



Benny Hinn: How Great Thou Aren't Orchestrating a Mighty Visitation of the Holy Spirit

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Considering all that has been written about Benny Hinn in *The Quarterly Journal*, it should be noted that PFO researchers have made attendance at some of his "Miracle Crusades" part of the analysis. To see Hinn in operation is a sight to behold. His *This Is Your Day* broadcasts are a carefully edited, sanitized, and propagandized edition of what takes place at these meetings. The whole process, which begins months before the event, is remarkable.

Last summer an announcement from Benny Hinn Ministries arrived stating that a *Miracle Crusade* would take place Sept. 11-12 in Springfield, Mo. Our invitation said:

"The Church is experiencing the greatest move of God in world history! ... For years we have been told the greatest days are ahead, but I am convinced that they are here! ... If you have a need, come expecting your miracle! ... I'm expecting a mighty visitation of the Holy Spirit at the Springfield, Missouri Miracle Crusade. Whatever you do, don't miss it!"¹

Hinn's ministry even enclosed 15 "Special Guest Passes." The invitation also included the instructions to immediately call a phone number "to receive special admission for you, and your friends at the Springfield, Missouri Miracle Crusade." We complied. The passes also included the important notice that we were to "Present this pass at the Partner's entrance before 5:00 p.m. for special admission for your family, friends and loved ones."²

We followed the instructions and arrived at Hammons Coliseum around 4:45 p.m. Only one set of doors to the coliseum was open — there was no special "Partner's entrance" designated — as the crowd entered the auditorium. The left side of the entrance was for those attending the crusade in wheelchairs. However, the wheelchair line had come to a standstill and an attendant was turning people away, saying that there was no more room in the wheelchair section. So much for Hinn's call to "come expecting your miracle!"

By the time we actually made it inside the building, we could see only a few rows of empty seats in the very back of the auditorium. And standing between us and those seats were people pressed shoulder to shoulder, all with the same idea: get to those empty seats!

We also found ourselves standing between those seats and a concession stand. People who already had seats were coming our way to buy hot dogs, nachos, pretzels, popcorn, candy, and soft drinks. (Yes, apparently a concession stand is an important staple at a "Miracle Crusade.") Some who already had bought their refreshments were pushing themselves through those trying to get to the remaining seats. One woman bulldozed her way through the crowd, holding her nachos in one hand and gesturing "Get outta my way!" with the other. We wondered which fruit of the Spirit she was manifesting.

After close to an hour of being pushed, shoved, and squeezed, we

finally located a pair of empty seats — at the very back of the auditorium in the bleachers. The Miracle Crusade Guest Passes, with their promise that we would "enjoy special admission," were of no use. They weren't even collected.

However, some did enjoy "special" seating. There were many empty chairs on the main floor, but ushers and guards turned away unauthorized persons. This area was being held for select people and filled just before the start of the service. This is a gimmick Hinn adopted from Kathryn Kuhlman. Years ago, Hinn reported that a Kuhlman confidant told him, "Kathryn was so sensitive to the Holy Spirit, that if one person sat on the front row who was not of the same spirit, he would kill the service."³

Apparently Hinn didn't want to take any chances, either. However, his practice is contrary to the Word of God (James 2:1-4).

A crusade representative indicated that the coliseum held 9500 people. This is a far cry from other arenas hosting Benny Hinn crusades, where at least double that amount attend. This could indicate that Hinn is having to play to smaller venues to keep his ministry lucrative.

William Lobdell, staff writer for the *Los Angeles Times*, reported, "Donations dipped by 12% for the first quarter of [2003], say ministry officials, a result of bad publicity and the weak economy that has hurt other nonprofits."⁴ The bad publicity spoken of includes the December 2002 *Dateline NBC* special, which again

brought a national spotlight on Hinn's unsubstantiated claims of healing and charges of misuse of funds by his ministry.

As we waited for the crusade to officially begin, we watched the crowd. People continued to flock to the concession stands and restrooms, climbing over and around us, up and down the narrow aisles and steep steps.⁵ Numerous cameras were in position and readied to record the crusade with all the detail of a professional sporting event.

Of particular note was those who had come for their "healing." We paid close attention to those in wheelchairs who could be seen from our seats. We saw a blind man, white cane in hand, who crawled to a seat in the section next to us. A man in the row behind us had no left ear. A woman across the aisle from us had a visible cyst at the neckline of her dress. It is likely that all those who came for healing had received the same form letter telling them to come expecting their miracle.

However, like the thousands who attend Hinn's crusades elsewhere, these three left with the same infirmities with which they came. If they came expecting a miracle, they left disappointed.

