any doctrine that comes along if the person says the Holy Spirit revealed it to him. That is why there are so many divisions within the Pentecostal groups. They, as all people, need to return to the Bible as the **only** standard of faith and practice, and not rely upon the fleeting whims of feelings.