

# **THE SICKNESS UNTO DEATH: SPIRITUAL DRUNKENNESS AND FALSE REVIVAL**

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<http://www.believersingrace.com/thesicknessuntodeath1.html>

***"These people are drunk but not with wine, they stagger but not by strong drink ..." Isaiah 29:9***

What we are seeing in the so-called Lakeland revival, did not come "like a mighty rushing wind out of heaven", rather it is the direct result of several "streams " that have converged over the last twenty years. The roots of Todd Bentley's experienced based revival, are manifold. They include the Kansas City Prophets of the late 1980's and early nineties, John Wimber's Vineyard movement, South African Evangelist Rodney Howard Browne, the Toronto Blessing, to the subsequent Pensacola Revival which led directly to Lakeland Florida and Todd Bentley. A major common denominator, which runs through all of these streams, is an emphasis on an experience called spiritual drunkenness!

There can be no denying that Bentley is a direct result of the so called Kansas City Prophets, Bentley himself regards two of these prophets openly, in spite of the moral collapses of both of them. He counts as a mentor Bob Jones, a seer who had to leave the ministry after having to confess to using his prophetic office to disrobe women. But to Bentley, Jones is a spiritual father. It was Jones' teaching that encouraged false prophecies in the church by encouraging "young prophets" that they need not be 100 % accurate, and that it was a good thing that the accuracy was so low, otherwise there would be a whole lot of Ananias's and Saphirra's!

Another highly esteemed "prophet" by Bentley is Paul Cain- the onetime protégé of false prophet William Branham. Branham believed that the doctrine of the Trinity was "of the devil" and that the Zodiac was as reliable a guide as the Bible. But Bentley's mentor Cain regards Branham as the "greatest prophet of the twentieth century". Cain's teaching on Joel's army, being a mighty end time army of Christians taking dominion, put into words the hope of the Dominionistic "Great Endtimes Revival" heresy that many have been awaited for some time. But Cain also was temporarily defrocked because of a sex and alcohol scandal.

Rodney Howard Browne, a South African Evangelist was the primary one who extracted out of the Joel's army teaching, the experience of spiritual drunkenness. Doesn't Joel tell us that there will be "New Wine"? Didn't Peter use the Joel Text on the day of Pentecost? And when they all began to speak

in tongues, didn't the mockers accuse them of being drunk on "New Wine"? Out of these inferences and faulty interpretations emerged the so-called "Laughing Revival" which spread around the world. Rodney Howard Browne ministered so much spiritual drunkenness, he dubbed himself "God's Bartender" and he called places where he would "minister", "Joel's place".

These meetings popularized the irreverence, hilarity, madness, and irrationality as being "a genuine revival", or "a great move of God". Sermons on Hell, were interrupted by hysterical laughter, ministers were put into trance states and never taken out of them, preachers began boasting that they never had to preach anymore, and Rodney and his imitators would open services with "have another drink"!

**What were Toronto and Pensacola all about? They were both a direct result of the ministry of Rodney Howard Browne - they too were permeated with drunkenness. Ministers staggering around, slurred speech, ridicule of scripture - (I saw a film of a service by a bleary eyed, disheveled Englishman named John Scotland, who motioned to an open Bible on a pulpit and slurred "I'll get to that yet for those of you who are still into it".) Yet there were thousands of people who flocked to the meetings, and for what? To participate in spiritual drunkenness!**

Now we have come to the current crisis within Evangelical and Pentecostal churches. At a time when the apostles called for utter sobriety, clear thinking, and sound doctrine, instead thousands flock to Lakeland to "get it" and "bring it back to their own church". (By the way, "It" couldn't possibly be the Holy Spirit, who is the divine person, and cannot be transported or imparted at will!) Where is "it" taking us - this defection, this apostasy? Certainly out of usefulness to our Lord, who warned us of "***that evil servant who shall say in his heart 'My Lord delays his coming' and shall then beat the maidservant and menservants*** (Have you seen Bentley's violent approach?) ***and eat and drink with the drunken.***" (Matt 24).

