

C. Word-Faith Movement

Arguably the Word-Faith Movement is the most influential within Christianity today. It dominates TV, radio and podcasts with more viewer/listeners than any other. It also boasts the largest churches (i.e., Joel Osteen's Lakewood Church with 38,000 members). The list of its leaders are internationally recognizable, appearing on TV stations around the globe: Joel Osteen, Joyce Meyers, Ken Copeland, Kenneth Hagin, Paul & Jan Crouch (Trinity Broadcasting Network), and others.

But there is a problem. The very foundation of this teaching is false, as the following comparison chart by Bob Waldrep of the Watchmen Fellowship explains:

Word-Faith Teaches

Scriptural Teaching

Authority & The Church

The church needs to be restored (Acts 3:21) through living apostles and prophets (Ephesians 4:1) who receive revelations and are given personal Bible studies by Jesus or the Holy Spirit.

Acts 3:21 is about the restoration of mankind, not of the church. Apostles and prophets were foundational offices (Ephesians 2:20; 3:5); apostles had seen the risen Jesus (1 Corinthians 9:1). Revelations at odds with Scriptures are to be rejected.

God

God has a spirit body (Isaiah 40:12). He created the world by literally speaking words of faith (Genesis 1:3; Psalm 33:6,9; Mark 11:22; Hebrews 11:3).

God does not have a body (1 Kings 8:27; John 4:24) except in the incarnation (John 1:14-18). God does not have faith; He is the object of faith (Mark 11:22-24; Hebrews 11:3-31). God does not need to speak words to do anything (Psalms 33:6-9; 148:3-8).

Humanity

Man was created in God's class, as a god on earth (Genesis 1:20-27; Psalm 82:6).

Man was created in God's image, not after God's kind (Genesis 1:11-12,21; 24-27); we are not and never will be gods (Isaiah 43:10; Psalm 82:1-8).

Sin

Adam sinned, making Satan the legal god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4) and giving man Satan's nature (John 8:44).

Since Adam wasn't god, he couldn't make Satan a god; God is still God over all the world (Psalm 24:1); He is in control (Genesis 50:20; Proverbs 16:1-9; Romans 8:28; Ephesians 1:11). Man is still man, still in God's image (Genesis 9:6), though darkened by sin (Ephesians 4:17-24).

Christ's Person

Christ was God, but ministered as a man with the Spirit (and we can do the same). Copeland and Capps say, "the Word" (John 1:1, 14) was God confessing that He would be incarnate in Jesus (implies no Trinity).

Christ, as uniquely God incarnate, did what only God can do (John 5:17-23). Both the Father and the Spirit worked through Jesus (John 3:34; 14:10) as all three persons of the Trinity are involved in all of God's works. The Word was a divine person distinct from the Father, existing from all eternity (John 1:1-3; 14-18); He is the eternal Son who came down for our salvation (John 13:3; 16:28).

Christ's Work

Jesus died spiritually as well as physically (Isaiah 53:9) and suffered in hell to complete His suffering for our sins. He took on Satan's nature and literally became sin (2 Corinthians 5:21) and was literally separated from God (Matthew 27:46). He was born again in hell and then rose from the dead (Colossians 1:18).

Jesus died one complete human death, body and soul ("death" in Isaiah 53:9 is intensive plural). When Jesus died physically, He lived spiritually and went to the abode of the dead (Luke 23:43; 1 Peter 3:18). By His death Jesus overcame Satan (Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14). In His death Jesus did not become sin, but took upon Himself the curse of our sin, suffering for our sin so that we might be blessed with His righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:18-21). Jesus rose from death to life, and as risen became the source of life in the new birth (Colossians 1:18; 1 Peter 1:3); but He was not "born again."

Faith & Positive Confession

Christians should have mountain-moving faith and have what they say (Mark 11:23; Romans 4:17). Faith claims possession now (Hebrews 11:1) despite the sense (2 Corinthians 5:7). Our words are powerful (Proverbs 18:21).

Faith is trust in God, not confidence in a spiritual law (Mark 11:22-24; John 14:1). Abraham believed God; it was God, not Abraham's faith that produced Isaac (Romans 4:17-23). Faith primarily trusts God for the future based on God's promises (Hebrews 11). Faith does not mean denying our senses but trusting God for future redemption (2 Corinthians 4:16-5:10). Our words cannot make things real (Proverbs 14:23) except as we or others act on them (Proverbs 18:21). God's word, unlike ours, always produces results (Isaiah 55:6-11). What we confess may be false (Revelation 3:17).

Health & Wealth

Christ by His atoning death freed us from the curse of the Law (Galatians 3:13) and thus from all disease and poverty (Deuteronomy 28). The atonement assures healing (Isaiah 53:4-5; Matthew 8:16-17; 1 Peter 2:24).

Freedom from the curse means spiritual blessing now (Galatians 3:13-16). The curses of Deuteronomy 28 were extraordinary plagues and the like, not all sickness. Christ's atonement does guarantee perfect health and well-being, but only in the resurrection of the body (Romans 8:10-11, 23; 1 Corinthians 15:42-45). God heals people today as foretastes of those future blessings (Matthew 8:16-17).