

The Role of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament Church

*A survey of New Testament references to the Holy Spirit
with a view toward understanding His ongoing role in the
Church and the lives of individual believers*

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Preface:

The Personal Journey of a Former Cessationist

Cessationist: one who believes that the supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit ceased with the death of the apostles and all on whom they laid hands; i.e., the apostles could pass on to others the supernatural endowment that they, the apostles, possessed, but those to whom the apostles imparted this endowment could not pass it on.

When one writes on a topic that might be a bit controversial, honesty demands that the author reveal relevant information about himself. Does he have an axe to grind? Are there elements in his life that blind him to traits that interfere with objectivity? In answer to such concerns, I submit the following.

For the first forty-five years of my life, I was a “Cessationist.” My father’s family had been active in the Campbell/Stone Restoration Movement since the mid-1800’s. Originally staunch Presbyterians, they had responded to the appeal to cast off all human denominations, human creeds, human names for the Church, and human substitutions for New Testament commands, in order to return to the Church as it is displayed in the New Testament.

The Restoration Movement began in the first decade of the 1800’s when various individuals in different locations became grieved over the divisions in the Church on the American frontier. In that decade, two strong movements, totally unknown to one another, became motivated by the idea that studying the New Testament Church was the means of bringing about unity in the diverse Body of Christ. Both groups committed themselves to redefining Christianity by the patterns displayed in these apostolic writings. If this could be done, then the denominational creeds, denominational loyalties and structures (especially those that they had brought to America from their European homelands), and other non-biblical tests of fellowship no longer would stand in the way of Christian unity.

One group was birthed in Kentucky through the activities of Barton W. Stone. The other group, beginning in Pennsylvania, was birthed through the activities of Thomas and Alexander Campbell. Coincidentally, both movements began among Presbyterians. These movements achieved phenomenal success, with scores of congregations leaving their denominations to become “Disciples,” or “Christians only.” Before many years had passed, the two groups learned of one another. In 1832, in Lexington, Kentucky, they joined hands in common cause and from that time onward they were one movement. Sadly, the hoped-for unity among all who profess the name of Christ did not occur. Instead, the movement became one more division in the Body of Christ. The Restoration Movement ultimately split into three streams, the liberal Disciples of Christ, the biblically conservative Christian Churches, and the non-instrumental (musical instruments) Churches of Christ.

The Kentucky branch of the movement grew out of one of the showcase events of the Second Great Awakening - the historically famous, Cain Ridge Revival. A series of significant revival meetings took place in southwestern Kentucky in the spring of 1801. The preachers at these meetings were from several denominations, but Presbyterian preachers were most in evidence. Barton W. Stone, the minister of a Presbyterian Church at Cain Ridge, Kentucky, being deeply disturbed by the apathy and spiritual laxity of believers in his region, invited the “revivalists” to come to Cain Ridge (in central Kentucky, about 20 miles northeast of Lexington). In response to

Stone's invitation, Cain Ridge meetings were held Friday through Wednesday, August 7-12, 1801. The focus of the weekend was a communion service, to be held on Sunday. Because of the surge that had been building through the earlier meetings, the Cain Ridge crowd was so huge that all meetings had to be held out of doors. Cain Ridge was a camp meeting. Upwards of 20,000 people (10% of the population of the entire state) attended the Cain Ridge revival.¹ During the six-day meeting, Stone was impressed by the fact that preachers of different denominations (Baptists, Methodists, but chiefly, Presbyterians) could work together for the salvation of souls. Consequently, within a year he and other Presbyterians of the area began a "Christian Church," looking to the New Testament for doctrine and church practice.

The thing that most often is reported about Cain Ridge is the phenomena that the revivalists called, "exercises." Prolific physical phenomena, similar to what was experienced in some post-Azuza Street Pentecostal groups, were manifested in the Kentucky revivals. Stone and others reported the "running exercise," the "singing exercise," etc. Stone described the running exercise as sinners who began

"feeling something of these bodily agitations, through fear, attempted to run away and thus escape from them. But it commonly happened that they ran not far before they fell down and became so greatly agitated they could proceed no farther."²

The "jerks" were common manifestations. Stone reported that some people "affected by the jerks would often grunt, or bark, if you please, from the suddenness of the jerk." The newspapers described "jerkers" who embraced a tree in an effort to stay on their feet, as "barking up a tree," and mocked this as the "barking exercise." Stone and most of the ministers present at Cain Ridge, as Jonathan Edwards had done fifty years earlier, became concerned about the emotional excesses that some called, "revival." Rumors of immorality among the wagons at Cain Ridge persist to this day. Some churchmen who were involved in the meetings later noted that there was not a lot of lasting difference made in people's lives. Revival was over and so folks went back to normal.³ In an 1831 article, Stone defended revivals, but in a subsequent article, published in 1833, he commented on the passing benefit of revivals in most people's lives.⁴ Indeed, some people were "saved," in these meetings, but the most significant lasting result of Cain Ridge was Stone and his associates' breaking from the Presbyterians and forming a congregation of "Christians only."

Even though the Cain Ridge revival and its accompanying "exercises" were instrumental in launching the Barton W. Stone's "Christians only," all expressions of the Restoration Movement became strongly Cessationist. Since this was my background, it is not surprising that I was a staunch defender of the Cessationist position. Not only was the stated position of the Restoration Movement Cessationist, it also was consistent with the experience of most Christians, and

¹ Travelers from other states made the pilgrimage for the meetings – those from Ohio and Tennessee usually are mentioned in commentaries on the event.

² Barton W. Stone, *Autobiography*, Chapter VI, 1847 pages 69-72

³ Neo-Pentecostal and Charismatic authors tend to quote Stone's favorable statements but overlook his later reassessment. See Vincent Synan, *The Twentieth-Century Pentecostal Explosion* (Altona Springs, FL, Creation House) 1987, page 57; Jack W. Hayford, *The Charismatic Century*, (New York, Warner Faith) 2006, page 32

⁴ Barton W. Stone, "Revivals of Religion" *The Christian Messenger*, Volume V, No. 7, July 1831; "Revivals," *The Christian Messenger*, Volume VII, No. 7, July 1833

certainly was descriptive of the experience of all with whom I had any relationship. So, this is the position I held, taught, and vigorously defended. I was a Cessationist.

Cessationists cite a number of passages to bolster their pneumatology. The two most often referenced are Acts Chapters 6-8 and I Corinthians 13:8-10. The following is a summary of the Cessationist interpretation of these passages.

1. **Acts Chapters 6-8** In the inaugural days of the Church, following Pentecost, only the Twelve apostles performed miracles. This changed when the apostles laid hands on the seven deacons in the Jerusalem Church. When the apostles laid hands on these men, subsequent events indicate that they were endowed with the same supernatural ability that the apostles possessed. Stephen first demonstrated this gift by credentialing his sermons through “great wonders and signs among the people.” His bold proclamation stirred up enemies of the Church and he was slain. Persecution of the Jerusalem Church followed Stephen’s martyrdom, causing the Christians to flee the city.

Philip, another one of the deacons on whom the apostles had laid hands, fled Jerusalem and ended up in Samaria where he began proclaiming the Gospel. As Stephen had done, he credentialled his preaching through signs and wonders. Many Samaritans, both men and women, responded to Philip’s *preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ*. In obedience to Christ’s command, Philip immersed the new believers. If Philip could have done so, he would have passed on to his converts the supernatural endowment that he had received at the hands of the apostles but he could not do so - he was not an apostle. Thus, Peter and John came to Samaria and supplied what Philip could not give. They laid hands on the converts and they received the same supernatural endowment that Philip had demonstrated. This episode demonstrates that when the apostles died, and all on whom they laid hands died, then supernatural endowments ceased. They could not be passed on.

2. **I Corinthians 13:8-10** Paul wrote that gifts of prophecy will be done away, tongues will cease, gifts of knowledge will pass away. All these are but partial revelations – each one containing a piece here, and a piece there. When the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. What is *the perfect* that will succeed prophecy, tongues, and knowledge? The Greek term translated, *perfect*, is τέλειον which is the neuter form of the adjective, τέλειος. This term refers to something that is complete, a fulfilled purpose, nothing lacking. The fact that the term is neuter means that it must refer to an inanimate object. In the New Testament spiritual economy, what has taken the place of prophecy as the means of revealing God’s will? What has taken the place of the gift of knowledge? Cessationists declare that the Scriptures meet this criteria, as well as being consistent with the neuter gender of the Greek adjective τέλειος. Before Scripture was given to the Church, the supernatural credentials verified the speaker as one who was presenting God’s truth. When Scripture became available to the Church, then these endowments no longer were needed. They were for a special time and a special need. As those on whom the apostles had laid hands died, mention of these gifts fades from the record in the early church. Scripture became the touchstone for doctrine, not the charismatic credentials of a speaker. Scripture is the *perfect* of I Corinthians 13:10.

Other passages could be cited, but these are the two most often given as key to the Cessationist position. We will respond to these views in the following pages.

In October, 1959, after seven years of ministering in Ohio, I accepted the call to lead a new Christian Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma, the Bellaire Christian Church. Under our leadership Bellaire was a typical Christian Church until the early 1970's, when a few members of the church began reporting experiences with the Holy Spirit. In time, the number grew and the congregation became divided over the issue. Some members said, "This is a Christian Church and that will never happen here." The issue was complicated by five strong women who had started attending teaching sessions led by Kenneth Hagin at the Sheridan Assembly of God.⁵ Four of the women were married and one was single. Usually, but not always, the husbands of the married women accompanied them to these sessions. These women became aggressive advocates of the Word of Faith doctrine and were determined to force Charismatic phenomena on the church. On one occasion, they cornered my wife in the ladies restroom and sought to force her to speak in tongues.⁶ One woman declared that she was going to give a prophecy in the coming Sunday service and no elder could stop her (how she knew that God was going to give her a prophecy on the following Sunday, she did not explain). These women viewed the elders as their opponents, which was only partially true. Three of the five elders had changed their views on the Holy Spirit because they had "received the baptism," and the other two were friendly toward the move of the Spirit. All of the elders insisted on order in the Sunday meeting. So, we found ourselves with four groups in the church: (1) those who said it never would happen here; (2) the aggressive Word of Faith proponents; (3) those who had experienced the Holy Spirit in some way (usually tongues) but desired to see things continue in proper order; (4) those who were trying to discover God's truth in all of the confusion.

On the one hand, not wanting to react to the Word of Faith aggressors (my flesh wanted to), and on the other hand, not wanting to hold to any position that could not stand the test of Scripture, I challenged the church to join me in finding God's truth. I called the church to participate with me in a weekly study of the biblical teaching on this subject. We were going to go through the Bible together and discover what Scripture said, not what someone's experience said, nor what our tradition said, nor what some charismatic teacher said. I prepared a syllabus for the weekly study, which took place every week on Wednesday night, for almost a year. We examined representative scriptures in the Old Testament, then from Matthew 1:1 through Jude 25 (all of the New Testament except The Revelation – that portion of Scripture that related to the life of the church prior to the end-time events), I noted every verse that had anything to say about the Holy Spirit, miracles, etc. In the syllabus I provided a literal translation of each of these verses. Together, we exegeted these passages.⁷ Where a passage could be understood in more than one way, we noted the various understandings and instructed each person to decide for himself what the passage communicated. We made a conscious effort to avoid imposing an opinion or an

⁵ This was the beginning of Rhema Bible Institute

⁶ One of the most aggressive women of this group was a part of the rotation that provided a Wednesday night program for the children while the adults were in our weekly Wednesday night prayer meeting. One Wednesday night, she took the children, into the chapel and turned the lights down low, planning to lay hands on the children and cause them to speak in tongues. Our ten-year-old son happened to be in the group. After the evening meeting, when I learned what this lady had done, I asked our son about the experience. He said, "Mrs. xxxx took us into the chapel turned out the lights, laid hands on us, and told us to speak in tongues." I asked him what happened to him. He answered, "I said, 'uta' and she said, 'you've got it!'"

⁷ Although I did not know it at the time, this was the manner in which the early Church studied the Scriptures. They studied and exegeted them as a community.

interpretation on anyone in the group. It was not long into the study before I realized that I no longer could sustain the Cessationist position. Neither could I accept the Word of Faith doctrine. As a result of that survey, I knew what I believed about the ongoing ministry of the Holy Spirit in the church; I also knew why I believed it. No longer was I a Cessationist.

Most of my friends who are former Cessationists, rejected that pneumatology because they experienced an encounter with the Holy Spirit. Most of them had experienced the laying on of hands, followed by speaking in tongues or some other manifestation. I did not change my belief because of an experience, but because of my exegetical examination of Scripture. In the succeeding thirty-five or so years, I have seen and heard (in many cases, participated) in just about everything that one can imagine, in the name of the Holy Spirit. Some of it has been questionable. Some of it has been an expression of the flesh. Some of it has been evil. Some has been just plain foolish. Some of it clearly has been a move of God.

When the Conclave Planning Committee assigned to me the task of writing a paper on the general topic, *The Role of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament Church* (to be handed out at the 2008 conclave), I realized that I would be repeating the watershed journey that I had undertaken decades before. In the following paper, we will follow the procedure that we followed at that time. This paper will be somewhat different from the syllabus that we prepared for Bellaire, because the audience is different and I have had more time to think though the issues and to study Scripture more deeply than was true of the original survey.

In order to understand the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church, it is necessary to be acquainted with the role of the Holy Spirit as displayed throughout all of Scripture, not just the New Testament. Thus, we begin with a cursory look at the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament Scriptures, then we will survey the role of the Holy Spirit as displayed in the Gospels. Next, we will journey through the Post-Pentecostal record of the New Testament Church, and conclude with statements made in the epistles, concerning the Holy Spirit. For the most part, our study will be inductive but we will engage in topical studies where necessary in order to have a more responsible understanding of the Scriptures.