Could this madness go any further? Well, yes as a matter of fact it could. There is a group called the **New Mystics** headed by an evangelist named John Crowder. He takes the "drunkenness" experience to the next level. His "**drunken glory tours**", yes that is what he calls them, received into churches all over America and the world, induct backslidden or fraudulent Christians into mystical experiences such as stigmata, bilocation (a sorcerer's term for being in two locations at once), third heaven visitation, etc. etc. etc! All the while administering the next level of spiritual drunkenness, "toking on the glory", in other words getting high on the

presence of God. He stands up in front of his congregations and pretends to suck on a marijuana cigarette, (an imaginary one) which he blasphemously calls "baby Jesus". He is releasing an album of music, which is entitled (blasphemously, again) "Toke the Ghost"!

My point is not to titillate or intrigue with the latest crazy spiritual fad; I see something more ominous in all of this. I believe that spiritual drunkenness is more than zany antics, I don't believe it is mere histrionics. Spiritual drunkenness is mentioned in the Bible as being a judgment of God. "

***Isa. 29:9-13: " Pause and wonder! Blind yourselves and be blind! They are drunk, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with intoxicating drink. For the LORD has poured out on you the spirit of deep sleep, and has closed your eyes, namely, the prophets; and He has covered your heads, namely, the seers. The whole vision has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one who is literate, saying, "Read this, please." And he says, "I cannot, for it is sealed. "Then the book is delivered to one who is illiterate, saying, "Read this, please." And he says, "I am not literate." Therefore the LORD said: "Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men."***

I see in the antics of Howard Browne, Bentley, the new so called "prophets", and all who either participate or support such a move a portent of a terrible judgment. The Book closed and sealed? Illiterates in the pulpits? Can you see that this warning is happening before our very eyes! ***"Judgment begins in the house of God...If the Righteous scarcely be saved, what shall become of the ungodly and the sinner?"*** says First Peter. The judgment involves loss of discernment, loss of usefulness, in some cases loss of family, ministry, loss of relevance to this perishing generation, and in many cases, loss of saving faith itself! It is not too late to turn, but it will take humility! How do you admit it was all wrong after so much investment, (you went on trips to the revival, you staggered in front of crowds of people, etc) If you just humble yourself, admit you were wrong and go back to an orthodox, Bible based, God centered fellowship, perhaps this sickness will not be unto death, but to the glory of the forgiving God! Who says, " If you seek me you will find me, if you seek me with all of your heart". Jeremiah 29:13

## **Spiritual Drunkenness: Last Call for the Sober to Flee**

<http://www.deceptioninthechurch.com/cultsandcharismatic.html>

The Bible has a lot to say about drunkenness, spiritual or otherwise.

And none of it is good.

With the Biblical tools we have available today, there is no reason for anyone to be deceived about the "Laughing Revival".

My Bible and concordance was all I needed to find out for myself the truth behind so-called 'spiritual drunkenness'.

One night, while I was still unsure about the 'Laughing Revival' -- (and frankly, I was at that time still leaning in favour of it and hoping to have my suspicions allayed) -- I sat down with my NIV Bible and concordance, and simply did a word study to see what the Bible had to say.

I wasn't expecting to find much when I started, and once I got past the 2 or 3 isolated verses favored by Toronto Blessing supporters (we'll look at those last)...

I was very surprised to discover just how much the Bible had to say regarding this phenomena:

Spiritual drunkenness is a sign of a deep spiritual sleep and blindness:

Isaiah 29:9-14 **"Be stunned and amazed, blind yourselves and be sightless; be drunk, but not from wine; stagger, but not from beer. The Lord has brought over you a deep sleep: he has sealed your eyes (the prophets);"**

Verses 11 and 12 further describe these people as being **unable to understand God's Word**.

Then, verse 13: **"These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men. Therefore ... the wisdom of the wise will perish, the intelligence of the intelligent will vanish."**

I don't know how much clearer the Word of God could be.

Spiritual drunkenness ("drunk, but NOT from wine"), far from being a sign of God's blessing and favor, is a sign that the following spiritual conditions and judgments have fallen upon a group professing to worship God:

- 1) they are blind,
- 2) they have fallen into a deep sleep spiritually,
- 3) their prophets are blind,
- 4) they've lost the ability to properly understand God's Word (sealed v.11,12).

The reason for all this is given in verse 13.

This group of people who manifest a spiritual drunkenness in their worship have, over time, professed to love and worship God, but they have departed from obedience to His Word and have insisted on trying to come to God on their own terms.

### **Spiritual drunkenness is a sign of being under God's judgment:**

Isaiah 28: 1,3. "Ephraim's drunkards". Ephraim was a name for the northern tribes of Israel, who were at that time seriously backslidden and about to be judged. Obviously, the Bible is not casting 'drunkard' in a good light.