At 7:00 p.m., the choir and orchestra were in full force with audience participation. Hinn's musical celebrities for this crusade included Judy Jacobs, Jimmie McDonald (who gained success singing at Kuhlman's meetings for 15 years), and Hinn's crusade mainstay, Steve Brock.

After only 15 minutes, the audience was led in a thundering rendition of the beloved hymn, "How Great Thou Art."⁶ And this could mean only one thing: the star of the evening was about to take center stage. And right on cue, during the crowd's exuberant singing of the chorus' "How great thou art, how great thou art," Hinn appeared on stage, the arena's spotlights focused and blazing on the faith healer in his tailored white Nehru suit.

The grand entrance during the chorus of "How Great Thou Art" is

another stage maneuver Hinn appropriated from Kuhlman. During her own healing crusades in the 1960s and 70s, Kuhlman would glide back and forth across the stage, with the bell-shaped sleeves of her long white dress floating in the breeze, while the faithful resounded with choruses of "How Great Thou Art."

Hinn now took the reins and led the faithful in worship with a variety of traditional hymns and contemporary spiritual songs. During this time of continued praise and worship, it was interesting to observe that one woman who had been sitting in a wheelchair rose to her feet and stood while singing. She did not appear to have any problems in doing so.

Jacobs and McDonald both performed solos, and Hinn told the audience about the many opportunities he is having to "preach the Gospel" throughout the world. He then offered a message of and invitation for salvation. Regrettably, the orthodoxy of the message and call would be undermined by his sermon soon to come. The final order of business — before the healing campaign began — was the offering. Ushers flooded the auditorium with hundreds of buckets to collect the offering envelopes.

On the offering envelopes, there were sections for present supporters to increase their "current monthly Partner commitment" by \$50, \$100, \$150, or \$250. Hinn also solicited those who would make a "Special Outreach Commitment" with a faith pledge in the next 30 days of \$10,000, \$5,000, \$2,000, down to \$250.

While Hinn told the people that they were not buying their miracle, he really was soliciting donations with promises of "give to get." It's a Christianized version of Las Vegas or the lottery. Followers hope and pray that if they keep playing the numbers — contributing to Hinn to spread the Gospel — their winning lot will soon come their way and they'll cash in. For those who forgot to bring cash or their checkbook, Visa, MasterCard, Discover, and American Express were accepted.

Having concluded the formalities of singing, announcements, an altar call, and the all-important offering, it was now time to begin the Miracle Service.

It long has been said that Hinn delivers false hope to his gullible followers. The great danger and misfortune in this is that he does so at the expense of Scripture. There are those who assert that Hinn, more recently, has become a better or more reliable exegete of Scripture. Yet, throughout the years, Hinn has routinely mangled biblical texts. At the Springfield crusade, he fared no better and his impoverished exegesis was on display.

The spiritually and physically debilitating consequences of his 20-minute sermonette on healing that followed, and which set the stage for the showcasing of his healing testimonials, were the real tragedy.

Hinn's defenders who argue for his ascent into orthodox doctrine and entry into the mainstream would do well to consider his words in Springfield. Hinn told his faithful:

"Ladies and gentlemen, forgiveness of sin and the healing of the body always go together. Always go together, they're not separate. Tonight you saw many accept the fact that Jesus died on the cross for them. Their sins were forgiven. They went back to their seats with joy, knowing, having the assurance, salvation is theirs. And so it is. Of course, He didn't [just] die for sin, but He suffered for disease. He was wounded for transgressions, and bruised for iniquities, and chastised that we may — we might have peace. But it doesn't end there, for it says with His stripes we are healed. With His stripes we are healed. Those of you sick in body, this is your moment."⁷

Hinn continued his message:

"Salvation, that divine grace we call salvation, comes in twofold dynamics. There is the front of the cross and there is the back of the cross. So many preach the front, they forget the back. They see Jesus on the cross and say 'Come into my heart.' But if ever

you walk and look at the back of that cross, you'll see His stripes. You [should] never forget the back of that cross. The front will give you salvation, but His back will give your healing. It's a twofold salvation."⁸

Hinn next proclaimed:

"In the communion we have the bread and the wine — or the grape juice in some churches. ... The bread was broken for your body, the blood was shed for your soul. It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul, the Bible says. ... The blood was not shed to heal your body. Hear this. The blood was shed to cleanse you from sin. But the body, what about the body? ... The body was broken that your body might be put back together. His body was broken, His body was broken that your body might be healed."⁹

