

The Biblical Support for Falling Out in the Spirit

Notice some biblical evidence for this phenomenon. In Genesis 2:21, God caused a “deep sleep” to fall on Adam so He could remove a rib in order to fashion woman. He then closed Adam’s side. He performed all of this surgery while Adam slept. He not only removed the rib, but He also healed Adam’s body after the surgery. Many have wondered if perhaps Adam had a scar on his side as a reminder that Eve was a gift to him. (We know that the Second Adam had His side ripped open and still bears the scar showing His love to us.) Adam felt God’s touch on his life in his physical body.

What God did then, He can do now. During a “falling out” time God can perform surgery and healing for people in a spiritual, emotional, mental, or physical way.

In Genesis 15:12, God put Abram into a deep sleep. God then prophesied or spoke the future over Abram’s resting spirit.

He told Abram that his descendants would be slaves in Egypt for four hundred years. After that period of bondage, He said Abram’s descendants would be delivered and would march out of Egypt with great wealth. Not only did God prophesy the future, but He also promised that Abram would live to a great old age and would be buried with his fathers. Abram listened in his trance and heard the voice of God.

In Numbers 24, God used a mercenary false prophet, a mere magician and sorcerer, to speak the word of God. Balaam had made a deal with Balak, the king of Moab. For big bucks, Balaam agreed to curse the children of Israel publicly. Verses 4 and 16 state of Balaam: “[He] sees the vision of the Almighty, [he] falls down, with eyes wide open.”

Each time Balaam tried to curse the people of God, he

fell down with his eyes wide open, seeing a vision from Almighty God. Instead of curses, blessings for the nation of Israel came rushing out of his mouth! That happened not once but three times. Angrily, King Balak shouted that the deal was off. Balaam would get no money from him! The fourth time Balaam opened his mouth, he prophesied in verse 17: "A Star shall come out of Jacob; a Scepter shall rise out of Israel."

In a trance, the unbelieving follower of witchcraft saw a vision of God and prophesied the word of God. How amazing to consider that through a trance, God used Balaam's mouth for His glory!

Even today, God can and does turn unbelieving occult followers into preachers of His gospel. Several months ago, a teenager stood in our service and gave testimony to Christ's intervention in her life. She and her friends had become deeply involved in Wicca, or supposed "white" magic. She had soon become dissatisfied with it and began to experiment with more blatant occult practices. She found herself gripped by something she could no longer control, and drug and alcohol abuse added to her problems.

The tormented young lady was put in contact with our deliverance counseling ministry. She was gloriously saved and set free and now gives her testimony to warn others of the dangers of playing around with the lure of power that Satan uses to entangle souls.

The prophet Ezekiel had several experiences in which God visited him in a trance. In Ezekiel 1:28, he described the first of them and recorded his response: "This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. So when I saw it, I fell on my face."

Ezekiel 2:2 reveals that the prophet saw a vision and heard a voice when he fell on his face. The voice commissioned him

to a ministry to a rebellious people, and the voice told Ezekiel not to be afraid. While Ezekiel was in a trance, God called him to a new work—a new ministry.

Ezekiel described another supernatural experience: The glory of the Lord stood there, like the glory which I saw by the River Chebar; and I fell on my face. —Ezekiel 3:23

During a trance experience, Daniel heard the voice of an angel speaking about the end of time. Daniel 8:27 states that when the trance was over, Daniel fainted and was sick for several days.

Falling Out in the New Testament

The New Testament also records many biblical accounts that support this strange and unusual phenomenon labeled “falling out.” The first reference is Matthew 17:1–6, which is an account of the Transfiguration. On the mountain, God showed three disciples what the significance of the Law and Prophets was and that Jesus was greater and the fulfillment of both. When the disciples heard that, they fell to the ground with faces down. They were terrified and totally overwhelmed by both the words of the revelation and the way it was delivered. Jesus touched them and reassured them gently.

The account in Matthew 28:4 tells us that the soldiers who were guarding Jesus’s tomb were literally paralyzed with fear when the angel appeared sitting on the stone that was rolled away. The guards were so afraid of the angel that they “shook for fear of him, and became like dead men.” Their fear (reverence) in the presence of the angel made them fall as though they were slain. Notice that in the presence of God’s power, both believers and unbelievers seem to be unable to stand.

The book of John tells the account of unbelievers falling in the presence of something holy. In this account Judas and the Roman soldiers had come to arrest Jesus. Jesus

identified Himself, saying, "I am He" or "I AM." The power in His words caused the soldiers to move away from Jesus, and then they suddenly fell to the ground (John 18:1-6).

