

# Weeping With Wilkerson (or These Strange Manifestations Are Not the Holy Ghost)

People will remember David Wilkerson, who was killed in a head-on collision in Tyler, Texas on Wednesday, for many different things.

Some will remember him for his books, like *The Cross and the Switchblade*, which became a best-selling phenomenon with more than 15 million copies sold in over 30 languages. Others will remember him for launching Teen Challenge, a nationwide ministry to reach out to people with life controlling habits. Still others will remember Wilkerson for his sometimes controversial prophetic words.

I will remember Wilkerson for all of that and more, but there is one particular message this general of the faith preached more than a decade ago that I believe needs to be shouted from the rooftops in these last days. (Indeed, many of Wilkerson's uncompromising messages need to be trumpeted in this hour, but a particular sermon he preached in Moscow in 2000 has weighed heavy on my heart since I first saw it a few years ago.) As was often the case with Wilkerson's sermons, it was relevant when he preached it but it grew even more relevant as time went on.

Wilkerson's sermon topic addressed strange manifestations that people wrongly attribute to the Holy Ghost. Now, Wilkerson was an Assemblies of God man who was well acquainted with the Holy Spirit. He was certainly one to flow with the Spirit of God. He heard from God. And it grieved his heart to witness the rise of strange manifestations in the name of the Holy Spirit—manifestations that were certainly not of God.

In his sermon, Wilkerson tells a story of a woman who was

confused about what was going on in her local church. She explained, "Many of our church don't know what to do. We were having wonderful services. The Spirit of the Lord was with us. But our pastor thought there was more. The church wasn't growing fast enough. And he heard of revival. He went to this revival. He came home three months ago. He got up to preach. And he started to laugh for half an hour. He couldn't control himself. He just laughed and laughed. There was no preaching. And he told us, 'This is a new move with the Holy Ghost'."

I want to stress this point: Wilkerson went on to explain that this wasn't a one-time incident at that local church. This wasn't some spontaneous outbreak of holy laughter. It went on for three solid months. There was no preaching for three months of Sundays. Only uncontrollable laughing. Wilkerson asked a pointed question: "The Holy Ghost who wrote [the Bible], who said, 'The truth sets you free,' will He cause the minister to laugh so he cannot preach this Word?" I'm not against laughing, but three months of laughing at the neglect of equipping the saints with the Word of God?

Without naming names, Wilkerson called out ministries where people barked like dogs and made other bizzare animal noises. He referenced unnamed churches where people hiss and wiggle on the floor like snakes. He described many strange manifestations—and explained how people call it the Holy Ghost. Fighting back the tears, Wilkerson said crediting these sorts of manifestations to the Holy Ghost makes Him look like a fool. Before the end of the sermon, Wilkerson was overcome with grief and began sobbing in his hands.

Did the Body of Christ heed this prophet's warning? Perhaps some did. But I have witnessed those things Wilkerson called out and perhaps worse over the past year.

Please don't get me wrong. I am all for experiencing the authentic power of God. I am all for valid manifestations of the Holy Spirit. I believe in the gifts of the Spirit. I love

to witness signs, wonders and miracles. I expect to see more of that in the days ahead. But I am concerned that some are ill-equipped to discern the difference between the Spirit of God and strange fire.

I've been to prayer meetings where a woman's eyes were rolling into the back of her head and her eyelids were fluttering rapidly as if she was under demonic control. (Are you going to tell me that the Holy Spirit rolls your eyes in the back of your head when you pray in the Spirit?) During service I saw that same woman up on the platform singing, then she abruptly stopped worshipping to prophesy utter nonsense for 10 minutes. The pastor did nothing.

I've seen people "toking" imaginary marijuana cigarettes and passing it down the line as if the Holy Ghost is some sort of drug. Again the pastor did nothing. People meow like cats, grown men lay on the floor in a sweaty huddle for hours, either unconscious or in some sort of funky haze, and teenagers twitch and shake uncontrollably as if having a seizure.

Again, I'm all for genuine manifestations of the Holy Spirit and I've participated in plenty of them. But I never read about Abel's eyes rolling in the back of his head when he brought his offering to God. There isn't anything in the Bible about Enoch's eyes fluttering rapidly and uncontrollably as he was raptured. Noah wasn't passing imaginary joints to his family in the ark. Abraham didn't have pileups with the 318 men trained in his own house. The Bible doesn't record Issac, Jacob or Joseph meowing like cats (or even barking like dogs or hissing like snakes). Moses didn't shake and twitch uncontrollably for an hour as if having epileptic seizure when he saw the glory of God.

If these heroes of faith didn't record such strange manifestations of the Spirit of God, how can we be so quick to say it's the Spirit of God? Can we automatically OK hissing,

writhing and barking just because John said many things Jesus did weren't recorded in the Bible? Shouldn't we test the spirits, like the Bible says?

Some of you are probably angry with me for saying these things. Let me make it crystal clear. I am not coming against signs that were recorded in the Bible. A talking . But a person who grunts and bucks like a mule? Praying over handkerchiefs and giving them to sick people. I've done it. Dancing in the Spirit. Go for it. Let's keep the topic on the topic. This article is about none of those things. This article isn't about biblical manifestations. It's about extrabiblical manifestations that, instead of glorifying God and producing good fruit, appear more like a side show.

Instead of picking up stones, you should be weeping with me. The Holy Ghost doesn't come to make us spiritual fruits, flakes and nuts. The Holy Ghost comes to convict us of sin, and of God's righteousness, and of judgment. He comes to comfort us, to counsel us, to help us. The Holy Ghost makes us more stable, not less stable.

The apostle Paul said, "If the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those who are uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind?" (1 Cor. 14:23, NKJV) The Amplified translation says "demented." The New Living Translation says "crazy." The King James version says "mad." And the Message translation puts it this way: "If you come together as a congregation and some unbelieving outsiders walk in on you as you're all praying in tongues, unintelligible to each other and to them, won't they assume you've taken leave of your senses and get out of there as fast as they can?"

Get out of there as fast as I can. That's what I do when I see these strange unbiblical manifestations and that's what I would suggest you do if you see people hissing, foaming at the mouth, and writhing on the floor in the middle of church. If

Paul offered this warning about praying in tongues, what in heaven would he say about barking like dogs, meowing like cats, and the like? Selah.

At the end of the day, I look at Jesus. You don't get any fuller of the Holy Spirit than Jesus. And I never saw my Jesus rolling around on the ground pretending to smoke imaginary weed or rolling his eyes in the back of his head or making animal noises. I haven't seen one record of Spirit-filled saints acting that way in the Bible. You would think if such mad manifestations were genuinely of the Holy Spirit and fell on those who were desperately seeking God's face we would see them recorded in the Book of Acts. Yes, we see strange miracles, but that didn't include hissing, barking, writhing, etc.

Now, I did read about an encounter Jesus had with someone who offered some strange manifestations. Indeed, a boy was experiencing some strange manifestations that heightened in the presence of God. Scripture reads, "When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth" (Mark 9:20, NIV)

What did Jesus do in the face of these strange manifestations? He rebuked the evil spirit and cast it out. So when I see people attributing animal noises, hissing, and other strange manifestations to the Holy Spirit, I weep with Wilkerson. Don't you? Please join with me in praying that the Church would have greater discernment in this hour. Amen.

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