

The Five Most Disturbing Things About A Benny Hinn Miracle Service

Written by
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There are a lot of things you should try at least once in your life — skydiving, eating some exotic delicacy, traveling alone. Let me give you one thing not to add to that list: attending a Benny Hinn Holy Spirit Miracle Service.

I recently went to one in New York. Before going, I knew little about Hinn — a man who's worth some \$42 million — other than that he's a big-deal televangelist among countless charismatic Christians. As someone who's fairly unfamiliar with that sphere of Christianity, I was mostly just wary of being in a crowd of people speaking in tongues and being slain in the Spirit.

But that turned out to be the least uncomfortable thing about the service. What did happen was so much more upsetting, difficult, and unnerving. If you ever go, here are five unsettling things you'll experience:

1. You'll second-guess your Bible knowledge.

When you hear Benny Hinn make statements like, “The prophets all prospered. They had no debt . . .” it stops you in your tracks. Wait — what? No they weren't. Were they? You might grab your Bible to check, or you might just realize, Of course that's not right. What about Elijah, who lived in a cave and had ravens bring him bread to eat? Or John the Baptist, who wore clothing made of camel's hair and ate locusts and honey?

Or, what about Jesus, who was born in a stable, buried in a borrowed tomb, and had no place to lay his head? When the earthly life of Jesus is a counter-argument to your “Christian” theology, there's something wrong.

(Another related, absurd Hinn statement: “Where did Noah get the money to build that ark? Think about where he got that moolah.” I'm pretty sure he didn't need to hit up the local Home Depot.)

2. You'll realize he's in control of everything in his world.

From the musician to his audience to the very God he claims to represent,

Hinn exerts control over it all. He orders his pianist to play a certain way, and tells him to stop and switch it up when he wants a different mood. He tells his audience how to worship and how much money to give him. And he knows his audience so well — he mentions their material needs, then says things like, “I want you to sow \$1,200, because I believe 120 is the number of liberty in the Bible.” Then he confidently promises they’ll be debt free in one year, as if he’s in control of that, too.

Question for Mr. Hinn: If 120 is the biblical number of liberty — which... what? — then why not just have people give \$120? (He did also tell them \$120 would be okay, but the added zero is a big deal.)

All in all, Hinn tries to take control of God and suggests you can do the same. He tells people to “claim reality with your mouth” and “declare it in writing” — as if you have the power of God to speak things into existence. As if you have the ability to make God do things for you. As if saying or doing something requires God to oblige you.

3. You’ll wrestle with your negative thoughts.

My first instinct was to write off everything that happened under the leadership of Benny Hinn as blasphemous — an offense to the very gospel he claims to preach. But, as you look around the room and see men and women worshipping God with abandon, you realize something. Maybe these people, who trust and believe Hinn, are actually having authentic experiences with Jesus, despite the man guiding them. Maybe these people are actually finding genuine faith in a place that is otherwise tinged by deceit.

And then, for a Christian like me, the thought creeps in: Could it be that God is using Benny Hinn for the salvation of souls? In a small, but significant and confusing and flustering way, this question complicates the otherwise strong desire in me for Hinn’s ministry to be shut down for good.

4. You’ll discover that he owns up to the prosperity gospel.

Unlike the Joel Osteens of the world, Hinn embraces the prosperity gospel by name. He even calls out “anti-prosperity pastors” and says they just don’t get it. At a Holy Spirit Miracle Service, Hinn will say “sow your seed” and “prosperity is for real” more times than you can count. And more:

You can’t expect millions from the Lord if you give him some small amount.

In Jesus' name, we'll have surplus. Financial surplus is mine . . . is ours.

You're coming out of debt in the next 12 months if you really believe this.

Hinn even sends you mail a week later, complete with return envelope and offering card, reminding you to sow your "seed-gift" in order to change your circumstances.

Benny Hinn's ministry can be summed up in his own words: "God's goal for your life is prosperity." By that, he doesn't mean spiritual prosperity, life everlasting in the presence of God. No, he means material wealth, physical health, and general prosperity — which looks quite unlike Jesus' call to deny ourselves and take up our cross daily.

5. You may end up walking out.

For two reasons. One, these things last upwards of five hours. But the main reason you won't last the five hours is that you'll get to a point of such total outrage at what he's saying that you won't be able to stomach hearing it any longer. I was (barely) able to endure two and a half hours of "God is about to place a ton of seed in your hands" and "I sense an anointing for this. It's going to last four-and-a-half minutes" before I had to get out.

(Disclosure: apparently, by leaving halfway through, I missed the faith healings, the slaying in the Spirit, and his message. Lucky me, I was there for the over two-hour warm-up of "give me your money and you'll be debt free.")

When the service first started, I found Hinn somewhat humorous. Then I realized the thousand-plus people there were taking every word he said as truth, and I felt really sad for those people.

But it didn't take long for that feeling to be replaced by anger. Hinn is taking advantage of hurting people — and using Jesus to do so, no less. That's why you walk out.

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