



FALLING UNDER THE POWER

What About Being
“Slain In The Spirit?”

David Alsobrook

Falling Under the Power

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Chapter One

Wheat and Chaff are Not The Same

I don't think I shall ever forget her face! I have "seen" the Lord's presence in His people many times, but never as I saw the Person of Jesus Christ in her kind expression. "Would you like this anointing of the Holy Spirit on your ministry, David?" I nodded affirmatively and experienced the electric-like power of God as never before or since. For seventeen hours His presence lingered sweetly upon me in a wonderful and unique way. Two airline stewardesses noticed it on the flight back home to Texas (where I lived eleven years ago). So did my younger sister, Joy, who greeted me at the airport.

What happened when Kathryn Kuhlman touched me and the power of God came upon me so mightily? I "fell under the power of God" as the saying goes, or was "slain in the Spirit" as another might say. I do remember how my legs buckled and how hard it was to get back up!

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My legs wobbled like jelly as I was assisted back to my chair on the platform. The distinguished gentleman sitting next to me kept asking, "Are you all right?"

Indeed, I was!

A few months later there was a miracle crusade in my town. The evangelist coming to conduct the city-wide meeting was billed as one of the most greatly anointed men of our day. I was excited about his coming and was eagerly inviting friends to the crusade.

I shared with one friend who had been diagnosed with advanced cancer about the healing power of Jesus Christ and the miracles I had witnessed in other meetings. I gave the Word to him, (as did another minister) and could see his faith rising stronger each day. We made him promise to attend the civic center miracle crusade.

He was there the first night. The "full gospel" type of message the evangelist presented was new and different to him, but his spirit was open for more of the Lord. When the invitation was given for cancer victims he went

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forward for the prayer of faith. The evangelist seemed to be slapping people on the forehead. I wondered to myself why he was pushing them so hard. When he prayed for my friend he hit him so hard his neck jerked back sharply. The evangelist then put his microphone to my friend's mouth asking, "Where's that pain now?" "In my neck," came his honest reply.

Angrily the evangelist ordered "this skeptic" off the platform. Sadly, he died of the cancer a few weeks later, fully trusting Jesus as his Savior, but not his Healer. I heard dozens of reports in the weeks that followed of disillusioned people who testified "the preacher pushed me" trying to make them fall. A Baptist minister who had earlier expressed his interest in the gifts of the Spirit before his entire congregation withdrew to his former, traditional position. He too had been prayed for by the evangelist when a call for ministers had been made in one of the "anointed" services.

It is easy to see upon reflection that those who "fell under the power" in this man's ministry were untouched by the Spirit of God.

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The effervescent joy of the Lord was missing from their countenances. They simply fell back into the arms of nonchalant ushers who lowered them to the floor. In all honesty, a few of the many prayed for were surely healed as God moved in spite of "the man of God."

Not infrequently I receive inquiries from sincere believers about the phenomenon of falling backward, which is common in full gospel/charismatic/pentecostal meetings. I am asked, "Is falling under the power scriptural?" "Is it of God?" I am cautious not to give a blanket answer to these letters as I do not know what type of ministry the writer has witnessed or experienced. My honest answer is: **there is a valid experience based upon the Word of God of a person falling in His presence...there is an invalid experience of a person falling by fleshly manipulation.**

In this message I want to share with you other experiences I have observed in more than thirteen years of continual ministry. I hope to clearly distinguish what is of God and what is not of Him. I want to examine the scriptural

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records of this event and notice similarities and dissimilarities in our day. Please bear with me and God will reward you.

A friend of mine related an experience which occurred in his ministry. In one meeting the power of the Lord was unusually present to heal the sick. A number of the people who came forward for healing were dramatically "slain in the Spirit" on the way up to the front of the auditorium. No one but God touched them. It was like a wave of the Holy Spirit's power.

After the service one of those so touched was asked what it was like when she "fell out." She replied without thinking, "I don't know because — *I fell in!*"

Chapter Two

A Demonstration of the Spirit is Not a Work of Grace

When the Christian hating zealot, Saul of Tarsus, journeyed toward Damascus a light brighter than the midday sun shone upon him and his party. Years later when he stood before Agrippa, Paul testified, "*And when WE WERE ALL FALLEN TO THE EARTH, I heard a voice...*" (see Acts 26:13-14).

It was through this encounter on the road to Damascus that Saul, the persecutor, became Paul the believer. He definitely experienced the initial work of grace, regeneration of the Spirit, through his encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ. The scales that fell from his eyes immediately prior to baptism signified the opening of his darkened understanding unto the light of salvation (see Acts 9:18).