Is.49:26. "drunk on their own blood" in judgment.

Is.51:21. "made drunk, not with wine" under God's judgment.

Is.63:6. "in my [God's] wrath I made them drunk and poured their blood on the ground."

Jer.48:26. "Make her drunk, for she has defied the Lord."

### **Israel's neighbour, Moab, is made drunk because she has defied the Lord!**

Deut. 29: 18-21. This passage describes a person who invokes the promises and protection of God's covenant, but disregards its conditions.

He has turned away from obedience to the Lord, yet invokes the Lord's blessing and protection and thinks to himself: **"I shall have peace."**

Verse 19 (NKJV). " **'I shall have peace, even though I follow the dictates of my heart' - as though the drunkard could be included with the sober.**"

Verse 19 (NIV). The NIV footnote offers the following alternative translation: " **'I will be safe, even though I persist in going my own way' - in order to add drunkenness to thirst.**"

Deut.29: 18-21 indicates that spiritual drunkenness is a sign that the drunkards have invoked the blessing of the covenant for themselves, yet walk after their own heart.

Jeremiah 51: A warning to flee because a greater judgment is coming!

I recommend a careful reading of Jeremiah 51, with particular attention paid to verses 6-9 and 37-45, in conjunction with Rev. 17:1-6, 18:1-8.

Babylon was a real city in Jeremiah's day that the Lord was about to judge, **but Babylon is also a Biblical type of apostate religion.**

Note: For those who are unsure about using the Old Testament in this manner, please look at the following passages: 1 Cor.10:6,11; 2 Peter 2,3; Heb.10:29-31, 2:1-3, 12:25-27 and Jude.

Paul and the other NT writers clearly considered that the judgments of God recorded in the OT were still very relevant warnings to us under the NT.

See also 2Tim.3:16 "ALL scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness".

Jer. 51:6-9:

Spiritual drunkenness is an indication that the church is about to be severely judged, and a warning to the sober minded who still remain to get out before it is too late. "Flee from Babylon! Run for your lives!"

"Babylon was a gold cup in the Lord's hand [an instrument of judgment]; she made the whole earth drunk. The nations drank her wine; therefore they have now gone mad. Babylon will suddenly fall and be broken."

Not only was Babylon under judgment, but she was an instrument of judgment in the Lord's hands. (This is the Joel 2 Army, btw.)

Certain 'revival' centers made the whole earth drunk, as multitudes poured in from around the globe to partake.

**The results of many deluded pastors who 'fetched' the blessing in Toronto/Pensacola and brought it back to their home church can only be described as 'madness', as hundreds of churches were devastated.**

Jer. 51:37-45:

v37,38: "Babylon will be a heap of ruins, a haunt of jackals,...Her people all roar like lion cubs." – animal noises, roaring like lions.

v38a: "while they are AROUSED, I will set out a FEAST for them" – it's party time!

v38b: "and make them DRUNK," – spiritual drunkenness!

v38c: "so that they SHOUT with LAUGHTER" – 'holy' laughter.

"then SLEEP forever and not awake, declares the Lord."

v40-44: And then final judgment is to follow, "I will bring them down...to the slaughter..."

v45: The final call for God's people to get out while they still can.

"Come out of her, my people! RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!"

This makes it pretty clear. **Here we have a people being aroused to party, shout and laugh, roar like lions and get 'drunk' just before they are judged.**

**The Bible describes in many places that immediately before severe judgment, people are given over to a "party" spirit: a fun-loving, amusement mad, self-gratifying wild party time!**  
(What a perfect description of the revelry of Lakeland... btw.)

See Is.56:12; Amos 6:1-6; Micah 2:11; Is.22:2,13;

The inhabitants of Jerusalem threw parties as the Babylonian army surrounded their city. Ezek.21:10 *"Shall we then rejoice and make mirth?" [when the sword of judgment has been sharpened against us.]*

More Old Testament references to drunkenness:

The following passages also refer to drunkenness as an indication or sign of being under the displeasure of God and judgment.

Ezekiel 23:33. **"filled with drunkenness and sorrow, the cup of ruin and desolation"**

Nahum 1:10, 3:11. **Nineveh drunk under the judgment of God. "You too will become drunk".**

Hab.2:15-16. Woe to him who gives drink, making his neighbour drunk. Now it is your turn, drink and be exposed! The word 'be exposed' used here can also mean 'stagger' according to the NIV footnote.