Where English versions of Scripture are quoted, we will cite the New American Standard Version (as revised in 1995) and note when another version is cited. I will take the liberty of altering the wording, when I believe that the Greek displays a subtlety that is hidden in the manner in which it is rendered in the NAS.

We will research all of the families of available Greek manuscripts when exegeting passages, but in the paper we may not make reference to this research, unless there is a difference that has an impact on doctrine. Also, in order to remove confusion, we consistently will translate the terms, βαπτίσμα (*baptism*) and βαπτίζω (*immerse*), as *immersion* and *to immerse*, since that is the meaning of the Greek term(s). We realize that this may be awkward for some, but we believe that the Anglicization of the term only causes confusion and conceals essential biblical truth.

Join me in the journey.

JWG
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WHO OR WHAT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

What is the Holy Spirit? Is the Holy Spirit some unifying subconscious condition, shared by all of humanity, as described by Carl Jung?⁸ Is the Holy Spirit a mystical jet stream, as I have heard some prophets declare – “getting into the prophetic stream, where prophetic words flow”? Is the Holy Spirit a latent power in all of us, as asserted by those teaching *A Course in Miracles*?⁹ Is the Holy Spirit “the power or energy of God, and never a third person in deity”?¹⁰ Is God a single being who manifests Himself in three ways, one of these being the Holy Spirit, as contended by some Jesus Only advocates? Who or what is the Holy Spirit? This question must be answered before we embark upon our journey. What are we talking about?

The expression, *Spirit*, or, *Spirit of God*, or *Holy Spirit*, is found in almost every book of the Bible. In the Old Testament, the word uniformly employed for the Spirit is רִיחַ (*ruah*), meaning, *breath*, *wind*, or *spirit*.¹¹ In the New Testament the word always employed for the Spirit is the Greek neuter noun, πνεῦμα (*pneuma*), which has the same meaning as the Old Testament term, *breath*, *wind*, *spirit*. πνεῦμα is used with the article (the spirit) or without the article (spirit). Holy Spirit is πνεῦμα ἅγιον, (*pneuma hagion*) without the article, or with the article, the Holy Spirit, τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον (*to pneuma to hagion*). Also in the New Testament are found expressions such as *Spirit of God*, *the Spirit of the Lord*, *the Spirit of the Father*, *the Spirit of Jesus*, etc.

The Old Testament term, רִיחַ , can be either feminine or masculine. The New Testament term, πνεῦμα , is neuter, but curiously, when a pronoun is used with this term in reference to the Holy Spirit, with rare exception, the masculine pronoun, *He*, is used, rather than the neuter pronoun, *It*. (Example: John 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26; 16:8, 13, 14, 15). Thus, the Holy Spirit is not regarded in Scripture as an influence or power emanating from God, but rather as a person. Traits of a person, rather than an influence or a power, are seen in that the Holy Spirit can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30), He can be lied to (Acts 5:3), He speaks (Acts 21:11; I Timothy 4:1; Hebrews 3:7; Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22), etc.

⁸ Carl Gustav Jung, *The Undiscovered Self* (New York, Little, Brown, & Co) 1957

⁹ *A Course in Miracles* is allegedly “new revelation” from “Jesus” to help humanity work through these troubled times. This “Jesus”—who bears no doctrinal resemblance to the Bible’s Jesus Christ—began delivering his channeled teachings in 1965 to a Columbia University Professor of Medical Psychology by the name of Helen Schucman. One day Schucman heard an “inner voice” stating, “This is a course in miracles. Please take notes.” For seven years she diligently took spiritual dictation from this inner voice that described himself as “Jesus.” *A Course in Miracles* was quietly published in 1975 by the Foundation for Inner Peace. For many years “the Course” was an underground cult classic for New Age seekers who studied “the Course” individually, with friends, or in small study groups. Various New Age practitioners have spun-off a number of books as a result of *A Course in Miracles*, one of the most popular and prolific being Ophra Winfrey’s frequent TV Show guest, Marianne Williamson (who also is an XM Satellite Radio reporter).

¹⁰ B. W. Stone, *Christian Messenger*, Vol. III, p. 58

¹¹ Another Hebrew word נְשִׁמָּה is used more exclusively for “breath” (Job 33:4)

The following are some examples of biblical statements that portray the Holy Spirit as deity:

- The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are coupled together in the baptismal formula given by Christ (Matthew 28:18-20).
- The Holy Spirit was active in creation (Genesis 1:2).
- Genesis 1:26 – *Let Us... in Our Image...* implies the presence and involvement of the Trinity (as revealed later in the New Testament), since the Spirit was involved in creation (Genesis 1:2) and the Father made nothing without the Son (John 1:3; Hebrews 1:1-2)
- I Corinthians 12:4-6 presents the Trinity in an ascending climax: The Holy Spirit is the bestower of gifts; the Son is served by the gifts; the Father works the entire sum of charismatic gifts in all believers.
- The Spirit is described as eternal (Hebrews 9:14), meaning without beginning and without end – a condition restricted to Deity.
- The Holy Spirit can be blasphemed (Matthew 12:31; Mark 3:28; Luke 12:10) – a possibility reserved for Deity.
- In Acts 5:3-4, the Holy Spirit is called, *God*.

NOTE: The King James of I John 5:7 contains a clear statement concerning the Trinity, *For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one*. This verse must be discarded because it is not found in any of the hundreds of Greek manuscripts or ancient versions.¹² The Trinity clearly is portrayed in a number of scriptural statements, especially the promises of Jesus made to His disciples in preparation for His departure (John 14:16-17; 15:26; 16:7).

There are some aspects of deity that are missing in the Bible's references to the Holy Spirit:

- The Holy Spirit never is worshipped singly, whereas the Father and the Son are worshipped individually (it must be remembered that when any member of the Godhead is worshipped, all are included in that worship)
- The Holy Spirit never consciously is addressed.¹³

Some of the statements made above will be considered in greater detail in the following survey.

¹² Clearly it was an addition made by a Trinitarian copyist who was interpreting the next line, *For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement*. The KJV addition is found in only four Greek manuscripts, all dating to more than a thousand years after the death of the apostles. The line also is absent from the manuscripts of all ancient versions (Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Ethiopic, Arabic, Slavonic) except the Latin. It is not found in the Old Latin or in the Vulgate. The line first is found in a Fourth Century Latin treatise, *Liber Apologeticus*, attributed to either the Spanish heretic, Priscillian (died c 385BC) or his follower, Bishop Istantiusis.

¹³ In Acts 5:3-4, Ananias was talking to Peter, he was not conscious of the fact that he was communicating with the Holy Spirit through Peter.

THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Three Greek words are translated, *gift*, in reference to the Holy Spirit. Two of these words are used frequently. The other word is used only once in association with the Holy Spirit.¹⁴

δωρέα (*dorea*) When the text speaks of giving or receiving the Holy Spirit, Himself, this is the term that is used – the Holy Spirit is the gift.¹⁵ This is the term Luke used in Acts to describe the two signal events when the Holy Spirit was given first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles.

- **The Jews at Pentecost**

Acts 2:38 *Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

- **The Gentiles in the home of Cornelius**

Acts 10:45 *All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.*

Acts 11:17 *"Therefore if God gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?"*

This is the term that Jesus used when speaking to the woman at the well (by inference, John 4:10 is understood to refer to the Holy Spirit, as interpreted by Jesus' comments in John 7:37-39).

John 4:10 *Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."*

John 7:37... *Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

When Simon the Samaritan Sorcerer saw the apostles imparting the Holy Spirit to the new Samaritan converts, he sought to buy the ability to do what the apostles did - impart this gift. Thus, indirectly, the term is so used in Peter's reply.

Acts 8:20 *But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!"*

In Ephesians 4:7 and Hebrews 6:4, δωρέα could be understood to refer to the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 4:7 *But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.*

Hebrews 6:4 *For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit,...*

The point that is emphasized by the use of this term is that when the Holy Spirit is given, He is a *gift*, not something earned or achieved by merit or deed.

¹⁴ All three of these words are used in Scriptural passages other than those referring to the Holy Spirit.

¹⁵ This term occurs eleven times in the New Testament, referring to such things as the gift of grace (Romans 5:15), the gift of righteousness (Romans 5:17), etc.

χάρισμα (*charisma*) When Scripture refers to abilities imparted to believers by the Holy Spirit, this is the term that is used (Paul also employed this term to describe other grace gifts).¹⁶ The Holy Spirit is not the gift, but these are the Spirit's gifts to the Church, given through their bestowal upon individual Christians. Examples of such usage are

Romans 12:6 *Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;*

1 Corinthians 1:7 *so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

1 Corinthians 7:7 *Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that.*

1 Corinthians 12:4 *Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit.*

1 Corinthians 12:9 *to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healings by the one Spirit,*

1 Corinthians 12:28 *And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.*

1 Corinthians 12:30 *All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?*

1 Corinthians 12:31 *But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.*

1 Timothy 4:14 *Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery.*

2 Timothy 1:6 *For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.*

1 Peter 4:10 *As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*

Some view Romans 1:11 as referring to Paul's imparting supernatural gifts to the Romans, since the term, χάρισμα, is used in this verse. Comment will be made on this in the following pages.

μερισμός (*merismos*) Only once in the New Testament is μερισμός used in reference to the Holy Spirit. Most English versions of Hebrews 2:4 render the term as "gifts," but its basic meaning is "distributions," or "partings," thus being similar in use to χάρισμα.

Hebrews 2:4 *God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts [literally: distributions] of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.*

The important point to be made from this word-study is that a distinction must be made between:

- the Holy Spirit as a gift that the Father and/or Son give to believers;
- as distinguished from, gifts that the Holy Spirit, Himself, gives to believers.

¹⁶ This term is employed seventeen times in the New Testament. As noted, eleven of these instances clearly refer to the Holy Spirit's bestowal of a spiritual gift. In the other passages, the term emphasizes something that is given, but not earned – such as justification in Romans 5:15-16.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

We will content ourselves with an overview of Old Testament references to the Spirit. Many other Old Testament passages could be listed in addition to those cited below. The following survey is given by way of illustration and as evidence that the Spirit has been active in every age. All of the examples cited are informative, but in many instances they cannot be viewed as a template for the activity of the Spirit under the New Covenant. Although there is a similarity between God's covenant relation with Israel and His covenant relationship with the Church, there are important differences. For example, the Old Covenant had as a central focus an earthly kingdom. The covenant was with Israel and the plot of ground that we call Palestine was an essential element to that covenant.

I. The Holy Spirit in Creation

The first mention of the Holy Spirit is the Genesis account of the formation of the earth after God had created matter.

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep,
and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. (Genesis 1:1-2)*

The Hebrew word translated *moved* (KJV) *was moving* (NAS) *was hovering* (NIV) is the term, רָחַף (*rahaph*). The term pictures the hovering of a bird. The YLT version picturesquely renders it, *the Spirit of God fluttering on the face of the waters*. The term is so used in Deuteronomy 32:11,

*As an eagle waketh up its nest, over its young ones fluttereth, spreadeth its wings --
taketh them, beareth them on its pinions; -- (YLT)¹⁷*

The picture before us is one in which the Holy Spirit has a special relationship with our planet. God created the universe. Then, the planet that was being created as the home for man received special attention from the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit fluttered over this globe the way a mother bird flutters over her newborn chicks.

Psalm 104 describes the sovereignty of Jehovah and His provision or withholding of blessings. In that description, the Spirit is described as the agent of creation.

*You give to them, they gather it up;
You open Your hand, they are satisfied with good.
You hide Your face, they are dismayed;
You take away their spirit, they expire And return to their dust.
You send forth Your Spirit, they are created;
And You renew the face of the ground.
(Psalm 104:28-30)*

Job 26:13 ascribes the beauty of the heavens to the work of the Spirit

*By His Spirit the heavens He beautified,
Formed hath His hand the fleeing serpent. (YLT)*

¹⁷ J.N. Young, *The English Young's Literal Translation of the Holy Bible*, 1862/1887/1898 (ASC II Version, copyright 1988-1997, Online Bible Foundation, Ontario, Canada

Isaiah, prophetically looking to a future blessing from Jehovah, foresaw the Spirit's transforming the wilderness into a fertile field.

*Until the Spirit is poured out upon us from on high,
And the wilderness becomes a fertile field,
And the fertile field is considered as a forest. (Isaiah 32:15)*

In his address to Job, Elihu reflected the ancient understanding of the Spirit's role in creation of man, *The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life. (Job 33:4)*

The role of the Holy Spirit in creation is a biblical reality

II. The Holy Spirit's role in calling men to God

The second place that the Spirit is mentioned in the Old Testament is Genesis 6:3

Then Jehovah said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years."

In this passage, the Holy Spirit is described as contending with humanity in an effort to retard the speedy downfall of the race.

The Old Testament describes the Spirit as an agent imparting moral and spiritual character.

"You gave Your good Spirit to instruct them, (Nehemiah 9:20)

Teach me to do Your will, For You are my God; Let Your good Spirit lead me... (Psalm 143:10)

In the Old Testament, the Spirit is not presented as convicting men of sin, to the degree that he is so pictured in the New Testament. We will note New Testament examples when we survey that portion of Scripture.

III. The Holy Spirit's role in imparting supernatural power and ability for service

Most Old Testament passages that mention the Spirit of God are in the context of the covenant relationship between Jehovah and Israel. If that truth is not kept in mind, the full meaning of most of the references will be lost. There are so many passages of this nature in the Old Testament that we must content ourselves with a few representative verses.