When he fell on the ground it was due solely to exposure to God's presence. Notice:

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"...and suddenly there shined around about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth..." (Acts 9:3). Jesus Christ "dwells in the light which no man can approach unto" (1 Timothy 6:16). Out of this light he "heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? And he said, Who art Thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I AM JESUS..." (Acts 9:4-5).

What I wish to illustrate from these verses is the fact that EVERYONE who accompanied Saul fell to the ground. But only one of the company, so far as we can tell, was born again*. They all fell, but only one got saved.

Furthermore we see a similar event in the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus was arrested. The officers, with their torches and weapons, came to the garden to arrest nothing more than a religious troublemaker. I would like to quote from the Fenton translation the event which followed:

* There is a theological debate as to the precise moment of Paul's conversion. Whether he was saved at the initial encounter or three days later after contemplating through prayer and fasting the full meaning of the apprehension is beyond the purpose of our present study.

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"Jesus then, knowing all the events that were coming upon Him, advanced, and asked them: 'For whom are you looking?' 'Jesus the Nazarene,' was their reply. 'I AM,' Jesus answered them. Judas, who was betraying Him, was also standing with them. No sooner had He said, 'I AM,' then they started backward and fell to the ground. He therefore asked them again: 'For whom are you looking?' 'Jesus the Nazarene,' replied they. 'I have told you,' replied Jesus, 'that I AM. If you therefore want Me, let these go away'." (John 18:4-8).

One familiar with this story no doubt noticed that the above translation quotes our Savior as saying "I AM" rather than "I am *he*" as the King James Version quotes Him. Many of the modern translations disagree with the KJV. One commentator says this relates back to Exodus 3:14. If such were the case we can better understand why they fell to the ground. Perhaps it was as though an unseen Hand pushed them backward.

Others disagree saying they recoiled in fear of Jesus and stumbled over each other, none wishing to be the first to seize Him. I will let

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you decide.

If they fell as a result of coming into the presence of The Eternal we should note it effected no work of grace whatsoever. Judas Iscariot was one who "*stood with them*" (v. 5). The next verse says, "*...they...fell...*"

A few hours later Judas fell again. This time "*he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out*" (Acts 1:18).

The same Psalm which tells us "*power belongeth unto God*" also speaks of men falling in judgment before Him:

"...ye shall be slain all of you: as a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering fence" (Psalm 62:11, 3).

Sapphira, under divine judgment, "*fell down straightway*" a few hours after her husband "*fell down and gave up the ghost*" (Acts 5:5 10).

We also see falling as an almost involuntary act of obeisance in the presence of God. Abraham, who was told to shape up in Genesis 17:1-2, "*fell on his face*" (v. 3) as God spoke to him. The mature disciple, John, "*fell at His feet*

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as dead" when he saw the One whose eyes were as a flame of fire (Revelation 1:17). Ezekiel fell on his face in the manifest presence of God numerous times (1:28; 3:23; 9:8; 11:13; 43:3; 44:4). Daniel fell on his face in the presence of Gabriel on one occasion and on another "*there remained no strength in me*" he wrote (see Daniel 8:17; 10:8). That Gabriel stands in the presence of God is the reason Daniel fell (Luke 1:19). Joshua fell on his face before the Captain of the Lord's host (Joshua 5:14). When the fire of God came down upon the altar at the dedication of Moses' tabernacle the Bible records: "*...which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces*" (Leviticus 9:24). When the disciples were with Him in the holy mount they "*fell on their face, and were sore afraid*" (Matthew 17:6). They were in the awesome presence of God!

Voluntary prostration before the Lord will be an eternal characteristic of His worshippers. "*And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped Him that liveth for ever and ever*" (Revelation 5:14).

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In our thirteen years of traveling ministry I have been in only one service where the people voluntarily, yet almost involuntarily, fell as one man upon their faces. It was one of the most precious services I was ever privileged to attend, let alone lead, and from my vantage point on the platform it was one of the most spectacular events I have ever seen.

There had been a lot of repentance and deliverance in this meeting. For several days people were getting right with God under heavy ministry in the Word. On the closing day the worship was heavenly. The other speakers and conference leaders agreed during the high praise that we should not quench the worship with the planned format. The praises of God's people flowed for almost three hours when suddenly a prophecy broke forth upon us: "I AM YOUR GOD AND YOU ARE MY PEOPLE. HUMBLE YOURSELVES BEFORE ME." There was such a divine weight of glory upon this utterance through a frail little lady that one instinctively knew God, and not man, had spoken.

