

What Happens When You Get 'Slain in the Spirit?'

Recently, I got slain in the Spirit ...

Now, when someone uses the polarizing phrase "slain in the Spirit," it invokes all of the *wrong* images—namely, some kind of demonstrative televangelist bopping someone over the head in a severely manipulated situation.

Does this happen? Sadly, yes. But for every counterfeit, there is the genuine article. I believe there is an authentic experience where the power of God can touch someone with such force, they will fall down (and also shake, tremble, laugh or cry)

What does it mean to be "slain in the Spirit?" We label someone as having undergone this experience when they receive prayer—often through the laying on of hands—and they fall backwards. I want to expound upon the definition.

My Recent Experience of Being "Slain in the Spirit"

When I got slain in the Spirit, did I receive prayer and the laying on of hands? Yes ... and no. Yes, I received prayer and felt a powerful electricity go into me—thus, pushing me to the ground. I also fell to the ground when the manifest presence of God entered the room and sovereignly touched me—with no human aid. I simply say, He is God; let Him do what He wants!

We recently hosted revival pioneers John and Carol Arnott for a weekend of meetings in South Florida. Truly, John and Carol are two of the most precious, humble and God-fearing leaders I know. I will stand in defense of both their ministry and the "Toronto Blessing" without apology.

Please know that I am a staunch advocate of upholding

Scripture above experience. I believe in the absolute authority of the Bible, and will never, ever allow some spiritual experience or alleged prophecy to challenge what is clearly presented in both Old and New Testaments.

At the same time, as one who takes the study of Scripture very seriously (having pursued and received my Master of Divinity from Regent University) I cannot deny one glaring reality that is present from Genesis to Revelation: When God touches human flesh, *something will happen*. Period.

It's time we changed our perspective on the alleged "manifestations of the Holy Spirit." We need to transition from rejection at worst or toleration at best and begin to warmly embrace the different ways the Spirit touches people. *What if there is disorder? Fleshly disruption? Show and spectacle?* Then we mature in our discernment to the point where we can identify and lovingly address the problem or simply shut it down.

We cannot pursue true revival without unreserved surrender to the movement of the Holy Spirit.

We sing songs about wanting God to move.

We pray for revival.

We cry out for the Holy Spirit to "touch" people.

All of these are valid desires.

Problem? We want God on our terms, not His. We want the Holy Spirit to move in complete accordance with our order of service, rather than adjusting to His. I'd rather take the good with the bad and the ugly, *and welcome the Holy Spirit's movement* than continue on with Christianity as usual.

Scriptural Effects of Being "Slain in the Spirit"

Let's pause for a moment and consider the effects of God

Almighty manifesting Himself in our limited, finite human space.

Scripture tells us that when heaven touches Earth, and God touches creation, things shake:

“The mountains quake before Him, and the hills melt; the land rises up before Him, the earth and everything that dwells on it” (Nahum 1:5, MEV).

“Now Mount Sinai was completely covered in smoke because the Lord had descended upon it in fire, and the smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain shook violently” (Ex. 19:18, MEV).

Even in the New Testament, we witness evidence of created order responding to the movement of God. When Jesus died, *“at that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from the top to the bottom. And the ground shook, and the rocks split apart. The graves also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had died were raised, and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the Holy City and appeared to many”* (Matt. 27:50-53, MEV).

These are three examples among multitudes. Read through the Psalms and prophetic books, and you will be confronted, time after time, with language that illustrates what happens *“when God comes down.”* The Earth responds. Trembles. Shakes. Mountains bow. Hills melt like wax. *If creation responds to the move of God, how much more will human flesh respond?*

Human Beings React to the Presence of God's Glory

Both Old and New Testaments are filled with evidence of what I call the *overwhelming power of God*. He is good, yes. He is gentle and kind, for sure. But consider the language of the Bible when we are introduced to the Holy Spirit. He's always rushing in, or rushing upon *in power*.