Is.24:19-21. **The earth reels like a drunkard under God's judgment.**

Joel 1:5, **"Wake up, you drunkards."**

Ecc. 10:16-17. Blessed is the land whose King is noble, whose princes eat at the proper time for strength and NOT FOR DRUNKENNESS."

Jer.13:13. The Lord fills the kings, priests and prophets with drunkenness before he judges them.

Amos 6:6. "You drink wine by the bowlful"

Micah 2:11. The deceiver says: "I will prophesy for you plenty of wine and beer!"

Is.56:9-12. "Let us drink our fill of beer!"

Biblical References to 'staggering':

Staggering 'under the influence' or "in the Spirit" is a common occurrence at TB style revival meetings.

Interestingly, the Bible also has a lot to say about staggering.

Job 12:25. **"They grope in darkness with no light; He makes them stagger like drunkards."**

Psalms 60:1-3. **"You have rejected us...you have given us wine that makes us stagger."**

Is 19:11-15. **"the leaders of Memphis are deceived;...The Lord has poured into them a spirit of dizziness; they make Egypt stagger in all she does, as a drunkard staggers around in his vomit."**



**Clearly the sign of drunkenness is NOT a sign of God's blessing, but of His judgment upon foolish and deceived leadership.**

Is. 28: 1-16. The drunkards of Ephraim... **"stagger at seeing visions", "reeling like drunkards"**

Pro.24:11. **"staggering towards slaughter"**

Is.3:8. "Jerusalem staggers" under judgment because their words and deeds are against the Lord.

Jer.25:15-29. In this passage, the Lord has filled a cup filled with the wine of His wrath and makes the nations drink from it.

**Drinking from the cup of God's wrath causes them to "stagger and go mad" before they are brought to judgment. V.27 "drink, get drunk and vomit, and fall to rise no more"**

Is. 51:17. **The cup of God's wrath is "the goblet that makes men stagger."**

Roaring like a lion while in worship:

Jer.12:8 **"she [my people] roars at me, therefore I hate her."**

Jer 52:38 **the people of Babylon [who are under judgment] roar like lions**

Zeph.3:1-4 "Woe to the city [referring to a wicked city under sentence of God's judgement]...Her officials are roaring lions..."

Is. 5:25-30 Israel's enemies roar like lions when they come to devour her.

Ezek.22:25 **false prophets roar like lions.**

I Peter 5:8 The Devil prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.

Jer. 2:15 "Lions have roared" in judgement.

**New Testament references to drunkenness:**

Lk.12:45; Mt.24:48-50 - The unfaithful servant gets drunk.

I Cor 5:11; 6:10 - Drunkards will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

Lk.21:34-36; Ro.13:11-14; Gal.5:19-21; 1Pet.4:3; I Thess.5:4-8. - Drunkenness is sinful and will be judged.

**The Word of God clearly censors drunken behavior.**

There are an overwhelming number of verses in the New Testament which ascribe self-control, self-discipline, order, decency, and sobriety as a fruit of the Holy Spirit.

**Why then would the Holy Spirit ever induce people to mimic behavior that is censored in the Word and contrary to His own nature?**

**And finally, the two proof texts most often cited in support of 'spiritual drunkenness' by those of the Toronto Blessing/Lakeland:**

Let's take a look at the 2 passages of Scripture used by "TB" supporters in an attempt to lend Biblical credibility to their drunkenness.

They are Acts 2:13 and Eph. 5:18.

We'll take a look at each separately.

1) Acts 2:13, "*They have had too much wine.*"

We will look at the entire context of the chapter, from verse 1 to the end.

In Acts 2:13, it was only the MOCKERS who were making fun of the disciples and said ***they were drunk.***

I do not think we should take our cue from those mocking Peter and the believers.

Other than that, there is no evidence in the text that they were acting like drunks, and all the evidence clearly indicates **the opposite.**

Peter got up and preached a clear, coherent, hard-hitting gospel sermon that cut the Jews listening to him to the heart with conviction of sin. He did not display anything like drunken behavior.


Peter's behavior was nothing like the "revival drunkards" who love to stagger around, slurring and stammering so much that they can hardly put a coherent sentence together, let alone an entire sermon that can bring 3000 new converts into the Church in one day.