A. Powers conferred upon warriors and judges

1. **Othniel** - *When the sons of Israel cried to Jehovah, Jehovah raised up a deliverer for the sons of Israel to deliver them, Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. The Spirit of Jehovah came upon him, and he judged Israel. When he went out to war, Jehovah gave Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand, so that he prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim. (Judges 3:9-10)*

2. **Gideon** - *So the Spirit of Jehovah came upon Gideon (literally – “has clothed Gideon”); and he blew a trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called together to follow him. (Judges 6:34)*
3. **Jephthah** - *Now the Spirit of Jehovah came upon Jephthah, so that he passed through Gilead and Manasseh; then he passed through Mizpah of Gilead, and from Mizpah of Gilead he went on to the sons of Ammon. (Judges 11:29)*
4. **Samson** - *And the Spirit of Jehovah began to stir him in Mahaneh-dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol. (Judges 13:25) Then Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother, and came as far as the vineyards of Timnah; and behold, a young lion came roaring toward him. The Spirit of Jehovah came upon him mightily, so that he tore him as one tears a young goat though he had nothing in his hand; but he did not tell his father or mother what he had done. (Judges 14:5-6)*

NOTE: In all passages of this class, the Spirit imparted special endowments of power without reference to the moral character of the recipient. The end in view was not personal, but rather the theocratic kingdom – Jehovah’s covenant relationship with Israel.

B. Wisdom and skill bestowed for various purposes

1. **Bezaleel, crafter of appointments for the Tabernacle** - *See, I have called by name Bezaleel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all kinds of craftsmanship, to make artistic designs for work in gold, in silver, and in bronze, (Exodus 31:2-4; see also 35:31)*
2. **Aaron’s tailors** (compared with the statements describing Bezaleel, it is a natural assumption that the endowments bestowed upon these tailors were manifestations of the same Spirit as that given to Bezaleel) - *You shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty. You shall speak to all the skillful persons whom I have endowed with the Spirit of Wisdom, that they make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister as priest to Me. (Exodus 28:2-3)*
3. **Joseph** - (Pharaoh and the Egyptians recognized the source of Joseph’s ability to interpret dreams) - *Then Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find a man like this, in whom is a Divine Spirit?" (Genesis 41:38)*
4. **Joshua** - *So Jehovah said to Moses, "Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; (note Deuteronomy 34:9)*
5. **The Elders of Israel** - *Jehovah therefore said to Moses, "Gather for Me seventy men from the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and their officers and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. Then I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the Spirit who is upon you, and will put Him upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you will not bear it all alone.... So Moses went out and told the people the words of Jehovah. Also, he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people, and stationed them around the tent. Then Jehovah came down in the cloud and*

spoke to him; and He took of the Spirit who was upon him and placed Him upon the seventy elders. And when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do it again. (Numbers 11:16-17, 24-25)

6. **Zerubbabel** - *Then he said to me, "This is the word of Jehovah to Zerubbabel saying, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says Jehovah of hosts. (Zechariah 4:6)*
7. **David** – *As God's anointed king, David had the Holy Spirit. Because of his sin, David feared the loss of the Spirit. Do not cast me away from Your presence And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. (Psalm 51:11)*

C. Prophecy (one who speaks for God)

In the earlier period, the term used to describe individuals endowed to function in this role was **רֹאֵה** (*roeh*), a “seer.” Later, the term used was **נָבִיא** (*nabhi*), a “prophet.” *Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he used to say, "Come, and let us go to the seer"; for he who is called a prophet now was formerly called a seer. (I Samuel 9:9).* The prophetic office was instituted as a part of the theocratic monarchy that began with Saul. Many others prophesied who did not occupy that office. Prior to the monarchy, various patriarchs and judges prophesied (Example: Abraham [Genesis 20:7] and Moses' self description [Deuteronomy 18:15]).

Old Testament prophets ordinarily began their messages with the phrase, *Thus saith Jehovah*, or something equivalent to this expression. The source of the prophet's message was the Spirit of God. Peter, commenting on the Old Testament, reminded his audience of this fact.

2 Peter 1:20-21 *But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*

Many Old Testament examples could be given, but here are two that illustrate the prevailing tenor of Old Testament prophets:

2 Samuel 23:2 *"The Spirit of Jehovah spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue.*

Micah 3:8 *On the other hand I am filled with power-- With the Spirit of Jehovah-- And with justice and courage To make known to Jacob his rebellious act, Even to Israel his sin.*

Of special interest is the manner in which the Holy Spirit revealed His message to Ezekiel. The Spirit, through a series of visions imparted the prophetic message:

Ezekiel 2:2 *As He spoke to me the Spirit entered me and set me on my feet; and I heard Him speaking to me.*

Ezekiel 8:3 *He stretched out the form of a hand and caught me by a lock of my head; and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the entrance of the north gate of the inner court, where the seat of the idol of jealousy, which provokes to jealousy, was located.*

Ezekiel 11:1 *Moreover, the Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the east gate of Jehovah's house which faced eastward. And behold, there were twenty-five men at the entrance of the gate, and among them I saw Jaazaniah son of Azzur and Pelatiah son of Benaiah, leaders of the people.*

Ezekiel 11:24 *And the Spirit lifted me up and brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God to the exiles in Chaldea. So the vision that I had seen left me.*

Ezekiel 13:3 *Thus says the Lord Jehovah, "Woe to the foolish prophets who are following their own spirit and have seen nothing.*

Balaam is a curious case. Although he refused to deliver any word other than that which Jehovah gave him, he does not seem to have been a genuine prophet of God. Balaam was a "diviner," (one who sought omens as a fortune teller might do) whom Jehovah chose to use in a particular situation. This is an illustration of the fact that the purpose of the Spirit's move was national and theocratic, rather than in the interest of the individual so used.

When Balaam saw that it pleased Jehovah to bless Israel, he did not go as at other times to seek omens but he set his face toward the wilderness. And Balaam lifted up his eyes and saw Israel camping tribe by tribe; and the Spirit of God came upon him. (Numbers 24:1-2)

Saul is a similar example. He was not a prophet, but in a singular event, for reasons fitting God's purpose, Saul experienced an episode as a prophet.

Then it happened when he turned his back to leave Samuel, God changed his heart; and all those signs came about on that day. When they came to the hill there, behold, a group of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him mightily, so that he prophesied among them. It came about, when all who knew him previously saw that he prophesied now with the prophets, that the people said to one another, "What has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?" A man there said, "Now, who is their father?" Therefore it became a proverb: "Is Saul also among the prophets?" (I Samuel 10:9-12)

At times, the urgency of the message overpowered the prophet. Jeremiah is the prime example of this manifestation.

O Jehovah, You have deceived me and I was deceived; You have overcome me and prevailed. I have become a laughingstock all day long; Everyone mocks me. For each time I speak, I cry aloud; I proclaim violence and destruction, Because for me the word of Jehovah has resulted In reproach and derision all day long. But if I say, "I will not remember Him Or speak anymore in His name," Then in my heart it becomes like a burning fire Shut up in my bones; And I am weary of holding it in, And I cannot endure it. (Jeremiah 20:7-9)

IV. God's Presence among His people is described as the Presence of the Spirit.

Nehemiah 9:20 *"You gave Your good Spirit to instruct them, Your manna You did not withhold from their mouth, And You gave them water for their thirst.*

Isaiah 63:11 *Then His people remembered the days of old, of Moses. Where is He who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of His flock? Where is He who put His Holy Spirit in the midst of them,*

Haggai 2:5 *'As for the promise which I made you when you came out of Egypt, My Spirit is abiding in your midst; do not fear!'*

V. The Old Testament Predicted Future Activity of the Spirit

A. The Messiah would be endowed by the Spirit

Isaiah contains the most exalted of these passages:

Isaiah 11:1-2 *Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of Jehovah will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of Jehovah.*

Isaiah 42:1-3 *Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations. "He will not cry out or raise His voice, Nor make His voice heard in the street. "A bruised reed He will not break And a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish; He will faithfully bring forth justice.*

Isaiah 61:1-3 *The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me, Because Jehovah has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners; To proclaim the favorable year of Jehovah And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, To grant those who mourn in Zion, Giving them a garland instead of ashes, The oil of gladness instead of mourning, The mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. (When Jesus launched His ministry in the synagogue of Nazareth, He declared that He was the fulfillment of these verses – Luke 4:16-21)*

B. The Old Testament predicted a future outpouring of the Spirit

Joel 2:28-29 *It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions. "Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.*

Isaiah 44:3 *'For I will pour out water on the thirsty land And streams on the dry ground; I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring And My blessing on your descendants;*

**CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE SUMMARY
OF OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES**

1. The Holy Spirit is the creating executive member of the Trinity.
2. One role of the Holy Spirit is the stirring of men's consciences
3. Not everyone in the older covenants received the Holy Spirit, but only those who needed supernatural endowment for a particular role or activity.
4. The Old Testament anticipates a New Covenant in which the Spirit of God will be bestowed in a fuller manner upon the promised Messiah and upon all who become citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST

The Four Gospels are redundant with mention of the Holy Spirit's presence in Christ's life and ministry. We will harmonize the four accounts in our survey of this material.

I. The Holy Spirit's role in the birth of Christ

The Angel who appeared to Mary, informing her that she had been chosen to bear the Messiah, informed her that the birth would be the result of the action of the Holy Spirit.

Luke 1:35 *The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God."*

The two terms used in this passage *come upon you* (ἐπελεύσεται ἐπὶ σε – *epeleusetai epu se*) and *overshadow you* (ἐπισκιάσει σοι – *episkiasei soi*) are two synonyms delicately selected to express the divine substitute for sexual intercourse.¹⁸ Of further interest are the Greek terms used to describe the infant – *the holy-begotten thing shall be called Son of God*.

Matthew's report confirms Luke's account.

Matthew 1:18 *Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.*

Matthew 1:20 *But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.*

The miraculous birth of Jesus was the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy.

Isaiah 7:14 *"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.*

It is important for us to acknowledge two things in regard to the birth of Jesus:

1. The member of the God-head that came to be called, *Son of God*, existed from eternity.

John 1:1 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. One might argue over the meaning of *in the beginning*, but whenever the beginning was, the Word already "was." The Word preexisted before "the beginning."*

2. The miraculously conceived body was inhabited by the Son.

Hebrews 10:5 *Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "Sacrifice and offering You have not desired, but a body you have prepared for Me..."*

To say more than this about when and how that body was occupied only leads to speculation and controversy.

¹⁸ Alexander Balmain Bruce, DD, *The Expositors Greek New Testament*, W. Robertson Nicoll, Ed. Volume I (Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company) 1976, page 464

The point to be made concerning this event is that the Spirit fulfilled His usual role of being the Creating-Executor, in the manner that we already noted in the Old Testament Scriptures.

When the baby Jesus was presented in the Temple, according to the Mosaic requirement, the Holy Spirit, through an aged man named, Simon, prophesied concerning the Child.

And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law, then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said,

"Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, According to Your word;

For my eyes have seen Your salvation,

Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

'A light of revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel.' ...

And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed-- and a sword will pierce even your own soul-- to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed." (Luke 2:25-33, 35)

II. The witness of the Holy Spirit at Jesus' immersion

Matthew 3:16 *After being immersed, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him,*

Mark 1:10 *Immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him;*

Luke 3:21 *Now when all the people were immersed, Jesus was also immersed, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased."*

John 1:32-33 *John testified saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to immerse in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who immerses in the Holy Spirit.'"*

These verses inform us that:

1. The Holy Spirit came from the opened heavens in the bodily form of a dove;
2. The Holy Spirit as that dove rested upon Jesus;
3. John had been prophetically informed that the one on whom he saw the Spirit descending would immerse people in the Holy Spirit.
4. Both John and Jesus saw the descending dove – we are not informed as to whether or not bystanders saw the dove.

Peter's declaration to the audience gathered in the home of Cornelius appears to be a commentary on this event.

Acts 10:38 *"You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.*

The descent of the Spirit/Dove, and its resting on Jesus, inaugurated Him into ministry, in the same manner as anointing with oil had inaugurated into ministry various important figures in the Old Testament economy. Here are some examples:

1. Priest (Exodus 28:41; 40:13; Leviticus 4:3, 5, 16; 6:20,22)
2. King (I Samuel 9:16; 10:1; 15:1; 16:3, 13; I Kings 19:16)
3. Prophet (I Kings 19:16; Isaiah 61:1?)

John 3:34 is pertinent to an understanding of Jesus' anointing by the Spirit.

For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God; for He gives the Spirit without measure.

The King James Version closes this verse, *for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.*

Even though the words, *unto him*, are not present in the Greek manuscripts, the KJV translators added these two words to clarify the recipient spoken of in the verse, i.e., the Son. It is apparent that this is the correct understanding because of the context of the verse which is describing the attributes that the Father has given to the Son. The verse following reads, *The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand.* (John 3:35)¹⁹

Two truths are apparent in the statement that the Son was given the Spirit without measure:

1. The Spirit was not doled out to the Son, but was given fully without restraint or limitation. This is in keeping with Colossians 1:19, *For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him...*
2. The Spirit was given in a manner that could not be exhausted. This is reinforced by the tense of the verb translated, *He gives* (δίδωσιν). The verb is in the present tense, which indicates a continual giving, rather than isolated instance of giving. This is illustrated by the difference between being given a pond full of water (a single gift of a set amount) and a waterfall (a perpetual supply of unmeasured water). This also fits the statement that the dove rested, or abode, on Jesus.

It is not our intent to become embroiled in a Christological controversy at this point, but rather to point out that after being immersed by John, the Holy Spirit was given to Jesus without any limitation and the Spirit's presence and anointing was continual.

¹⁹ Some versions, by the use of quotes, indicate that verses 27 – 36 were made by John the Immerser. I disagree with this assessment. In my opinion, F. F. Bruce (*The Gospel & Epistles of John*, Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company – 1983 – page 96) and others correctly state that John the Immerser's quote ends at verse 30. Verses 31 – 36 are a commentary by John, the author of the Gospel, following that pattern that he displayed in 3:16-21, i.e., adding a commentary after the words of Jesus.