We're familiar with Acts 2:2: *"Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting."*

The language is not tame; it's "violent." Not angry, mad or mean violent. It's as if heaven had been waiting a few thousand years for just the right conditions for the Spirit of God to be released into the Earth—and *remain*. Before the work of Jesus on Calvary, mankind was not in right standing with God and, thus, unable to be filled with the abiding Holy Spirit (remember, He is *holy* and thus demands a *holy* place of habitation). Under the Old Covenant, the Spirit only came temporarily upon a select few.

Even then, consider the Old Testament language describing the move of the Spirit.

King David: *"So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David"* (1 Sam. 16:13, NIV; ESV uses the phrase *rushed upon David*)

Gideon: *"Then the Spirit of the LORD enveloped Gideon"* (Judges 6:34, MEV); literally, the Spirit of God put Gideon on like a glove.

Samson: *Then the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him"* (Judges 14:6, MEV).

Samuel prophesying to King Saul: *"Then the Spirit of the LORD will rush upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man"* (1 Sam. 10:6, ESV)

The priests: *"... that the house, the house of the Lord, was filled with a cloud. And the priests were not able to stand in order to serve because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God"* (2 Chr. 5:13-14, MEV).

Even John the beloved disciple—the one who rested his head

upon the breast of Jesus—fell down as a dead man when encountering Jesus in His resurrection power (Rev. 1:17)

Why is it so difficult for us to accept that when God's presence comes into contact with a human being, they *will respond*?

So What Happens When You Are Slain in the Spirit?

You don't *need* to go down on the ground to experience God. However, I do believe that, at times, spiritual surgery takes place during these precious times. It happened to me.

When Carol Arnott prayed for me, it was like volts of lightning went into my body. I don't know how else to explain it. What I love about John and Carol is they don't try to manufacture an experience; they are not manipulators. They minister with love and gentleness. And yet, they carry and release an unusual measure of anointing.

While on the ground, I sensed the Lord performing surgery on me, saying, "I am removing the fear of man from your life—especially when it comes to sharing about the Holy Spirit." A wonderful experience, yes, but I had a role to play in carrying it out. Was I going to partner with God, believe He'd performed a powerful work and get up from that touch, living like something really happened? Or would I simply settle for a momentary touch, when in fact, the touch is always meant to yield sustained transformation? *We get to decide.*

The common argument against the phenomenon is: "I've seen people fall down, get back up and go on living the same dysfunctional way they did before they got touched by God." There is a stewardship to one's encounter with God. Either they were faking it—and that's between them and the Lord—or they received a genuine touch, but they failed to steward the work of the Spirit in those sacred moments.

We have a role to play in receiving and walking out the touch of God on our lives.

I write about this experience without reservation because I believe, in this desperate hour, the solution to the ills and maladies of the world is *not* more Christian rhetoric. Yes, let's be a people who stand firmly upon our convictions and uphold the unchanging truths of Scripture. Absolutely.

But here's the thing: people aren't looking for a nice light show with a Christian label. They need something real and raw. David describes the world *out there* as dry and weary—a place where there is no water. We carry living water. In fact, God is not content for His people to sit around, simply keeping the living water of His Spirit all to themselves. Certainly not! This living water is meant to be released as a rushing river (John 7:37-39)!

May this river flow once again in our churches and lives, and may the Holy Spirit come rushing in with power *on His terms*, not ours.

Larry Sparks is co-author of the book *The Fire That Never Sleeps* with Dr. Michael Brown and John Kilpatrick. Larry's mission is to help teach all believers how to experience and sustain personal revival—enjoying a deep relationship with God through encountering the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. To this end, he maintains a blog through *Charisma* magazine, is a published author, teaches revival seminars, and is the co-founder of *Renewing South Florida*, an organization committed to uniting the local church for regional outpouring. Larry holds a Master of Divinity from Regent University and presently serves as publisher for *Destiny Image* publishing house.

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