*A Demonstration of the Spirit is Not a Work of
Grace*

I felt myself falling forward although no one had suggested it. I have the clearest memory of seeing people all around me fall forward to the floor all over the auditorium. One of the other speakers, who has served the Lord more than fifty years, kept crying "glory, glory, glory..." as he laid next to me. I could say nothing for 45 minutes but could only weep in the glorious presence of the Lord.

It was a full hour later before the saints got up, slowly and reverently, one by one. Each looked transformed. Faces were radiant and clean. Pure and fervent love for one another flowed like a river between us. One brother and I held each other for a long time weeping and praising. Truly, YAHWEH ELOHIM had visited us in the Person of His Son. For several days thereafter a lightness and joyfulness filled my heart. Jesus was very real.

As much as I believe in the validity of falling under the *dunamis* power of the Holy Spirit in a healing ministry (as we will study next) I far more long to see people voluntarily

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prostrate themselves in the presence of a Holy God.

Chapter Three

How Scriptural Is It?

I started to recite examples of people who have been "slain" in countless revivals throughout church history. Whitefield used to warn boys who climbed trees in order to hear his open air sermons to get down before he started preaching. Hundreds were struck out in trances, sometimes for days, under this holy man's ministry of a former era. The same was true under Finney, who was himself suspended a full foot off the platform in thin air during one discourse on Grace. During the rugged frontier days a ministerial veteran named Cartwright once saw an entire dance floor miraculously changed into a prayer room! Even the musicians crumpled to the floor in conviction of their sins. Ladies of honor were prostrate for hours permanently ruining their exquisite attire. The dance hall was sovereignly closed by God and reopened as the area's pre-eminent church house!

Please excuse me, dear reader, for I said "I started to recite examples" as though I had

decided not to do so and then proceeded to do exactly that!

All these examples are exciting and wonderful, but "what saith the Scripture?"

The Holy Spirit Fell Upon Them In Acts

There is an interesting Greek word we should consider. It is the verb *epipto* which is defined in several dictionaries used for the Greek New Testament thusly:

1. to fall upon (Vine's)
2. to rush or press upon (Thayer's)
3. used metaphorically, to fall upon, i.e., to seize, take possession of him...., used of the Holy Spirit in His inspiration and impulse... (ibid).

This little fellow is used to describe the coming of the Holy Spirit in a distinct and unusual manner in Acts 8:16; 10:44; 11:15. It is also used where Peter "*fell into a trance*" or as the literal says, "*a trance fell upon him.*" *Epipto*

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is a much stronger word, than say, for example, *eperkomai* which is used in Luke 1:35 where Gabriel explained to Mary how she, a virgin, would conceive a son: "*The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee...*" Jesus used this verb in Acts 1:8 "*...the Holy Ghost is come upon you...*" *Eperkomai* simply means "to come upon" whereas *epipipto* means "to fall upon; to seize." Both verbs are used in connection with individuals receiving the Holy Ghost...and yet one word is strikingly stronger than the other.

Perhaps the Holy Spirit inspired Luke to use the words to denote His variety of operations. After all, Paul said,

"there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit...there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all" (1 Corinthians 12:4,6).

In some cases the Holy Spirit came upon the believers as a gentle dove as they were immersed into Him. On other occasions He fell upon them forcibly seizing them for God. The original language teaches this.

My question is: *If the Holy Spirit fell upon*

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you, rushed upon you, and pressed upon you in His inspiration and impulse...could you remain vertical? He moved upon the face of the waters awaiting God's creative commands (Genesis 1:2). He raised the lifeless body of Jesus from the cold slab emptying His tomb (Romans 1:4). He was the active Force in the creation of the heavens. *"By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath (or, Spirit) of His mouth"* (Psalm 33:6).

I believe with all my heart that the Holy Spirit literally fell upon me July 21, 1974 at the Shrine Auditorium when the experience at the beginning of this lesson occurred. He had come upon me April 7, 1970 in a gentle, sweet way when I was baptized by Jesus into the Holy Ghost. There was a distinct difference between the Spirit's *coming upon* me and His *falling upon* me. Of this there can be no question.

Some would argue that while *"the Holy Spirit fell on all them which heard the word"* (Acts 10:44), this was a sovereign outpouring apart from the imposition of physical hands. "Just show me one place where someone laid hands

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upon another and the Holy Spirit so fell," a fellow minister once asked. To which the implication of Acts 8:15-17 is quite clear. Verse 16 says, "*For as yet He was fallen upon (epipipto) none of them...*" The next verse implies that did occur when Peter and John laid their hands upon the new converts. Perhaps that explains Simon's request? "*Give me also THIS POWER...*" (v. 19). There is a distinct implication that the Holy Ghost *epipipto* the Samaritan converts through the laying on of the apostles' hands.