And then Hinn brought his eisegesis to a head:

"I'm telling you that the Scripture says that Jesus Christ not only died to save you, He suffered to heal your body. He is the savior of the soul and the savior of the body. Redemption, your redemption, in it your healing is included. The healing of the body is included in the work of redemption. That is a fact — an eternal fact. ... I'm here in Springfield, Missouri, to tell you Jesus still heals. He still heals. And He will heal you tonight! ... So let's not receive half, let's receive the whole thing tonight. ... But now God Almighty has always given both together. What is required is faith. Remember this, it took faith to save you. You didn't feel nothing [sic], you just believed it. You know how it feels to be — to get saved? You just said, you said, 'Jesus, I'm sorry I've sinned. Come into my heart.' Bang! You're saved. It's just that easy to get healed. Just that easy to get healed. You don't have to pray, you don't have to pray a loooooonnnng King James prayer. You just have to say, 'Help!'"¹⁰

In just a few short minutes, Hinn delivered a litany of faulty biblical interpretations that would require a separate article for full analysis. However, a few critical points warrant an immediate response.

First is his assertion that salvation is twofold: "forgiveness of sin and the healing of the body always go together." That would be a wonderful promise if true, but sadly it isn't. The idea comes not from Scripture, but from the imagination of Hinn (and other Word Faith teachers), and herein lies the harmful effects of false teaching.

Those who buy into Hinn's novel premise are in for a disaster. Hinn *rightly* promises that salvation and forgiveness of sin are by the merits of Christ's death upon Calvary's cross. But he undermines this biblical truth by *wrongly* promising that healing of our physical body is by the merits of Christ's suffering. Scripture declares that Jesus was made sin (or a sin offering) on our behalf (2 Corinthians 5:21). Nowhere is it ever declared in God's Word that Jesus was made *sickness* for us. First Corinthians 15 is clear that "Christ died for our sins" (v. 3). It does not say, "Christ suffered for our sickness." In no uncertain terms, Hinn adds to the Gospel message preached by Paul which he received from the Lord Jesus Christ.

The "Catch-22" for Hinn's devotees is that because, according to him, both redemption and healing are guaranteed as a result of the suffering and death of Christ, then there can be no certainty about salvation (eternal life) when there is no healing. The web Hinn weaves and which entangles his faithful is that when their physical healing is not realized, then any assurance that their salvation is secure is equally suspect. Taken to its logical conclusion, Hinn's theology surmises if God is not faithful when He has promised to heal one physically, how can He be trusted as faithful to save one?

Richard Mayhue addresses Hinn's unbiblical proposition:

"...if healing is in the atonement and if it applies physically today, those who ask by faith for physi-

cal healing and are not healed have no logical right to be assured of their salvation. In contrast, God says that if we are saved, we have every right to believe in our salvation. So if physical healing were in the atonement and if we ask to be healed and are not, not only do we lose our assurance of the physical, but we should also lose our assurance of the spiritual. Fortunately, such an unbiblical conclusion can be reached only if we have first taken a wrong approach to what the atonement is really all about — the forgiveness of our sins."¹¹

Hinn draws and declares his erroneous theology by reading into the text of Isaiah 53 a promise that is not there. The emphasis contained in the whole of Isaiah 53 is directed toward spiritual healing — not physical healing as a second and equal dynamic of salvation. The repetitive theme found in the Isaiah passage is the absolution of sin:

"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. ... For the transgressions of My people He was stricken" (Isaiah 53:5-6, 8b).

Hinn wrongly capitalizes on the phrase, "by His stripes we are healed," found in the latter part of verse 5. Hinn argues that the sufferings of Christ guarantee physical healing, and that the death of Christ guarantees spiritual healing (or forgiveness of sin). Yet Isaiah proclaims, Christ was *wounded* for our *transgressions*, He was *bruised* for our *iniquities*. Clear and simple, the "wounded" and "bruised" speak to the eradication of our "transgressions" and "iniquities," not to physical healing.

Those who look to Hinn for extraordinary biblical understanding get more Scripture twisting. Consider Hinn's statement that Christ's "body was broken that your body might be

put back together. His body was broken, His body was broken that your body might be healed." Hinn again makes a declaration foreign to — and contradicted by — the Scriptures. The body of Jesus was not "broken." In fact, the Bible says the requirement for a sacrificial lamb was just the opposite (Exodus 12:46, Numbers 9:11-12).

Of Jesus' body, John wrote: "But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. ... For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, 'Not one of His bones shall be broken'" (John 19:33, 36).