The rest of the 120 that came out of the upper room with Peter were speaking in real foreign languages, clearly understandable to the foreigners visiting Jerusalem at the time, proclaiming the "wonders of God" (Acts 2:11). These people were anything but drunk! Whatever 'spirit' the Toronto people are moving in, it's not the same Spirit at work in Acts 2.

2) Eph. 5:18, **"Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead be filled with the Spirit."**

Read the surrounding verses from 5:8-5:20 carefully: **Paul wasn't comparing the condition of being Spirit-filled to drunkenness, he was contrasting it!**

From verses 8 through 18, notice the contrasts Paul makes between pairs of opposites: light/darkness, wise/unwise, understanding/foolishness, and finally drunk/spirit filled.

**You were once darkness, but now you are light (v. ; not unwise, but wise (v.15); don't be foolish, but understanding (v.17); don't be drunk, instead be filled with the Spirit (v.18).**

The verse says: "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead be filled with the Spirit." Do not get drunk – it leads to debauchery!

Notice the word 'instead', indicating a contrasting opposite.

Paul was **contrasting** being filled with the Spirit to drunkenness, NOT likening it to it!

In their foolishness, "*revival drunks*" actually turn that around to say, "*Woohoo, lets party and get drunk in the Spirit!*"

The debauchery Paul warns against in v.18 is just what we are seeing in the wild party atmosphere that now reigns in revival churches.

The vast number of verses in the New Testament that tell us the Holy Spirit is a Spirit of order and sobriety are stunning. Self-control, sobriety, and order are fruits of the Spirit, and nowhere does it say the Holy Spirit is a

spirit of drunkenness.

Therefore, spiritual drunkenness, staggering, slurred speech cannot be the work of the Holy Spirit of God, as that would be inconsistent with the nature of the Holy Spirit according to Scripture.

Surely what Isaiah said is true of them: "The Lord has brought over you a deep sleep: He has sealed your eyes ... For you this whole vision is nothing but words sealed in a scroll." (29:10,11)

## **Run for your lives!**

I would like to offer the following conclusions based on the evidence of God's Word.

*1) 'Drunkenness' is a form of spiritual judgment upon a church or group professing the name of the Lord yet have departed from obedience to the truth.*

*According to the Bible passages we have looked at, spiritual drunkenness is a form of God's judgment on a church for the following reasons, as well as being a signal to others that the church has fallen into these conditions:*

- a) They are deceived.*
- b) They are blind – have little or no discernment left.*
- c) Their priests and prophets are backslidden.*
- d) They have tolerated false prophets in their midst.*
- e) They have tolerated bad, questionable teaching.*
- f) They give God lip-service, but have turned away from a carefulness to follow His law. In other words, they love to sing to the Lord on Sunday, but are carnal or even sinful through the week.*
- g) They want to serve and worship the Lord on their own terms; set their own altars.*
- h) They have ignored the Lord's Word.*
- i) They have sought experience over truth.*
- j) Their shepherds are asleep, and have allowed the enemy in.*

***2) 'SPIRITUAL DRUNKENNESS is a signal that another, much more severe judgment is coming!***

*More ominously, in these Bible passages, drunkenness actually preceded severe judgment. It is a sign that much greater judgment will follow the drunken party.*

3) 'Drunkenness' is a last call to get out!

Finally, I believe it is a last call to the sober minded who still remain in these churches to get out as fast as they can.

It's a clear signal to flee while you still can because time is running out fast.

In Jer.51, the drunken party preceded final judgment (40-44).

Other passages listed above bear this pattern out as well. Verse 45 - **"Come out of her, my people! Run for your lives! Run from the fierce anger of the Lord."** and again in v.6 the call is repeated to **"Run for your lives!"**

***If these passages are to be believed, than spiritual drunkenness in a church is a warning from God to GET OUT NOW.***

Don't hang around such churches - even out of curiosity - just to see what happens.

From these verses, we can gather that it will not be safe to be in these groups when the next judgment arrives. There is no point in speculating what form the next wave of judgment may take, but it will be very severe and of such a nature that being in these groups when it comes will be incredibly dangerous and foolish.

It would be foolish to take His Word lightly and disregard the clear warning signals God has given us.

*This was written in 2005 by a man trying to make sense of the nonsense manifestations of the Kansas City Toronto Blessing meetings.*

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