Our Lord compared the Holy Spirit to wind in John 3:8 and He came in that form in Acts 2:2 — "*like as of a rushing, mighty wind.*" The wind cannot be seen, yet its effects upon the matter can be seen and thus described. When the wind blows the strong limbs of trees we say "Look at the wind!" What we mean, actually, is "Look at the wind's effect upon the trees." Consequently, "*the Holy Ghost fell upon them*" describing His effect upon the receivers.

One of the neatest feelings a boy can have is to brace himself against a strong wind and feel its power push against him. Children fantasize

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of flying through the air when the wind is strong on their backs and their coats are outstretched like a boat's sail. No wonder Jesus likened the moving of the Spirit to the wind!

This same word is used another time in Mark 3:9-10 where our Lord was "pressed upon" by the multitude thronging Him. He had to get in a small ship to avoid the pushing crowd. Remember, one of the meanings of *epiipto* is "to rush or press upon" (Thayer) and is a literal meaning.

Sometimes the Holy Spirit blows upon God's people affecting them as a mighty wind. How wonderful to be under the Spirit's possession to such a degree! Unlike the children playing in the wind, though, we can "*mount up with wings as eagles*" on the Spirit currents and soar in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus far above all principalities, power, might, and dominion!

The Priests Could Not Stand

In the Old Testament we have an example of the manifest presence of God so strong in the midst that priests found it impossible to offer

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sacrifices because they could not stand on their feet! Unlike the many examples we studied previously where people voluntarily fell on their faces before the Lord, we have a clear indication this was not the case during the dedication of Solomon's temple.* Please notice two things: 1) at first the priests could not enter the outer court, 2) after they managed to enter they could not remain on their feet.

First, let's notice the passage in 2 Chronicles 7:1-2:

"Now when Solomon had made an end of praying the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house.

*And the priests **could not enter** into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD'S house."*

Second, let's notice the passage in 1 Kings 8:10-11:

* I refer here to the case of the priests' inability to stand. The onlooking Israelites did voluntarily prostrate themselves as 2 Chronicles 7:3 says. They were gathered in large numbers outside the main entrance and bowed to the pavement when the *shekinah* filled the Lord's house.

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"And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place (into the outer court), that the cloud filled the house of the LORD,

*So that the priests **could not stand** to minister (to offer sacrifices at the Brazen Altar in the outer court) because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD."*

Yes, there is something gloriously awesome about the tangible presence of God! In 1973 while conducting a series of meetings that stretched into seven weeks in a small Pentecostal church in East Texas we were so blessed one evening to view the cloud of His glory (*shekinah*). The saints had been praying and interceding for their church to come into a deeper flow of the Holy Spirit. Each service was stronger and deeper in the Lord's conscious presence. People testified they sensed His presence as soon as they drove onto the parking lot. Some were healed when they came through the front door at the beginning of the services. God's presence was very real. Often many people were under the power in a single service (with or without the laying on of hands). One

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man dying with leukemia was healed while under a strong anointing for 90 minutes. In some services the joy of the Lord burst forth like new wine to the point we could have been accused, like the 120, of drunkenness (see Acts 2:15).

One evening was especially glorious. After the teaching and ministering to people for salvation, healing, the baptism with the Holy Spirit, and other needs, I dismissed the congregation about 10:30. Pastor White said, "I believe we should remain a little longer, saints. If you need to go, feel free to go quietly. If you can remain and pray, then gather up here at the front and intercede for our town."

I was especially tired in body and remember thinking to myself, "Oh, Brother White, I wish you hadn't said that!" [Sometimes *"the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak"* (Matthew 26:41).]

However, I remained with about a third of the congregation to pray and intercede for a deeper visitation of God to that community. After we had prayed for about 30 minutes I

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slowly became aware that everything had grown strangely quiet around me. I lifted up my head from the pew on the platform where I was praying and saw the cloud of His presence filling the top half of the auditorium. Almost everyone else was looking up and seeing the glory, too, but no one could speak a word about it.

A few nights later I was preaching along and suddenly grew aware of the presence of the Lord in a similar manner. Although I could not see the cloud this time, I related to the congregation that I sensed His tangible awareness. I stopped my sermon and asked for all who had afflictions in their bodies to stand to their feet. I led in a prayer for healing and then witnessed a simultaneous demonstration of the Holy Spirit. Everyone who was standing for prayer fell back into the pews at the same time! Later some said they tried to regain their composure and sit normally but could not for a little while. The rest of that service was composed of testimonies of those the Lord had sovereignly healed. I can remember one dear sister's testimony to this day. Said she, "It was

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just like Dr. Jesus put me under anesthesia and cut out my gallstones." Sure enough, her healing was later verified to the bafflement of a medical doctor who had previously examined her.