III. The Holy Spirit's role in the Wilderness Temptation of Christ²⁰

Many sermons have been preached concerning the temptations that Our Lord endured in the wilderness. All three Synoptics report the event. Like a three-note chord in a musical score, the triple account of Jesus' wilderness temptation blends information concerning the incarnation, the activity of the Holy Spirit, Satan's schematic pattern, and a model for defeating the Tempter. Our concern in this paper is the role of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus did not just decide to embark upon a season of prayer and fasting before launching His ministry. Luke states that Jesus was *full of the Holy Spirit*, when He left the Jordan and that the Holy Spirit led Him into the wilderness. Here are the relevant verses:

Matthew 4:1 *Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.*

Mark 1:12 *Immediately the Spirit impelled Him to go out into the wilderness.*

Luke 4:1 *Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness*

The varied intensity of the verbs in the three accounts, as well as the subtle variety in the verbs and attendant terms, present a full-orbed picture of the Holy Spirit's role in the drama.

- **Matthew** ἀνάγω (*anago*): literally, "to lead up." This word accurately reflects the topography of the area. As Jesus left the Jordan River valley, He ascended in a southwesterly direction. Matthew's term correctly states that the Holy Spirit led Jesus up out of the valley onto the higher plateau occupied by the wilderness. This term presents a geographically and topographically accurate picture of the trek.
- **Mark** ἐκβάλλω (*ekballo*): literally, "to throw out." This is a forceful word, implying more than just a gentle leading – it conveys the idea of "force." Thus,

KJV *driveth*

NAS *impelled*

NIV *sent* (the poorest rendering of the three)

The Holy Spirit did not gently suggest a visit to the wilderness. He forcefully launched Jesus into the wilderness

- **Luke** ἄγω (*ago*): literally, "to lead." Of significance is Luke's use of the imperfect passive form of the verb, indicating an ongoing leading. In harmony with the tense of the verb is Luke's use of the preposition, ἐν (*en*). A literal rendering of Luke is

And Jesus, full of the Spirit Holy returned from the Jordan and was being led in the Spirit in the wilderness.

1. Being "full of the Holy Spirit" and "in the Spirit" conveys a picture of Jesus' being in full submission to the Holy Spirit.
2. Being led "in" the wilderness (as contrasted with being led "into" the wilderness) indicates that the Holy Spirit guided Jesus about, day by day and from place, during the 40 day wilderness experience. The Holy Spirit directed Jesus in His

²⁰ The following section is an excerpt from *Sundry Studies in the Life of Christ*, by James W. Garrett, available through Doulos Press

activity of fasting and other activities which are not revealed in the biblical account. Of the three most popular translations, the NAS conveys this most accurately, *And was led about by the Spirit in the wilderness.*

THE TIMING OF THE TEMPTATIONS

The tenses of the participle of the verb, *παῖράζω* (*pairadzō*), meaning “to test,” or “to tempt,” reveal further information concerning the temptations.

- **Matthew** uses the aorist infinitive passive participle. His use of the participle describes the purpose of Jesus’ being led into the wilderness. He was taken into the wilderness for the purpose of being tested by temptation.
- **Mark** uses the present passive form of the participle. The present form of a participle indicates that the action described by the participle took place concurrently with the action described by the main verb, which in this sentence is the past tense of the state of being verb, *was*. The manner in which this form of the participle is used by Mark indicates that the temptation took place during the 40 days in the wilderness, not just at the end.
- **Luke**, like Mark uses the present passive participle. The main verb to which the present passive participle relates in Luke is *to lead* (*ἄγω*).
 - * **SINCE** a present tense participle indicates that the described action took place concurrently with the action of the main verb;
 - * **SINCE** the main verb in the sentence is *ἄγω* (*to lead*);
 - * **ERGO:** Luke thus informs us that the temptations took place while Jesus was being led about by the Holy Spirit.

This is consistent with what we determined in the previous discussion concerning the tense of *ἄγω* in this verse and the preposition *ἐν*.

Thus, even though one might conclude from a reading of Matthew that the temptations took place at the end of 40 days, Mark and Luke present a different picture. A careful reading of Matthew removes any perceived conflict. Matthew merely states that at the end of the 40 days Jesus became very hungry and the temptation to turn stones into bread was Satan’s response to Jesus’ hunger.

- * **SINCE** the three temptations detailed in Matthew and Luke began with Satan’s effort to take advantage of Jesus’ hunger,
- * **SINCE** this condition began at the close of the 40 days,
- * **ERGO:** we conclude that these three temptations took place at the end of the 40 day ordeal.

It would seem, therefore, that the temptations in the wilderness were not limited to the three that are detailed in the Matthew and Luke. Our Lord was tempted in a variety of temptations during the 40 day period. Luke could be understood to mean this when he wrote,

And when the devil had finished every temptation (Greek – all temptation), he departed from Him until an opportune time. (Luke 4:13)

Exactly what manner of temptation took place during the 40 days, and how it was done, we only can speculate and that speculation causes us to recall Hebrews 4:15.

For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

To limit Hebrews 4:15 to a description of what transpired during the 40 days is unwarranted, but it certainly opens the door to more than the temptations described in the account before us.

CONCLUSIONS

As a result of the three synoptic accounts, the following conclusions emerge:

1. The Holy Spirit thrust Jesus into the wilderness for the purpose of being tested/tempted.
2. While in the battle, the Holy Spirit led Jesus from place to place.
3. Jesus was in total submission to the Spirit and met the temptations head-on.
4. Observing how Jesus dealt with Satan, it becomes apparent that Jesus did not defeat Satan through the power of the Holy Spirit, nor through any special Divine endowment, but through Scripture, the Word of God, which Paul labels, *the Sword of the Spirit* (Ephesians 6:17)

IV. The Public Ministry of Jesus

After Jesus was *led about by the Spirit in the wilderness forty days* (Luke 4:1), He *returned in the power of the Spirit unto Galilee* (Luke 4:14). He began teaching in the synagogues of the Galilean villages. When He came to Nazareth he read to the congregation Isaiah 61:1ff, the passage which declares, *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me* (Luke 4:16-21).

In Matthew 12:18ff we find Jesus applying Isaiah 42:1-4 to His ministry of healing. This passage of exquisite beauty describes the Messiah as a quiet, unobtrusive, tender minister to human needs, possessed of irresistible power and patience – ministering in the anointing of the Spirit.

"Behold, My Servant whom I have chosen; My Beloved, in whom My soul is well-pleased; I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He shall proclaim justice to the Gentiles. He will not quarrel, nor cry out; nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. A battered reed will not break off, and a smoldering wick he will not put out until He leads justice to victory. And in His name, the Gentiles will hope." (Matthew 12:18-21)

It is incontestably clear that the Gospel writers viewed the entire public ministry of Jesus as being directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit, even when they do not mention the Holy Spirit in the text. When reference is made to the Holy Spirit it is because of a special emphasis, but the presence and action of the Spirit always are assumed. Note for example the comment made concerning Jesus' rejoicing when seventy of His disciples returned from a victorious ministry trip.

At that very time He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit, and said, "I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight. (Luke 10:21)

His Spirit-anointed words caused His hearers to realize that they were not listening to a mere human teacher.

They were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. (Mark 1:22)

A topic of serious interest, related to the Holy Spirit and the public ministry of Jesus, is the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. All three of the Synoptics record Jesus' statement that blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is an unpardonable sin.

Matthew 12:31 *Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven.*

Mark 3:28-29 *Truly I say to you, all sins shall be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin "--*

Luke 12:10 *And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him.*

Jesus made this declaration in response to His enemies' attributing His deliverance ministry to the power of Satan (Matthew 12:24; Mark 3:22). Matthew records Jesus statement that what He was doing was in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 12:28 *"But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.*

Given this context, we clearly can state that blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is ascribing to a Satanic source works which clearly are the gracious works of Divine mercy and power.

V. The Role of the Holy Spirit in Jesus' death and resurrection

Scripture states that the Holy Spirit even had an involvement in the atoning work of Christ on the cross and his victory over the grave.

Hebrews 9:14 *how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

Romans 1:4 *who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,*

CONCLUSION

The topic of this paper, the role of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament Church, constrains us from undertaking a full-orbed study of the role of the Holy Spirit in the ministry of Jesus. Our purpose in this section has been to demonstrate the dominant presence of the Holy Spirit in Our Lord's earthly sojourn. Given the picture presented in the Four Gospels, one could say that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John contain the record of what the Holy Spirit did through Jesus. The Holy Spirit was the executor. Jesus Christ was the cooperative agent. Thus, Jesus, the God/Man, set the example for us in Spirit-controlled living.

THE FOUR GOSPELS' TESTIMONY TO THE HOLY SPIRIT'S ROLE THE CHURCH

Before embarking upon a reading of Acts, it is essential that we look back into the Gospels to be aware of Jesus' statements concerning the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

I. All Four Gospels record John's statement that Jesus would immerse his disciples in the Holy Spirit

Matthew 3:11-12 *"As for me, I immerse you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will immerse you with the Holy Spirit and fire."¹² "His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."*

Mark 1:7-8 *And he was preaching, and saying, "After me One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to stoop down and untie the thong of His sandals."⁸ "I immersed you with water; but He will immerse you with the Holy Spirit."*

Luke 3:16-17 *John answered and said to them all, "As for me, I immerse you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will immerse you with the Holy Spirit and fire."¹⁷ "His winnowing fork is in His hand to thoroughly clear His threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into His barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."*

John 1:33 *"I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to immerse in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who immerses in the Holy Spirit.'*

II. The Synoptics (Matthew, Mark, and Luke)

A. All three Synoptics record Jesus' promise that the Holy Spirit would provide the disciples with the words that they should speak when they were arrested and called to give a defense of their actions and teaching.

Matthew 10:19-20 *"But when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say; for it will be given you in that hour what you are to say. "For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.*

Mark 13:9, 11 *"But be on your guard; for they will deliver you to the courts, and you will be flogged in the synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them. ... "When they arrest you and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but it is the Holy Spirit.*

Luke 12:11-12 *"When they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not worry about how or what you are to speak in your defense, or what you are to say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."*

We will encounter the fulfillment of this promise as we study the record in Acts

B. Luke records Jesus' promise that God the Father is eager to give His children the Holy Spirit, if they ask for this gift

Luke 11:13 *"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"*

Matthew records the same promise, but without specifying the Holy Spirit as the good gift.

Matthew 7:11 *"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!"*

Luke's version of this promise illustrates his marked emphasis on the operation of the Holy Spirit.

C. Matthew's record of Jesus' Great Commission includes the Holy Spirit in the immersion formula (comment will be made on this formula, as we study the conversions recorded in Acts).

Matthew 28:18 *And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, immersing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ..."*

II. The Gospel of John contains a significant larger amount of material concerning the anticipated role of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

A. The Holy Spirit is essential to the new birth process

John 3:3-8 *Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."*

Three points in Jesus' statement are pertinent for our study of the Holy Spirit.

- The new birth is the result of action of the Holy Spirit. In many ways, the role of the Holy Spirit in the virgin birth of Christ prefigured the new birth of those born into the Kingdom of God.
- The result of the new birth is obvious (one knows that the wind is blowing)
- No one can explain how this takes place (*The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.*)

The implications contained in this statement are important. If one is “born again,” there should be an obvious difference in the new-born citizen of God’s Kingdom – it is observable. This relates to the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). To reduce the process to something that we can explain is beyond human capability.

Excursus: water and Spirit

Because of the modern practice of having converts “pray the sinner’s prayer,” as the signal event of conversion, we must pause and comment on Jesus’ statement, *unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*. Every document from the early Church that comments on this passage understands the water in John 3:5 to refer to immersion. Given the consistent practice displayed in Acts, it is obvious that the apostles considered immersion to be an essential element in the conversion package. It was not something optional. No one was considered to be “born again” without having been immersed and immersion took place immediately. Popular evangelists over the past 150 years have ignored the biblical pattern and declared the deed done, as soon as one “prays the sinner’s prayer.” As an aside, converts sometimes are advised to find a church and “be immersed at their earliest convenience,” but the impression given is that the process already has been completed. Such an approach ignores the authority of Jesus’ clear command in the Great Commission, the consistent pattern displayed by the apostles, and the understanding put forth by the earliest writings of the Church.²¹

In recent days, because some denominations deny the importance of immersion in the salvation process, an attempt has been made to interpret the water of John 3:5 as physical birth – i.e., the mother’s water breaks before the baby is born. According to this interpretation, Jesus said to Nicodemus, “Unless a man is physically born of an earthly mother and then spiritually born of the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.” The fact that one must be physically born in order to exist is so obvious that this strained effort to avoid the role of immersion seems rather absurd. Why not accept the understanding displayed by the apostles, the New Testament Church, and the post-New Testament Church, rather than trying to find some interpretation that fits denominational theology or modern evangelical practice?

An opposite error is displayed by those who consider a ritual dunking to be sufficient for being born into the Kingdom. Theodore of Mopsuestia addresses this error.

“Since Nicodemus had asked, ‘Can one enter again into the mother’s womb and be born,’ Our Lord explained that this occurs through both water and Spirit. He said water because the action takes place in water, Spirit because the Spirit exercises His power through the water. This is called the Spirit of adoption, not water, because we receive new birth through His power. For this reason in immersion we name the Spirit together with the Father and the Son, but we do not mention the water, so that it may be clear that water is employed as a symbol and for a [visible] use. But we invoke the Spirit as the effective agent together with the Father and Son. That is why, in reply to Nicodemus question... Our Lord answers, ‘Through both water and Spirit.’ Just as in the instance of natural birth, where the womb is the place in which

²¹ Justin Martyr (c.140 AD) is one of the earliest writers to comment on this passage (*First Apology* 61). Athanasius, Chrysostom, Gregory of Nazianzus, Tertullian, Basil the Great, Ambrose, and other early prominent church leaders consistently present the views expressed here.

the child is formed and then perfected by the divine virtue that forms it from the beginning, so also in this place. The water is referred to in place of the womb and the Spirit in place of the Lord as the effective agent...²²

Theodore's explanation is an important response to those who assume that the water has sacramental power. The water has no power but, as Theodore says, is the "place" where the Spirit does His work. Unless some spiritual transaction takes place, – which assumes repentance and faith as prerequisites on the part of the convert - one could be immersed and come out of the water without experiencing the new birth. All he did was to get wet.