In the book of Acts, the apostle Paul recorded two separate visitations from God. The first encounter took place as he was on the road to Damascus with papers to arrest more Christians. Paul (or Saul, as he was known before his salvation) was responsible for the deaths of many believers. In Acts 9:3, a blinding light from heaven appeared and seized Saul. He heard a voice from heaven and fell to the ground blinded. His fellow travelers also heard the voice but saw nothing except Saul's response and blindness: "Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?' And he said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting'" (Acts 9:4-5).

Here again we see clear evidence of falling out as a natural response to a divine revelation. Paul arose from that experience blinded for several days. Although his physical sight was temporarily gone, his spiritual eyes could see clearly. In a trance, he received confrontation and correction from Jesus. Paul recounted this experience before the Jews in Jerusalem in Acts 22 and again before King Agrippa in Acts 26.

Another encounter experienced by Paul is recorded in Acts 22:17-18: "Now it happened, when I [Paul] returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I was in a trance and saw Him [Jesus] saying to me, 'Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me.'"

Paul definitely heard the voice of Jesus while he was in a trance. We do not know whether or not he had fallen to the ground, but he was out of consciousness and totally absorbed or engaged in communion with Christ. The purpose of the trance was to give Paul deliverance from his enemies.

The experience happened to him in church. God needed to give Paul specific instructions, for more than forty Jewish leaders had sworn an oath that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. God supernaturally revealed that He had other plans for Paul!

Acts 10:10–17 records yet another apostle's experience. Peter had gone out onto a housetop to pray while his hosts were preparing dinner. There he "fell into a trance." In the vision, Peter saw a sheet let down from heaven with all kinds of animals on it. The voice in the vision said, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." Peter responded by saying, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean." The voice rebuked Peter, saying that what God had cleansed, he should never call common.

The exchange happened three times. God used the vision to call Peter to minister to a man named Cornelius in Caesarea. God was making Peter ready for a new ministry to the Gentiles. Peter heeded the vision that called him to a new task.

The whole book of Revelation is a vision of God's glory to the beloved apostle John. Revelation 1:1 gives this introduction to the book: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John." Verse 10 gives further details when John says, "was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet." But Revelation 1:17 gives us a compelling piece of information: "And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, 'Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last'" (emphasis added).

John in his vision saw many things and heard the voice of Jesus. He was a witness to the Word of God and a witness to the testimony of Jesus. He saw, heard, and obeyed the

heavenly vision.

Notes From History

Here again are the great revivalists from history who observed instances of resting in the Lord. Jonathan Edwards, the main instrument and theologian of the Great Awakening in America (1725–1760), said in his Account of the Revival of Religion in North Hampton in 1740–42: . . . many in their religious affections being raised far beyond what they had ever had before: and there were some instances of persons lying in a sort of trance, remaining perhaps for a whole twenty-four hours motionless, and with their senses locked up; but in the meantime under strong imaginations, as though they went to heaven, and had there a vision of glorious and delightful objects.

Charles Finney (1792–1875) was one of the most powerful revivalists since the Reformation. At a country place named Sodom, in the state of New York, Finney gave one address in which he described the condition of Sodom before God destroyed it:

I had not spoken to them in this strain of direct application, I should think, more than a quarter of an hour, when all at once an awful solemnity seemed to settle down upon them; the congregation began to fall from their seats in every direction, and cried for mercy. If I had had a sword in each hand, I could not have cut them off their seats as fast as they fell. Indeed nearly the whole congregation were either on their knees or prostrate, I should think, in less than two minutes from this first shock that fell upon them. Every one prayed for himself, who was able to speak at all.

What does God do when you fall out in a trance? God does exactly what He wants to do. His ways are not our ways, but we know that He does all things well! In every case, Jesus accomplishes a deeper work in the believer. He may perform

surgery; heal your body; prophesy; give a promise; speak a strange word out of your mouth; send an angel; give instruction, correction, or deliverance; or call you to a new ministry. Whatever He does is communication from the Spirit of God to the spirit of man—Spirit-to-spirit contact. This bypasses your mind, will, emotions, thoughts, carnal desires, limitations, and demonic strongholds.

I like to think of falling out as a time-out with the Lord. If you are a parent, you may be familiar with that term. Little children are often placed in a time-out corner or chair in order to think about what they have done or failed to do. They are isolated from a group to calm their busy little bodies.

In the same way, we may need a time-out from our busyness. Our heavenly coach may choose to take us out of the game temporarily. He may pull us aside to say a word of praise for a job well done. Our heavenly coach may need to say, "Come away and rest awhile!" He may have a new play or assignment for us, or He may change the game plan altogether. The Father may sense that we are hurt and need time for healing. Whatever the reason for a time-out with our heavenly coach, we must listen to Him and trust Him, for it will always be for our own good.