I hesitate to share some of these "pearls" knowing there may be "swine" who read them, but I trust you are a "sheep" who hears His voice! Ask the Lord Jesus if this is true or not and let Him speak to your heart.

I have observed under numerous ministries that the more powerful a healing anointing is in a meeting the more likely it is that the pulsating power of the Holy Ghost will so pervade the atmosphere that many different types of demonstrations will occur.

The natural simply cannot connect with the supernatural without a reaction!

Chapter Four

Wait a Minute, I Have Some More Questions!

OK! May the Lord grant us understanding in all things as we ponder the things He has said (see 2 Timothy 2:7).

Q: I went forward for prayer in a church we visited on vacation. The pastor pushed on my forehead. When I didn't fall I sensed he got upset with me. He chided me for "quenching the Spirit." Was I wrong?

A: I can certainly empathize with you since the same thing has happened to me, too! That pastor is probably a good brother who has become a little (?) lopsided on falling. Perhaps he has fallen, too, into the trap of thinking God is not moving in a service if people are not flat on their backs. Forgive him for the embarrassment and pray for him to wise up. I personally thank you for not cowing to him and falling into the arms of a waiting catcher to help make him look good before the eyes of the undiscerning. So often people sense a minister

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wants them to fall through subtle (and sometimes not-so-subtle) suggestions. Don't ever fall because of man's manipulations. Come to think of it, don't ever stand for them either!

Q: I thought if I fell under the power I would automatically be healed. I was slain in the Spirit in a recent healing service but was not healed. Was it truly of God? Wouldn't I have been healed?

A: Not if you didn't exercise faith for healing. Often new converts are healed without exercising much faith. They just get into the presence of the Lord and their symptoms vanish. God says, "*The just shall live by faith*" (Romans 1:17). God is not pleased with people wanting to fall under the power like some sort of "high"—He won't be mocked either (see Galatians 6:7). I have an opinion that this particular demonstration is given to encourage people to believe for their healing. As when all who accompanied Saul of Tarsus fell to the ground with him in the manifest presence of God but experienced no change of heart, just so we see that people sometimes fall and don't get

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anything but lint! Unfortunately, some people try to live on emotions and will soon find God is not a spiritual junkie passing out spiritual fixes for emotional addicts and thrill seekers. "*In His presence IS fullness of joy*" (Psalm 16:11), but we cannot enter His presence with wrong motives (see Psalm 66:18). Our heavenly Father wants us to grow the fruit of joy in maturity (see Galatians 5:22-23). "*For we walk by faith, not by sight*" (I Corinthians 5:7).

Q: Why do usherettes cover ladies with small cloths when they fall? Why do ushers catch the people?

A: In many churches there are sisters who have been assigned to cover those whose clothing may appear immodest when stretched out on the floor. This is done in an effort to give no "*occasion to the flesh*" (Galatians 5:13) so that "*good (not) be evil spoken of*" (Romans 14:16).

Some ministers use catchers to allay people's fears of possible hurt from falling on the floor unaided. Usually 1 Corinthians 14:40 is used as scriptural support for this practice. I think catchers psychologically gear people to

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fall. I often ask ushers not to come forward when I pray for people, *unless* it is obvious they will be needed. When I feel people have come forward so they can be "slain" I ask the ushers to hold them up while I pray. On a few occasions the anointing has been so strong the ushers, as soon as they come into contact with the people, also fall under the power of the Lord. When it's real it's glorious, but when it isn't, it's cheapening.

By the way, I have never witnessed anyone getting hurt when truly falling under the power of the Holy Spirit. I do remember one man getting the wind knocked out of him when an usher missed him. He admitted, "I didn't actually have a need—I just wanted to fall"(he got his wish!). I am sad to tell you that in some churches and ministries the people are led to believe they cannot receive anything from God unless they fall every time they receive laying on of hands. Overbalance and extremism definitely hinder the purpose of God in sending supernatural demonstrations of His power.

Why do people fall backward in charismatic/pentecostal meetings?

Is there a scriptural basis for this event?

Are there times this happening is manipulated? Do preachers sometimes push people?

Are "catchers" necessary?

All these questions and many more are covered in this small volume. You will find interesting insights from God's Holy Word.

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