CAUTIONARY NOTE: Given the great number of sincere believers who have prayed the sinner's prayer, but have not been immersed – some even having been martyred for the Name of Christ - we must be very cautious about making any judgments on their spiritual status. When these believers sincerely came to Christ, they did what they were told to do by their church leaders. The onus was on the evangelist to instruct the new converts as what their response to the Gospel should be. Those who are leading the Church would do well to respect the clear command of Christ, as well as follow the example set by the apostles and the early church.

B. The sermonette on the Bread of Life (John 6:51-63)

This sermonette was given to separate the true disciples from the false ones (those who came to Jesus just to get a free meal – see John 6:26-27). The closing paragraph is pertinent to our study.

John 6:61-63

But Jesus, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this, said to them, "Does this cause you to stumble? What then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before? It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life."

The closing paragraph of this sermonette emphasized two points that are relevant to the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church:

- The presence of the Spirit was more important to the impartation of life, than was Jesus' presence (Obliquely, this relates to essential role of the Spirit in John 3:5).
- The words of Jesus, which the Church would possess, are spirit and life.²³

²² *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* New Testament Iva, John 1-10, (Downers Grove, IL, IVP) 2006, page 113 – quoting from *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* Louvain, Belgium, 4 3:67-68. Theodore of Mopsuestia, an ardent opponent of the heresies of his day, wrote a commentary on John c. 400 AD.

²³ Jesus read the thoughts of those who were struggling over his words, *He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him* (John 6:56). In response to their questions, which they had not expressed to Him, He declared that His words are spiritual food.

C. The Spirit would be received by believers after Jesus was glorified (a prediction of Pentecost). Furthermore, those who receive the Spirit would become fountains of life.

John 7:37-39

Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

D. Jesus' farewell discourse, recorded in John 13-17 contains a number of statements describing the Holy Spirit's role in the New Testament Church.

The statements that Jesus made on this occasion must have seemed cryptic to the apostles. Only after Pentecost and the life in the Spirit became reality were they able to grasp what Jesus was saying to them. We have the privilege of hindsight. This extended discourse was quite emotional and, as is true of all emotional conversation, there is a bit of repetition and no logical progression.

John 14:16-20

I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also. In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

- The Holy Spirit is a *Helper* (KJV – *Comforter*; NIV – *Counselor*). The term rendered *Helper*,” is παράκλητος (*paracletos*). Literally, the term is rendered, “one called alongside,” describing a being who shares our experience and encourages/helps us in the journey. Inherent in this picture is the place of responsibility - it remains on the believer who is helped in that responsibility by the παράκλητος.
- The Helper is the Spirit of Truth
- Jesus will not leave his disciples as orphans, but will come to them in the person of the Helper.
- The Helper will be sent from the Father at Jesus' request
- The Helper will abide with believers throughout the Church age.
- The world cannot receive the Helper; He is available only to those who are in the Kingdom of God
- The Apostles will know Him because He dwells with them and in them. This implies experiential knowledge of the Spirit's presence.

John 14:25-26

These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

- Another statement concerning how and from whom the Spirit will be sent – the Father will send the Holy Spirit in Jesus' name
- The Helper will enable the Apostles to understand the things that Jesus had said in their midst – things which they struggled to comprehend.
- The Helper will enable the Apostles to remember all that Jesus had said to them.

This promise to the apostles is important to us, because it assures us that the Spirit of Truth imparted to them what they needed to preach and teach about Christ. The New Testament Scriptures are the result of the fulfillment of this promise.

John 15:26-27

When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

- Jesus repeated the promise of the sending of the Spirit, but with a different perspective.
 1. In John 14:16, Jesus stated that He would ask the Father and the Father would send the Helper.
 2. In John 14:25 Jesus stated that the Father would send the Holy Spirit in Jesus' Name.
 3. In 15:26, Jesus indicated that He would be with the Father when the Spirit was sent and that He would be the one who dispatched the Spirit from the Father.

The emerging picture is that the Son will ask that the Spirit be sent from the Father and the Father will grant the request. The Son then dispatched the Spirit. This is in keeping with Peter's language in Acts 2:33, *Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.*

- The verbal tenses in this promise are important. *I will send* is future tense, in keeping with the Pentecostal fulfillment seven weeks later. The tense of *proceeds from the father* is present tense, indicating continual action. This is in keeping with John 3:34. The Spirit will continually flow in unceasing and unlimited abundance.²⁴
- One of the primary roles of the Spirit will be to testify concerning the Christ. He will not testify about Himself. The Spirit-empowered apostles will become witnesses. This is in keeping with Acts 1:8 *but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.*
- A qualification for those who are called to this level of witness is that they had been with Christ from the beginning.

John 16:7

²⁴ The aforementioned tense of the verb in this phrase is a small but contributing factor in the argument against cessationism.

But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.

- Another statement that the presence of the Spirit is more important than the presence of Christ in the coming Church age.
- Another promise that Jesus would send the Holy Spirit to His disciples.

John 16:8-11

And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

The term rendered, *convict*, is ἐλέγχω (*elencho*). The word is used to convey various shades of meaning but all of them relate in some way to convincing or exposing. When something is exposed, or made obvious, then a person is convinced of its reality. Judicially, the term is used to declare the accused to be exposed – his guilt is clear. Thus, a role of the Spirit will be to convince, expose, convict, in the areas listed. When the Spirit comes,

- Jesus will have been proven to be who He declared Himself to be and those who disbelieved will be convinced of the sin of disbelief;
- Jesus will have been proven to be righteous, because only a righteous being could enter the presence of the Father;
- Jesus knew that his chief adversary, the ruler of this world, was behind all that his enemies perpetrated against Him *I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me* (John 14:30). The presence of the Spirit will be the token that Jesus' earlier words are fulfilled, *Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.* (John 12:31)

John 16:12-13

I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

This is a reiteration of what had been said earlier, with the added statement that the Holy Spirit will speak what He hears. This is reminiscent of what Jesus said about Himself, during His ministry (John 5:30; 8:28; 12:49; 14:10).

John 16:12-13

He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you.

As the Son glorified the Father by his work on earth (John 7:18; 17:14) so the Spirit in His work on earth will glorify the Son. Looking at the immediate context of this statement (preceding verses), the reference here is to the manner in which the Holy Spirit will glorify the Son, i.e., by clearly unfolding the meaning of His person and work.

Excursus: The Exclusive Work of the Spirit

Five times in this discourse, the demonstrative Greek pronoun, ἐκεῖνος (*ekeinos*) is used, i.e. *that*. Ἐκεῖνος, in each instance, is masculine, in agreement with παράκλητος (*parakletos*). The manner in which the term is used (masculine demonstrative pronoun with third-person verb) indicates that certain things are the exclusive domain of the Spirit. He and none other will fulfill the matter mentioned. The following statements are made concerning the Spirit's exclusive role:

John 14:26 *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, **that is the one who** will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.*

John 15:26 *When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, **that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, that is the one who** will testify about Me,*

John 16:8 *And when He comes, **that is the one who** will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment;*

John 16:13 *But when **that one who** is the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.*

John 16:14 ***That is the one who** will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you.*

E. John 20:22-23 - The Great Commission in John

The resurrected Jesus delivered the Great Commission on more than one occasion. The audience always consisted of the Eleven or some portion of the Eleven.

- Mark, Luke, and John report the giving of the commission in the upper room on the evening of Jesus' resurrection (Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47; John 20:21-23).
- Matthew records the restatement of the commission when the Eleven met Jesus on an appointed mountain in Galilee (Matthew 28:18-20).
- In addition to the Gospel record, Luke records Jesus' reiteration of the commission on Mt. Olivet (7/8 mile outside of Jerusalem), just prior to His ascension (Acts 1:8).

Although the central idea in each recitation of the commission is identical, the details and wording vary. Luke and John include Jesus' reference to the reception of the Holy Spirit as a prelude to their ministry, whereas Matthew and Mark do not. Luke and John's account are pertinent to our quest.

- In Luke's account of the Upper Room commission, Jesus instructed the Eleven, *stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high* (Luke 24:49)..

This is consistent with Luke's record of Jesus words to the Eleven just before His ascension on Mt. Olivet,

Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me; for John immersed with water, but you will be immersed with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." ... but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." (Acts 1:4-5, 8)

- John's record adds an element that seems to be inconsistent with all of the other narratives.

So when it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. "If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained." But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. (John 20:19-24)

How are we to understand John's report that *He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit"*?

This event took place seven weeks before Pentecost. How does the impartation of the Spirit on this occasion fit into the scenario declared in the other accounts, i.e., that they were to wait for the impartation of the Spirit, which did take place on Pentecost?

Efforts by Pentecostals, Charismatics, Cessationists, Reformed theologians, etc., to explain John 20:22, fail to present an indisputable understanding of what transpired in this episode. Most reach a conclusion based on their previously designed pneumatology and impose that understanding upon the text. Honesty requires us to declare every explanation to be speculative. Here are two of the more popular explanations.

- F. Bruce, responsibly seeks to understand Jesus' statement by interpreting it in the light of the immediate context. The purpose for the bestowal, contained in the conclusion of Jesus' statement, determines the nature of the bestowal. i.e., *"If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained."*(John 20:23).

“The Son's mission in the world is entrusted to them, since He is returning to the Father; but as the Son had received the Spirit in unrestricted fullness for the discharge of His own mission (John 1:32-34; 3:34), so they now receive the Spirit for the discharge of theirs...But it is not the bestowal of life that is in view now, but empowerment for ministry...Since the Spirit is bestowed to empower them to fulfill the commission they have just received, the authority conveyed in the Lord's following words [verse 23] is probably also related to

the fulfillment of their commission.²⁵ The relation between this incident (the ‘insufflation’) and what happened on Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21) is a question which naturally arises but which is not easily answered. What John records is no mere anticipation of Pentecost but a real impartation of the Spirit for the purpose specified. The Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit was more public, and involved the birth of the Spirit-indwelt community, the church of the new age.’²⁶

Bruce’s contention that “empowerment for ministry” took place in the described scene appears to contradict the statements of Jesus in Acts 1:4-5, 8, as quoted above. According to Luke’s account (both in his Gospel and in Acts) the empowerment did not occur until after Jesus’ ascension. Bruce’s effort to resolve the problem by asserting that there were two empowerment/bestowals seems a bit awkward to me, and at best is speculation.

- Pentecostals, and Charismatic groups, plus Holiness groups who advocate some sort of “Second Blessing” (each group would define what that means), interpret the words of Jesus in the upper room to refer to the bestowal of the Holy Spirit that one receives when He enters the Kingdom – commonly referred to as, “the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.” According to this interpretation, the Pentecostal experience was the “Second Blessing,” or “The baptism in the Holy Spirit,” an impartation occurring subsequent to the salvation/sealing of the Holy Spirit.

The problem with this understanding of the upper room impartation is the context, which ties the upper room bestowal to the apostles’ future ministry of forgiving and retention of sin (as recognized by Bruce).

Even though we acknowledge that any precise pneumatology flowing out of this event is speculative, some things are clear. Harmonizing the three accounts of the event will assist us in some general conclusions.

²⁵ F. F. Bruce pages 391-392

²⁶ F. F. Bruce, page 396, endnote 18

Mark 16:14	Luke 24:36-40, 45-49	John 20:19-23
<p>Afterward He appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at the table; and He reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen Him after He had risen.</p>	<p>While they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be to you."³⁷ But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit.³⁸ And He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?³⁹ "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."⁴⁰ And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. ...⁴⁵ Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,⁴⁶ and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day,⁴⁷ and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.⁴⁸ "You are witnesses of these things.⁴⁹ "And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."</p>	<p>So when it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you."²⁰ And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord.²¹ So Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you."²² And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.²³ "If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained."²⁴ But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.</p>

CONCLUSION CONCERNING JOHN 20:22

Both Luke and John include reference to the Holy Spirit in the upper room version of the Great Commission.

- Because of the death and resurrection of Christ (events witnessed by the apostles), the Gospel could be declared to all nations.
- The successful proclamation of these events and the Good News resulting from them, was not dependent on human ability, but on the power and authority of the Holy Spirit.
- The apostles were not to begin fulfilling their commission until they had received power from on high – i.e., the Holy Spirit.
- Those who responded positively to the Gospel would have their sins forgiven; those who did not would retain the guilt resulting from their sins.

Whatever Jesus' statement concerning the reception of the Holy Spirit (as recorded by John) might mean, it fits this paradigm.

ACTS: THE HISTORICAL RECORD

The fifth book of the New Testament, *The Acts of the Apostles*, records significant events that transpired during the first three decades of the Church – from the ascension of Jesus in 30 AD to Paul’s awaiting his trial before Nero in 63 AD.²⁷ Reference to the Holy Spirit abounds on almost every page of Acts. The record of the Spirit’s activity in Acts is chiefly Charismatic – the report of the miraculous endowment of the apostles for their work of extending the Kingdom. For the most part, the discussion of the sanctifying work of the Spirit is reserved for Paul’s letters.

The first immersion in the Holy Spirit: Pentecost

As noted earlier, all four Gospels contain John’s declaration that Jesus would immerse in the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11-12; Mark 1:7-8; Luke 3:16-17; John 1:33)

Only two events in Acts are described as *immersion in the Holy Spirit*. The first is in Acts 2. The second is in Acts 10. We shall study these in sequence.

On the day of His ascension, Jesus informed the apostles that this promise would be fulfilled in just a few days, equipping them to become evangelists throughout the earth.

Acts 1:5 *for John immersed with water, but you will be immersed with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.*

Acts 1:8 *but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.*

The *not many days from now*, proved to be ten days.²⁸

Acts 2:1-4 *When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.*

A few years later, Peter referred to the Pentecost event as the fulfillment of the promised immersion in the Holy Spirit (Acts 11:15-16)

The significance of Pentecost as the occasion for the outpouring of the Spirit

Pentecost is the Greek name of the feast that biblically is known by three names,

- The feast of weeks (Deuteronomy 16:10)
- The feast of harvest (Exodus 23:16)
- The day of first fruits (Numbers 28:26)

²⁷ Because of errors in the Gregorian Calendar, on which our calendar is based, Jesus’ earthly sojourn would have extended from 4 BC through the spring of 30 AD

²⁸ Jesus was resurrected on Sunday, following the Passover week Sabbath. He remained on the earth for forty days (Acts 1:3). Pentecost was fifty days after his resurrection. Thus, the Pentecostal experience took place ten days after His ascension.