Once again, Hinn has established his false "healing in the atonement" theology by reading into the Bible's text and, more dreadfully, has made Jesus to say something He did not say. Hinn told his Springfield audience that, "[Jesus] said to His disciples, 'Take, eat my broken body. Broken for you.'" No such statement by Jesus can be found in the Bible.

While Hinn may contend his point can be argued from 1 Corinthians 11:24, it cannot. The Apostle Paul, in citing Jesus' command when He celebrated the Passover meal with his disciples (e.g., Luke 22:19), does not exegete our Lord's words into a "twofold dynamics" theory of salvation. Moreover, the word "broken" in the phrase "This is my body which is broken for you" from the King James Version (and New King James Version) is not supported by any other ancient texts or by comparison with other passages in the KJV. A.T. Robertson states of 1 Corinthians 11:24:

"*Klomenon* (broken) of the *Textus Receptus* (King James Version) is clearly not genuine. Luke (22:19) has *didomenon* (given), which is the real idea here. As a matter of fact the body of Jesus was not broken (John 19:36). The bread was broken, but not the body of Jesus."¹²

Additionally, it must be stated that the problem in Hinn's proclamation comes not from the use or citation of the word *broken* from the KJV passage. There are many good Christians who use 1 Corinthians 11:24 from the

KJV. The issue of concern here is that Hinn develops or bolsters the unbiblical concept of physical healing from the word imported into the passage. This is far afield from those noted above and is more at home with the biblical interpretations of cults which build an elaborate doctrine upon an unqualified verse in Scripture. But Hinn *must* employ such a poor hermeneutic (here and in Isaiah 53) for his message of "physical healing" is the foundation of his whole ministry. Without it, there would be no packed arenas, no television broadcasts with "signs and wonders," no best-selling books on the miraculous — and no deluge of donations to his ministry.

As Hinn wrapped up his healing sermon, he began to orchestrate the miraculous with nearly another half-hour of praise singing, this time interspersed with brief narrations of biblical healing accounts and personal explicit admonitions including:

"You on wheelchairs tonight, I have news for you. God Almighty paid for your healing. Don't stay in that wheelchair tonight."

"That wheelchair is not God's plan for your life."

"You in those wheelchairs, you don't have to stay in those wheelchairs."

"Now listen: The job is done, the price is paid. You don't have to be sick anymore."

"Come out of your wheelchair in Jesus' name."

"Remember: whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered not only from sin, but from diseases and infirmities."

"As you call upon His name, miracles happen."

"Lift your hands and receive your healing now."

Then as the music and the orders to "receive your healing" reached a crescendo, Hinn began calling out the miraculous left and right:

"Someone's just been healed of lung cancer. I rebuke that lung cancer in Jesus' name."

"Lift your hands and ask Him to heal you. Don't wait for me to call out your healing."

"Somebody's neck has just been healed."

"Somebody with bad circulation, you have something the matter with your blood circulation. The Lord's healing you right now!"

"Somebody's ears are being healed."

"Stomach cancer is being healed. I rebuke it in the name of the Lord."

"Arthritis is being healed. Someone with arthritis to my right. ... Pick up that right leg that has been stiff with arthritis. I rebuke that arthritis in Jesus' mighty name."

"A skin condition has been healed to my right."

"Somebody's eyes are being healed way up there in the balcony, way up and to my left somebody's eyes have just been healed."

"Somebody with a tumor under the right arm. The tumor is disappearing."

And the healings just kept coming. "So many healings, I can hardly keep up with the Holy Spirit," Hinn lamented. Blindness, cancers, muscle conditions, deafness, bone diseases, ulcers, even varicose veins could not withstand Hinn's claimed revelation knowledge and divine healing.

As Hinn continued working the crowd, calling out a barrage of healings, Steve Brock and ministry representatives made their way onto the main floor to cultivate those in the audience for their healing. As Hinn continued to announce the healings, ushers thrust multiple empty wheelchairs onto the stage. The audience roared at the sight. Yet, for all the empty wheelchairs and all the words of knowledge of divine healing, it seemed to have taken quite a while for individuals to come forward and testify of their miracle. Where were all the people who once were seated in these wheelchairs?

One recipient of a “healing” was the woman in the wheelchair who had stood up during the singing. She claimed to have been healed from arthritis and was allowed on the platform with Hinn. Hinn entertained the crowd by “slaying her in the Spirit.”

One who was not as fortunate to make it to the platform was a severely crippled young man. A woman, possibly his mother, worked fruitlessly with him to straighten up. He struggled up and down the aisle, only to finally fall back into his wheelchair.