After Alexander the Great had installed Greek as the language of his empire,²⁹ the feast became known as “Pentecost,”³⁰ meaning “fiftieth.” Pentecost was fifty days after Passover. Jewish custom was to celebrate Pentecost on Sunday, following the seventh Sabbath after the Sabbath of Passover.³¹ The feast was celebrated according to Mosaic ritual by presenting two loaves of bread to the priest, which he then presented as a wave offering (Leviticus 23:15-21; Numbers 28:26-31). These loaves represented the first fruits of the wheat (or barley) harvest. Various animals also were sacrificed in conjunction with the wave offering. This was one of the three annual feasts which all Hebrew males were required to attend.³²

According to Jewish tradition, the Law was given at Mt. Sinai on Pentecost. This is not an improbable deduction from Exodus 19:1. The Israelites arrived at Sinai on the third new-moon after their departure from Egypt (although our English versions render Exodus 19:1 as “third month,” the Hebrew calendar was lunar and literally indicates a new moon). Thus, they would have arrived at Sinai about forty-four days after Passover³³ and a few days later Moses received the Law on Mt. Sinai. This tradition presents a very fitting background for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The Mosaic Covenant was given on Sinai on this day in 1447 BC, and the New Covenant was inaugurated on this day in 30 AD.

On whom did the tongues of fire rest and who spoke various languages?

To whom does the, *they were all together*, refer? Does verse 1 of Chapter 2 state that the 120 were in a house with the apostles and everyone in the room was a recipient of the tongues of fire, or does the verse refer only to the apostles? Both understandings have zealous advocates.

The basis for believing that the *all* refers only to the apostles.

Those who argue that the *all* includes only apostles, base their argument on grammar. Indeed, grammar does favor the idea that the term applies only to the apostles. The immediate antecedent to the adjective *πᾶς* (*pas*) rendered, *all* is the Twelve.

Acts 1:26-2:1 *And they drew lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles. When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.*

That only the apostles received the tongues of fire and spoke in a variety of languages fits the language of Peter’s defense,

²⁹ Alexander died 323 BC

³⁰ πεντεκοστή

³¹ Josephus represents the fifty days as being counted from “the second day of unleavened bread, which is the sixteenth day of the month (*Antiquities* III, 10, 5) If this were correct, the first of the fifty, and consequently the last, might fall on any day of the week. This contradicts Leviticus 23:15-16, which determines that the day of beginning the counting and ending the counting is the day after a Sabbath.

³² The other two being Passover and the Feast of Booths (Exodus 23:14-17; 34:23-24; Deuteronomy 16:16)

³³ F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company) 1988, page 50

But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: "Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words. For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day;"(Acts 2:14-15).

Peter stated, *these men are not drunk...* (οὗτοι masculine third person plural and so rendered by most modern English versions, i.e., NIV, NAS, RSV, as *these men*). The natural picture that presents itself to us is Peter's standing with the apostles and gesturing to the eleven as he declared, *these men are not drunk as you suppose.*

The basis for believing that the *all* refers to the 120

Chrysostom (307-447 AD) first advanced the idea that all 120 were included in the experience. Jerome and many more recent commentators have followed Chrysostom's lead. Joel's language, quoted by Peter, is the only textual reason put forth by those who argue that the *all* refers to the 120.

"And it shall be in the last days," God says, "that I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and you young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams, etc." (Acts 2:17)

In response to those who cite Peter's quote as evidence that the 120 are included in the term, *all*, J. W. McGarvey comments,

"But it is obvious at a glance that these words were not all fulfilled on that occasion. Nobody then present was seeing visions, or dreaming dreams. There was only the beginning of a fulfillment which afterward was extended until all was done which Joel predicted."³⁴

Some ignore the grammatical textual question, and just assume that the 120, and perhaps more, experienced the tongues of fire and speaking of languages. This assumption grows out of the general impression made on some readers by the account of the gathered disciples presented in Chapter 1. For example, New Testament scholar, David Williams, writes,

"they – (the believers) were all together in one place. By **all** we may assume that at least the hundred and twenty of 1:15 were included, but there may have been others from Galilee and elsewhere who had come up to Jerusalem for the festival." [bold type in Williams' original]³⁵

For some, resolving this issue is quite important.

- Those who hold to an ecclesiology in which the Church consists of the clergy, rather than all believers, might find it important to argue that only the apostles received the flaming tongues.

³⁴ J. W. McGarvey, *New Commentary on Acts of the Apostles* (Cincinnati, Standard Publishing Co.) 1892, page 21, fn 1

³⁵ David J. Williams, *New International Biblical Commentary, Acts* (Peabody, Massachusetts, Hendrickson Publishers) 1990, Page 39

- Modern Pentecostals, who argue for the unlimited distribution of the activity of the Holy Spirit, usually argue that the 120 received the flaming tongues.

It is difficult to weigh these two points of view. Does the grammar of the text prevail, or the over-all impression gained by reading Chapter One?

The argument from grammar, plus the account of what followed, point me to the conclusion that only the Twelve experienced the flaming tongues followed by speaking various languages. However, I hold that conclusion tenuously, rather than tenaciously.

Sound, Fire, and Tongues

And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. (Acts 2:2-4)

The sound: The first signal of the coming immersion in the Holy Spirit was a sound from heaven. Even though there was no wind, the sound was *like a violent rushing wind*, filling the entire house where they were sitting.³⁶ For a discussion of the difficult question as to the identity of the *house where they were sitting*, see ADDENDA A.

The fire-like tongues: The language describing the appearance of the fire-like tongues also challenges our ability to visualize the scene. Literally, Acts 2:3 states, *and were seen by them, tongues like fire distributing themselves*. Thus, it seems that there was a central something that looked like fire, which spontaneously parted into many parts and each part rested on each one of them. The identity of the *them* we already have discussed.

Other tongues: They were filled with the Holy Spirit. Peter later described this event as the fulfillment of the promise of the *immersion in the Holy Spirit* (Acts 11:16ff). Although ecstasy usually is not present in spiritual manifestation³⁷ it seems to have been present here. When they were filled with the Holy Spirit, the recipients began praising God (no doubt at the sovereign impulse of the Holy Spirit) and to everyone's surprise, those praises were uttered in a variety of languages.

Speaking of the mighty deeds of God: We are not informed as to which mighty deeds of God were recited. The Greek term is *μεγαλεῖος*, which is an adjective meaning "magnificent, splendid." However, in this verse it is preceded by a definite article, and both the article and the adjective are plural. Thus, because of the presence of the definite article, the adjective functions as a noun. Literally, then, the phrase reads, *the magnificents of God* or *splendids of God*. To make sense of such terminology, our English versions use language similar to that used in the NAS (quoted above). The sense of this expression seems to be that the tongues speakers were not preaching the Gospel, but glorifying God.

³⁶ The Greek text emphasizes this point, literally reading, *and there was suddenly out of heaven a sound, as being borne of a violent wind*.

³⁷ Paul extended treatment of this subject in I Corinthians 12 – 14 has as its foundational understanding that the use of tongues or speaking prophecy is under the control of the speaker – ecstasy is not present

The response of the multitude

For many Jews, traveling to Jerusalem for one of the great annual feasts was so important that the obstacle of distance was not sufficient to keep them from making the trip. One writer indicates that more than one hundred thousand Jews were present for Pentecost each year, during the period in which the New Testament was written.³⁸ Thus, on Pentecost there was a very diverse mixture of Palestinians and pilgrims from many nations – each group with its own distinct language or dialect.

And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. They were amazed and astonished, saying, "Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? "And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born? "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs-- we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God." And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others were mocking and saying, "They are full of sweet wine." (Acts 2:6-13)

The list of language and geographical groups roughly moves from east to west, with a change in the Greek sentence construction to indicate a transition from the Parthian Empire to that of Rome.

1. **Parthia** itself is mentioned first, indicating the district beyond the Caspian Sea
2. **Media**, a district west of the Caspian and south of the Zagros Mountains
3. **Elam**, the ancient name for the Plain of Khuzistan, north of the Persian Gulf
4. **Mesopotamia**, the first name in the changed construction. This term referred to the Tigris-Euphrates valley, a region in which both Rome and Parthia had influence. This is the region to which the initial Jewish exiles were transported.
5. **Judea** refers to the entire region, from the Egyptian river to the Euphrates.
6. **Pontus, Cappadocia, Phrygia, Pamphylia** (Asia Minor)
7. **Asia**, the Roman province of Asia, consisting of the western coast of Asia Minor and the islands off the coast
8. **Egypt, including Libya and the major city of Cyrene**
9. **Rome**
10. **Cretians and Arabs**, refer to those Jews from the area immediately south and east of Palestine.

Thus, ten general regions are mentioned as constituting the nations and regions from whence the pilgrims came. It is difficult to determine how many languages were spoken in these groups. Some would have spoken the same language with various dialects. Others would have had their own unique language. All would have been able to communicate in Aramaic, which was the language spoken in Jerusalem and would have been the language of commerce and common intercourse during the festivals. Greek also was the common language throughout the Mediterranean.

³⁸ Williams, page 45

When the Holy Spirit began speaking through the disciples, in a variety of languages, the pilgrims understood the praises to God that were being uttered in their particular language.

Palestinian Jews, on the other hand, would not have understood them. To the Palestinians the languages sounded like gibberish, and their conclusion was that they were hearing the emotional ravings of a bunch of drunks.

Something about their appearance, mannerisms, perhaps even accent of speech, identified the apostles as being from Galilee. Galileans were regarded as being “country bumpkins” and thus not conversant in a number of languages. That being true, the hearers were *amazed...perplexed* and asked the meaning of this unnatural display.

Peter’s explanation of the phenomena

Peter took center stage and spoke in Aramaic, the language that all pilgrims, plus native Judeans could understand.

But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: "Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words. "For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day; but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel:

*'And it shall be in the last days,' God says,
'that I will pour forth of My Spirit on all flesh;
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your women shall dream dreams;
even on my slaves, both men and women,
I will in those days pour forth of my spirit, and they shall prophesy.
And I will grant wonders in the sky above and signs on the earth below,
blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke.
The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood,
before the great and glorious day of the Lord shall come.
And it shall be that everyone who calls on the Name of the Lord will be saved.'"*
(Acts 2:14-21)

In the New Testament, the expression, *last days*, refers to the period that began with Pentecost and will end when Jesus returns (Acts 2:17; 2 Tim. 3:1; Heb. 1:2; Jas. 5:3; 2 Pet. 3:3). Thus, some of the things predicted by Joel refer to the final days of the last days, i.e., the phenomena in the cosmos. The point that Peter made by using this quote is that during the period following Pentecost, the Holy Spirit would manifest Himself through all sorts of people – i.e., no class would have exclusive access to the Spirit and no class would be excluded from that access. What the Jerusalem multitude was witnessing was the beginning of the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy.

Next, Peter summarized the events of Jesus’ life, including his death, and resurrection. He then declared that Jesus has been installed at the right hand of God, and concluded by declaring,

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ-- this Jesus whom you crucified."

The statement in Peter's sermon that is within the purview of this paper is his identification of the source of the phenomena that had brought the crowd together.

Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. (Acts 2:33)

This explanation is in harmony with the progression concerning the sending of the Holy Spirit that we noted earlier in John (see page 29, John 15:26-27).

Peter used a play on words in this declaration. The Greek term, ἐκχέω (*ekcheo*), meaning *to pour out, shed, spill*, is the term used in the Septuagint in Joel's prophecy, just quoted.

*'And it shall be in the last days,' God says,
'that I will **pour forth** of My Spirit on all flesh;
even on my slaves, both men and women,
I will in those days pour forth of my spirit, and they shall prophesy.*

Peter, echoing Joel's words, announced, *He [Jesus] has poured forth this which you both see and hear.*

Peter's audience could not have missed the significance of what he declared. This is what they had been looking for – it was here. Thus, being convinced that Peter's declaration of the exaltation of Jesus was the truth,

they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37)³⁹

Peter's reply is most significant for our study,

Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself." (Acts 2:38-39)

It is important that we analyze Peter's instructions.

Repent - the Greek word is μετανοέω (*metanoeo*), literally, *to change one's mind*. Peter, having declared to them the true identity of Jesus, told them to change their minds about who Jesus was/is. *He is both Lord and Christ – this Jesus whom you crucified.*

Be immersed – the Greek term is βαπτίζω (*baptidzo*) which means to *dip* or *immerse*.

In the Name of Jesus Christ – Because there is controversy in Pentecostal circles concerning the formula to be used at the time of immersion, we must pause and examine this statement. The following *Excursus* will address this issue.

³⁹ It is significant that they did not just respond to Peter, but to the entire apostolic band – the Twelve

In the Name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, or in the Name of Jesus Christ?

In the Great Commission, as recorded by Matthew, Jesus commanded,

Matthew 28:19 *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, immersing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,*

Peter, on the Day of Pentecost, instructed the crowd,

Acts 2:38 *"Repent, and each of you be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ..."*

The words of Matthew's Gospel were recited as a part of the initiatory rite from the earliest days of the Church. It was not until an international Pentecostal camp meeting, held at Arroyo Seco, outside of Los Angeles, that any alteration was seriously presented. At that meeting, Canadian evangelist, R.E. McAlester, preached at an immersion service, noting that the apostles in Acts 2:38 urged people to be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ, not in the triune formula of Matthew 28:19. One of the men attending the camp meeting, John G. Scheppe, intrigued by McAlester's sermon, spent the night meditating on what had been said. In the wee hours of the morning, he burst from his quarters and ran throughout the camp shouting that God had revealed to him the truth about being immersed in the Name of Jesus Christ. His display caused a stir and not long afterwards, a new doctrine had come forth which resulted in the "Oneness Movement." This movement rejected the Trinity, proclaimed a modalistic view of God, and proclaimed a new revelational theory of the Name of Jesus. The United Pentecostal Church is the best known contemporary advocate of this doctrine.

How can we reconcile the words of Jesus with the words of Peter – or can we? I believe that the language in each text supports the traditional triune formula of Matthew 28:19.

In the Great Commission text, the Greek states, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοῖς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος (*baptidzontes autois eis to onoma tou patrov kai tou huiou kai tou hagiou pneumatos*) The key element for our purposes in this exhortation is the preposition, εἰς, literally, *into*. The implication of this preposition is that when one is immersed, he enters *into* a relationship with the Triune God. This is consistent with Paul's language in Romans 6:3 and Galatians 3:27

Romans 6:3 *Or do you not know that all of us who have been immersed into Christ Jesus have been immersed into His death?*

Galatians 3:27 *For all of you who were immersed into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.*

Another passage of interest is Acts 10:48

Acts 10:48 *And he ordered them to be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days.*

The terms here are ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ βαπτισθῆναι (*en to onomati hiesou Christou baptisthenai* "in the name of Jesus Christ to be immersed"). In this instance the preposition is ἐν (en), which is used with the dative case and normally is intransitive – that is, it signifies a static situation, - the object in view is "in" something, going nowhere. However, when an intransitive preposition is used with a transitive verb, as it is in this instance βαπτισθῆναι, the transitive understanding of the verb overrides the intransitive sense of the

preposition.⁴⁰ Thus, Acts 10:48 is to be understood as *to be immersed into the name of Jesus Christ*, the same thing that Paul declares in Romans 6:3 and Galatians 3:27 (where the transitive preposition, εἰς [into] is used).

On the other hand, Peter's statement reads, βαπτισθήτω ἕκαστος ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ... (*baptistheto ekastos umon epi to onomati Hiesou Christou*) The key element for our purposes in Peter's instruction is the preposition, ἐπί, which when used with the dative (as it is here) literally means, *upon* (having to do with the location of something). However, it also has other meanings that grow out of that locative concept of *over* or *upon*. One such use indicates authority over – Matthew 24:47; Luke 12:44. Another use is to indicate on the basis of, Luke 4:4; 5:5; Acts 3:16; Romans 8:20; Hebrews 8:6. Thus, Peter's exhortation could be understood to mean to be immersed upon the authority of Jesus or on the basis of His command.

With this understanding, the conflict is removed. The initiatory formula is triune. In keeping with the Great Commission and the historic Church practice, *in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit*. This to be done upon the authority of Jesus Christ – done in His Name.

For the forgiveness - ἄφεσις (*aphesis*) meaning, *release, pardon, cancel, hence, forgiveness*.

Of your sins – ἁμαρτία (*hamartia*) etymologically means, *to miss the mark*. Thus, the term refers to any failure to be perfect and it has that meaning in the New Testament – both failures of commission and omission. However, the term also is used in the New Testament to indicate more than failing to live up to a standard. Paul, for example, uses the term in the sense of an invading power (Romans 5:12; 6:6, 12-14, 23). In this usage, the term indicates that there is a condition that does not allow one to hit the mark – to live up to God's perfection. Overall it can be said that the New Testament uses this term in the general sense of, *sin*.

And you will receive – interestingly, the term used is λαμβάνω. The core idea of this word is *to take, or receive*. Peter could have chosen several Greek words to indicate that the converts would receive something (for example, δέχομαι - *dechomai*, παραλαμβάνω, *paralambano*) or he could have said, *you will be given* (δίδωμι *didomi*). The fact that he chose λαμβάνω merits notice. This term implies cooperation on the part of the recipient – a gift may be offered to me, but I must take it, accept it. This also implies that what he was promising the converts was not the identical experience that he and the apostles had experienced. In their case, the Holy Spirit was poured out and they had no part in it. In the case of the converts, cooperation on their part is implied. This idea is tied to the fact that repenting and accepting immersion was an act of the will on the part of the convert in which the Holy Spirit was willingly received. In coming pages we will note the implication of this term in other episodes.

The Gift of the Holy Spirit – The term is δωρεά (*dorea*), referring to the Holy Spirit Himself, rather than to a charismatic manifestation (See page 8)

The promise – it is instructive to follow the theme of the promise, ἐπαγγελία (*epangelia*), through Luke's account, beginning with the closing passage of his Gospel.

Luke 24:49 "And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

⁴⁰ Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond Basics* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House) 1996, page 358-359, fn 11

Acts 1:4-5 *Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me; for John immersed with water, but you will be immersed with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."*

Acts 2:33 *"Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.*

Acts 2:39 *"For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself."*

This is a very significant chain of statements. The Holy Spirit had been promised to the apostles, and the promise had been fulfilled, when they experienced the sound, the tongues of fire, and ecstatic praise of God in languages unknown to the worshippers. Peter announced to the crowd that the promise is not just for the apostles, but for all in his audience – plus every coming generation and every nation. Peter did not promise tongues of fire, or the sound of wind, nor the ability to speak foreign languages. What he promised them was the availability of the Holy Spirit, Himself. Phenomena may occur, but the Gift is the Person of the Holy Spirit.

Peter linked the Gift of the Holy Spirit to immersion for the forgiveness of sins. His words are definite, i.e., that those who accept what he has offered also will be accepting and receiving the Holy Spirit. Realizing this, we must move to Paul's important statements to the Corinthians and the Ephesians.

2 Corinthians 1:21-22 *Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.*

Ephesians 1:11, 13-14 *also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, "In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.*

The *seal* to which Paul refers is of concern to every believer. In ancient times, a person who wrote letters wore a signet ring with logo engraved on the face of the ring. When he wrote a letter, he placed wax on the letter and then impressed his signet ring into the wax, leaving his logo – his *seal*. The seal identified the document as belonging to the one whose seal it bore. The seal also was used to substantiate the identity of officials who decreed certain things (Pilate's seal on the tomb of Jesus). In our day, it might be easier for us to think of branding. In the open range, cattlemen will brand the calves with a hot branding iron. Cattle from many ranches graze together until round-up time. At round-up time, the cowboys from each ranch will cut out from the herd the calves with their particular brand. The brand guarantees ownership.

This what is meant by our being *sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise* (note again, that word, *promise*). If I have the Holy Spirit, that is God's brand on me, for all of heaven and hell to see. I am His. Also, God has given the Holy Spirit to me as a guarantee that I am His and that heaven is my inheritance. That being true, when asked if I am saved, my answer is not that I know that I am saved because I prayed the sinners prayer, or that I was immersed some years ago. My answer is *Yes! I am saved and I know it, because I have the Holy Spirit!*

This wonderful promise, this certainty, is what Peter offered his hearers on the Day of Pentecost. Phenomena may occur, but many things can produce phenomena, including evil spirits.⁴¹ Phenomena does not save nor does it guarantee salvation. The inner possession of the Holy Spirit guarantees that I am His and He is mine.

Acts 2:41 *So then, those who had received his word were immersed; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.*

There is no mention of any phenomena such as prophecy or tongues on the part of the converts. We might conclude that there might have been, but that it just wasn't mentioned. The problem with taking this position is that in the other episodes where the Holy Spirit is a key subject, and there was phenomena, the exact nature of these manifestations is described. No such description is given in Acts 2:41ff.

The second immersion in the Holy Spirit: Caesarea

As noted earlier, only two episodes in Acts are labeled, *immersion in the Holy Spirit*. The first event, Pentecost, had been predicted as being that, and was so identified later by Peter and the Jerusalem church leaders.⁴² These same leaders identified, after the fact, the second episode to which this term is applied. We now turn to that event which is recorded in Acts Chapter 10.

Peter was divinely directed to travel to Caesarea and preach the Gospel. His own objections to entering the house of a Gentile and preaching the Gospel to Gentiles had to be overcome by a vision from God (Acts 10:9-20).

Peter's preaching to Gentiles aroused great animosity among the believers in Jerusalem. The Jewish Christians believed that only Jews could be recipients of the Gospel. In response to his accusers, Peter recounted how he himself had objected to preaching to Gentiles, but that God sovereignly had instructed him to do this – thus, his preaching to Gentiles was an act of obedience. Peter then went on to explain what happened. Here is Luke's account of the event in Caesarea.

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, "Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be immersed who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?" And he ordered them to be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days. (Acts 10:44-48)

When Peter recounted to the leaders of the Jerusalem Church this amazing series of events, he and they identified this as being the same thing that happened at Pentecost,

And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as He did upon us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, "John immersed with water, but you will be immersed with the Holy Spirit." Therefore if God gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's

⁴¹ For example, speaking in tongues is a primary doctrine of Mormons, as well as many cults.

⁴² Acts 11:15-18

way?" *When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, "Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life."* (Acts 11:15-18)

The similarities between the two events are obvious:

1. Both were a sovereign act of God
2. Both occurred without a human agent (no one laid hands on them)
3. Both are described as a *gift* (δωρεά)
4. Both were *poured out* (ἐκχέω)
5. Both were evidenced by exalting God in tongues
6. Both were accompanied by phenomena that convinced observers that God's approval was bestowed on the salvation message.
7. Both are labeled, *immersion in the Holy Spirit*.

There also are obvious differences.

1. At Caesarea, neither tongues of fire nor the sound of a mighty wind were manifested.
2. On Pentecost, the Spirit was poured out on the apostles; at Caesarea, the Holy Spirit was poured out on the audience.
3. On Pentecost, the phenomena was a sign to the audience; at Caesarea, the phenomena was a sign to the audience that Peter was preaching the truth, but also a sign to the preacher and his companions that God accepted Gentiles.
4. On Pentecost, immersion preceded the reception of the Holy Spirit by converts (Acts 2:38); at Caesarea, the Holy Spirit was bestowed before the converts were immersed (Acts 10:44-48).

Even with these differences in details, the essential nature of the two events is the same. The Holy Spirit, totally unbidden, sovereignly was poured out – first upon Jews and in the second instance, upon Gentiles. As a result of these two events, Paul could write to the Galatians,

For all of you who were immersed into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:27-28)

Since Pentecost and Caesarea are the only events that Scripture labels, *immersion in the Holy Spirit*, and since these two events are the inaugural episodes in which Jews and then Gentiles were received into the kingdom, these are the only events for which we have a biblical warrant for applying the label, *immersion in the Holy Spirit*. This does not mean that the impartation of the Spirit, followed by manifestations, is limited to these two events, but Pentecost and Caesarea are unique in their purpose and the manner in which they were bestowed.

The Holy Spirit manifested in a miracle, the ability to answer civil authorities, and God's response to Spirit-filled prayer: Acts 3-4

All of the evidence available causes those who study New Testament manuscripts to conclude that the traditional closing verses of Mark 16 (verses 9-20) were not in the original autograph.⁴³ Pertinent to our study are verses 17-20

"These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

So then, when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the signs that followed.

Having looked into the matter I must accept the weight of evidence and agree with those who conclude that these verses were not penned by Mark. I must admit that I come to this conclusion with regret because verses 17-20 verify doctrines that are important to me,

If these verses were not in the original, then who wrote them and why? These questions cannot be answered with any confidence, but this much is certain – whoever penned them, did so because they contain the record of what did happen, after the fact. They did go forth and cast out demons, they did speak with new tongues, they did pick up serpents, they did lay hands on the sick and they did recover, they did go out and preach everywhere while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word by signs that followed. The only thing mentioned in these verses of which we have no record of fulfillment is drinking deadly poison without harm.

Immediately after Luke's record of Pentecost and the beautiful community of believers that developed, we encounter the first account of a post-Pentecostal miracle. Acts 3:1-10 describes this initial miracle of healing that took place as Peter and John were entering the Temple to participate in the hour of prayer.

A lame man, well known to the citizens of Jerusalem, was begging beside the temple gate. As Peter and John started to enter the temple environs, the man asked them for alms. Peter's well-known reply is an oft-repeated classic,

But Peter said, "I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene-- walk!" (Acts 3"6)

Peter grabbed the man, lifted him up and he began walking, leaping, and praising God. Because the people knew the man well, his immediate healing made a dramatic impression on those who were in the Temple court. Peter quickly told the crowd that it was not by the apostles piety or power that the miracle had happened, but this was done by faith in Jesus. Peter spoke the same convicting word that he had spoken on Pentecost, i.e., that Jesus, whom they had crucified, is the Christ. He called them to repentance, so that they could have a part in the end-times ingathering.

The Jewish temple authorities were very disturbed by the apostles' preaching the resurrection of Christ. They arrested them and jailed them overnight.. The next day, they brought the two apostles to their assembly room and placed them in the middle of the room, surrounded by a host

⁴³ An autograph is the original document, penned by the author. Manuscripts are copies of autographs.

of important Jewish dignitaries. In this intimidating setting, the apostles were asked "By what power, or in what name, have you done this?" (Acts 4:7)

The next verse (Acts 4:8) contains the first record of the fulfillment of Jesus' promise that the Holy Spirit would give them the words to say, when they were brought before authorities and questioned (Matthew 10:19-20; Mark 13: 9, 11; Luke 12:11-12 – see pages 24-25).

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of the people...

Peter preached a condensed version of the Gospel. The question for us to answer is, "what is meant by *filled with the Holy Spirit*?"

- Does this speak of Peter as a "Spirit-filled man," i.e., at some point in the past he had become "filled with the Holy Spirit"?
- Or, does the phrase in this passage mean that the Holy Spirit filled him at that moment in a special way for that occasion?