No doubt, their predicament was one that was repeated all over the auditorium — and in other cities where Hinn takes his Miracle Crusades. People who leave suffering from the same infirmity with which they arrived surely must struggle with an eventual shipwrecked faith. Many will leave the arena with not only a physical problem, but now thinking there’s something spiritually askew. How cruel, unconscionable, and utterly heartless it is for one like Hinn to offer a false hope which leaves in its wake devastating guilt and severe depression. This is the prevalent downside few realize and which is never presented on his *This Is Your Day* broadcasts.

At 10:30 p.m. — and after showcasing only a handful of anticlimactic “miracles” — the crusade came to an abrupt halt. Where were all the dramatic healings that had been proclaimed by Hinn? Although there were a handful of people remaining on the stage, Hinn dismissed the crowd with a reminder of how powerfully God’s Spirit had moved this evening and with a plug for the next morning’s “anointing” campaign. He quickly left the stage, with no indication of an encore — at least not tonight.

As many of the people left the building and walked (or were pushed in their wheelchairs) toward their cars, they passed four large tractor-trailer trucks. Three of these trucks had brought the lighting, sound, video, and stage equipment. The fourth one housed the video production command center for the crusade. For such a show as this, much is needed and hauled from city to city. In just a little over 24 hours, those trucks would again be loaded and soon on their way to another city, once again to create “a mighty visitation of the Holy Spirit.”

Endnotes:

1. Benny Hinn, Benny Hinn Ministries form letter, no date, copy on file.

2. The “before 5:00 p.m.” summoned attendees to be present more than two hours before the “Miracle Service,” which was scheduled to begin at 7:00 p.m.
3. Benny Hinn, *Benny Hinn Testimony*, Orlando Christian Center, July 19, 1987, audio tape on file.
4. William Lobdell, “The Price of Healing,” *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, July 27, 2003, pg. 30.
5. Throughout the entire time of the crusade, but most notably when a few soloists sang either during the offering or between the sermon for salvation and the sermon for healing, people were coming and going incessantly to the refreshment stand. This was obviously very odd, although it fit perfectly into the “performance” aspect of things.
6. Hinn’s appearance on stage less than 20 minutes after the start of the service was a deviation from previous crusades we had attended in the 1990s. During those crusades, the crowds were allured with a much longer duration of group dynamics through the music prior to Hinn’s arrival on stage.
7. Benny Hinn, sermon on healing at Springfield, Mo. Miracle Crusade, Sept. 11, 2003, transcript on file.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*
11. Richard Mayhue, *The Healing Promise*. Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House Publishers, 1991, pg. 121.
12. A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1931, Vol. IV, Epistles of Paul, pg. 164.

Is God “Showing Up” Today?

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Jack Deere, and a coterie of “Kansas City Prophets.”⁸ One of Kendall’s friends and former deacons acknowledges: “Some evangelicals believe that R.T. in his pursuit of the glory of God has gone too far.”⁹

When examining Kendall’s life, one is tempted to ask, “Will the real R.T. Kendall please stand up?” He was born in Ashland, Ky., in 1935 to Nazarene parents. He reports he saw Christ and heard His voice on a trip to heaven in October 1955.¹⁰ His alliances constantly shifted and changed. He admits, “I have always been an ambitious man.”¹¹

Kendall became a Nazarene minister for a time, then became an Orthodox Presbyterian minister for a time, then became a Southern Baptist minister, and describes himself as a “four-and-a-half-point Calvinist.”¹² All Kendall’s past personas were left behind when he came under the strong hand and shadow of the still dominant but aging Lloyd-Jones at Westminster. Lloyd-Jones vetted much of Kendall’s ministry. Kendall admits for a time he tried to sound like Lloyd-Jones.¹³

Kendall had his “blessed” Blessitt phase, his “raising Cain” phase, and then for a time Kendall says of Rodney Howard-Browne: “I probably became Rodney’s number one apologist.”¹⁴ At last he joined the outer fringes of what some have called the

counterfeit revival. Kendall has reinvented himself more times than Al Gore. There could really be a book done on the many faces of R.T.

SHOWING UP OR SHOWING OFF?

Kendall says in *When God Shows Up* that God “manifests Himself,” but if we are not paying attention, “we could completely miss seeing His glory — right before our eyes — and we would not even know He had shown up!”¹⁵ If God “showing up” is anything like what happened to Paul on the Damascus Road (Acts 9) or Isaiah seeing God high and lifted up (Isaiah 6) or John’s vision of the glorified Jesus (Revelation 1) it is difficult to imagine such a thing being