The verb form, rendered, *filled with the Spirit*, is a nominative masculine singular aorist passive participle, *πλησθεῖς* (*plestheis*). The fact that the participle is aorist, means simply that the filling occurred prior to the speaking, which should seem obvious to any reader. The question is, "when." Dr. Howard Ervin argues that this is an *ingressive* use of the aorist. To explain the ingressive aorist, he cites Dana and Mantey,

"The action signified by the aorist may be contemplated in its beginning. This use is commonly employed with verbs which signify a state or condition, *and denote entrance into that state or condition.*"⁴⁴

In deciding whether or not an aorist can be understood as ingressive, Daniel B. Wallace says that it must pass this test:

"The force of this aorist might be brought out by the gloss, *began to do* (with activities), *became* (with stative verbs)."⁴⁵

Thus, if the action is described as initiatory (began or became), then it might be understood as ingressive, if the context demands.

Dr. Ervin begins his line of argument with the Pentecostal experience. Certainly, one might argue for the ingressive aorist in Acts 2:4 *And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit*. If ingressive, the translation would be, *became filled*, being understood as initiating an ongoing condition. However, even this passage does not mean that it is necessarily so. Grammatically, the preferred understanding of an aorist is that this was an isolated incident. Ervin, on the other hand, having decided that the aorist, indicative passive, form of the verb in verse 2:4 is ingressive, he then presses that understanding on Acts 4:8.

⁴⁴ Howard M. Ervin, *These are not Drunken as ye Suppose* (Plainfield, NJ, Logos Publishing) 1968, pg 59, citing Dana and Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, (Toronto-Ontario, The McMillan Company) 1927, 1955, page 196

⁴⁵ Wallace, page 558-559

A couple of things are wrong with Ervin's argument:

- First, the test that Wallace says must be met for an ingressive aorist just doesn't work in this passage, unless one decides that Peter was filled at that moment – *became filled*, which is the exact opposite of what Ervin is trying to prove.
- Second, a very important question looms over Ervin's understanding of Acts 4:8:

If Luke intended to convey the idea that Peter was a Spirit-filled man – the result of having been filled at some point in the past – why didn't he use the imperfect tense, instead of the aorist?

If one wants to communicate an ongoing condition that is the result of a past event, the imperfect tense is the obvious choice.⁴⁶ If Luke had used the imperfect it would be clear that Peter was a continually Spirit-filled man because he had been filled at some time in the past – exactly what Ervin contends is Peter's status in Acts 4:8. The fact that Luke chose the aorist, rather than the imperfect, greatly weakens Ervin's argument.

The only conclusion that I can reach on this matter is that Dr. Ervin, whose scholarship I greatly respect, has allowed his preconceived pneumatology to control his exegesis in this passage. From other Scriptures, he has deduced that a "Spirit filled person" has entered into a state of being "Spirit filled," and that the Acts record must conform to this understanding.

The only thing that is certain is that Peter's response did not come from his own wisdom or cleverness of speech. His response was supplied by the Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit imparted boldness and oratorical power impressed the Jewish authorities.⁴⁷

Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus. (Acts 4:13)

After putting Peter and John outside of the room, the council discussed what to do about the two preachers. They could not deny the miracle that had happened. They called them back into the room and commanded them to desist from their preaching in Jesus' name. Peter and John, still operating in the Spirit, answered,

But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard." (Acts 2:19-20)

⁴⁶ Wallace, page 544 Dr. Daniel Wallace makes significant comment on the difference between the ingressive aorist and the ingressive imperfect. "The difference between the ingressive *imperfect* and the ingressive *aorist* is that the imperfect stresses beginning, but implies that the action *continues*, while the aorist stresses beginning, but does not imply that action continues."

⁴⁷ I have experienced this phenomena in my own life. When speaking to a state teachers school in Kiev, (Pedagogical School IV), during the Communist era, in response to questions from the students I and those with me spoke about our church and matters of the Gospel. When we were finished, Communist ideologues took us into a back room for "dialogue." The Holy Spirit spoke through me in response to their questions. The answers that came from my mouth certainly did not reflect my wisdom or cleverness. I saw one Communist brought under conviction as we freely spoke what came from the Spirit.

The council threatened them further and then let them go. The apostles immediately proceeded to join their companions.

When they had been released, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. (Acts 4:23)

Again, we face a question, “Who were their companions?” Acts 4:23 in the Greek merely states, *they went to their own...* Does *their own* mean the other apostles, or does it mean a diverse group of disciples? No definite answer can be given. Certainly, the expression, *their own*, included the other apostles but whether or not others were present is a difficult question to answer. Yet, an attempt to answer this question is important to those who are proponents of a once-for-all immersion/filling, as we shall see below.

Peter and John recounted to the group what had happened to them, including the threats that were made against them when they were released. The record of the group’s response contains several significant points:

1. They prayed to God the Father (they referred to His holy servant, Jesus);
2. They acknowledged the Holy Spirit as being the author of Psalm 2 (4:25);
3. They identified the Jewish/Roman establishment as a fulfillment of Psalm 2:1-2;
4. They acknowledged that God’s will was being manifested, even in Jesus’ death and in the present opposition;
5. They asked the Father to give them boldness in the face of the threats that had been made against them;
6. They asked God the Father to perform healings and other wonders through the name of the Father’s holy child (or servant), Jesus.⁴⁸

God responded dramatically. The building in which they were meeting was shaken and they all were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness. This of course, is in keeping with Jesus promise to the apostles just prior to His ascension, i.e., that the Holy Spirit would provide power for witnessing (Acts 1:4-5, 8).

Once again, the question has to be faced, what was the nature of the filling? Howard Ervin, having concluded that the aorist in 2:4 is ingressive, seeks to press that understanding on all subsequent uses of that tense, in respect to “fillings.” He argues that Peter, being a Spirit-filled man, could not have been “refilled.” Therefore, in order to allow his interpretation to stand, Ervin concludes that *their own* of 4:23 must include new converts and that *they were all filled*, meant that the new converts were immersed in the Holy Spirit at this time.⁴⁹ In my opinion, this is pressing the text into a mold to fit one’s pneumatology. Having decided that one receives the immersion in the Holy Spirit through some means, and then remains Spirit-filled for the rest of one’s life, Ervin must make every passage fit his paradigm.

I propose another perspective, which I believe more appropriately fits the language of the text. In my opinion, Paul’s exhortation to the Ephesians is a key to understanding the many examples of being Spirit-filled in Acts.

⁴⁸ The Greek term, *παῖς* (*pais*) primarily means, *child, boy, or son*. Interestingly, there are passages in which the term can be understood as *servant* although it might be ambiguous (Matthew 14:2; Luke 7:7; 12:45; 15:26).

⁴⁹ Ervin, pages 62-67

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; (Ephesians 5:18-20)

The Greek verb (πληρώω *pleroo*) rendered as, *be filled*, is imperative, present, passive (or middle), second person plural. Literally, the text says, *all of you keep on being filled*, or *all of you keep on filling yourselves*. The reason the verb in this phrase can be rendered either *keep on being filled*, or *keep on filling yourselves*, is because both the passive voice (allowing something to be done to oneself) and the middle voice (doing something to oneself) are spelled the same way with this particular verb i.e., πληροῦσθε (*plerousthe*). Whether passive voice or middle voice, two things become apparent:

1. It is possible for an individual to be in a filled state sometimes and in a non-filled state at other times.
2. It is the individual's responsibility to do what he needs to do to remain in a filled state.

When one is filled with the Spirit, he will manifest this in his behaviour and attitude. Being filled with the Spirit causes the fruit of the Spirit to be displayed, as described in Galatians 5:22-23, and manifested in the manner described in Ephesians 5:19-20 (we will discuss this later).

Thus, it would seem that there is a routine state of being filled, which should be the normal state of all Christians. However, there are those special times when the Spirit surges to overflowing in the believer's life. These times, it would seem, are in times of crisis, in times of great significance, etc.

Thus, the normal and usually assumed use of the aorist (simply stating that something happened, an incident, rather than a sustained condition) is more compatible with the Acts record than is the ingressive aorist (as Ervin contends is the situation with Peter) or the *dramatic aorist*,⁵⁰ which Ervin contends is the language used in the *all were filled*.⁵¹ The normal use of the aorist speaks for itself. Any understanding of the aorist other than its usual meaning requires surrounding circumstances to make apparent that special usage. The only reason that I can think of for insisting that some meaning other than the normal one is inferred in these passages is a preconceived pneumatology that requires this conclusion.

A closing comment on this episode grows out of the verses that immediately follow this account.

And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them. And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. (Acts 4:32-33)

The congregation is described as experiencing *agape* community – no mention is made of their bold witnessing. The apostles are described as *with great power, giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ*. This distinction does lend credence to the view that only

⁵⁰ Ervin, page 66. Here Ervin once again turns to Dana and Mantey. Page 199. D&M list three “special uses of the aorist,” i.e., the *Gnomic Aorist*, the *Epistolary Aorist*, and the *Dramatic Aorist*. Again, it seems a bit telling to me that some special use of the aorist has to be found to make the text fit one's preconceived, and debatable pneumatology, whereas the normal use of the aorist provides a much simpler and less restrictive pneumatology.

⁵¹ Ervin, pages 66-67

the apostles were present in the Acts 4:23-31 episode. The concluding comment on the incident states that those who were present were emboldened for witnessing and since the apostles, not the entire church, are described as powerfully witnessing, then it is not unreasonable to conclude that *their own* of 4:23 would include only the apostles – another opinion to be held tenuously, not tenaciously.

Excursus: What is meant by the expression, *full of the Holy Spirit*?

Ideas and thoughts are communicated by language, but language has its limitations. Figurative or metaphorical idiomatic expressions often are used to describe a human condition or a state of being. One such idiom is *filled*, or *full of*. These terms are used to describe a person who is characterized by a condition that controls or completely overwhelms him. Someone full of anger is one whose rage controls him. Someone full of sorrow is one who is morose and downcast, without any joy. Someone full of joy is one who is exuberant and positive. Someone who is full of wisdom is one who makes wise decisions. Someone who acts like a fool is full of foolishness. Of course, these are figures of speech, or metaphors. They are not literal. An individual does not have some sort of inner chamber or “tank” that is full of anger, sorrow, joy, wisdom, foolishness, etc. – a vessel into which one can place a dipstick and measure the level of whatever. Thus, we use the terms, *filled*, or *full of*, to indicate the prevailing state of the individual.

When one reads much that is written concerning the Christian’s relationship with the Holy Spirit, this truth is overlooked. Many writers seem to take these terms literally. Thus, a Spirit-filled person is one who has some sort of a spiritual tank full of the Holy Spirit. Howard Ervin argues that when one is Spirit-filled he is “filled,” and thus cannot experience another “filling of the Holy Spirit.” This writer asks,

“What happened to Peter’s Spirit-filled experience between the events recorded in Acts 4:8 and Acts 4:31? Was a fullness added to fullness? (Can one be filled “fuller” than “full”? But this is merely a play upon words.) Or did Peter somehow lose the fullness of the Spirit he exemplified in his appearance before the ruling council of Judaism? If so, then it is in order to ask, how? When? And why? And until the questions are adequately answered, it is futile to claim that Peter was refilled with the Holy Spirit in Acts 4:31.”⁵²

Such a view ignores the obvious metaphorical idiom and views Peter as having an inner spiritual reservoir of some sort that was filled and topped off at one time, and unless some of it gets spilled or he leaks, his reservoir remains full. How much more sensible would it be, and in line with the normal use of this idiom, for us to understand that when one is described as being full of, or filled with, the Holy Spirit, he either is having an overwhelming experience of the Holy Spirit, or he is living a life completely under the control of the Holy Spirit. Even those who live a Spirit-controlled life experience those times when a special encounter with the Spirit takes place. An example of the latter of these would be when a believer is brought before a ruling council and asked to give account of himself – in such a case, the Holy Spirit “fills” the disciple and speaks through him. When someone lays hands on a convert, and he has an encounter with the Holy Spirit that results in tongues, prophecy, or some other manifestation, he is full of the Holy Spirit, in that he is under the control and influence of the Spirit (overwhelmed by) in that encounter.

⁵² Ervin, page 67

A lesson on lying to the Holy Spirit

The description of church-life at this point in the record is aptly summarized in the phrase, *and abundant grace was upon them all* (Acts 4:33). An expression of that grace was the commitment to community that prevailed. They voluntarily lived a communal existence,

*And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. (Acts 2:44-45) ...and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them. ... For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales and lay them at the apostles' feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need. (4:32, 34-35)*⁵³

One notable member of the church, Joseph (also called Barnabas), sold a tract of land and donated the money to the church. It appears that his example motivated a Jerusalem couple to do the same thing. Evidently, Ananias and his wife, Sapphira, made somewhat of a show over the fact that they were going to sell a piece of property and, like Joseph, give the money to the church. However, Ananias decided to keep some of the money and donate to the church only a portion of the profit from the sale. There was nothing wrong with doing this, but Ananias presented the donated sum as if it were the total amount that he had received from the sale. He perpetrated this deceit with his wife's full knowledge.⁵⁴

Peter's striking words to Ananias present us with a number of questions.

But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land? "While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." (Acts 5:3-4)

Instantly, Ananias fell down dead – seemingly executed by the Holy Spirit. Young men in the church carried Ananias' body to an undesignated location and buried him. Three hours after his death, Sapphira came into the meeting, evidently expecting to be praised for the couple's generosity. Peter met her and asked her if the money that Ananias had donated was the amount that they had received for the property. She lied, saying that the donated amount was the purchase price. Peter's words to her are as direct and uncompromising as those he had spoken to her husband.

⁵³ The Jerusalem Church, in its inaugural years, is the only church reported to have practiced communal living. Elsewhere, Christians kept their homes and land, worked with their hands to provide their needs, even owned slaves. The early days of the Jerusalem church were unique. Jews from many nations had accepted Peter's invitation on Pentecost (Acts 2:38ff) and many probably had remained on in Jerusalem, rather than returning to their homes. Many Judean and Galilean converts probably also remained in Jerusalem, rather than returning to their villages. Since these sojourners had no income and the money that they had brought with them for their Pentecostal excursion had been exhausted, communal living was the spontaneous response of the Jerusalem Christians.

⁵⁴ The initial record of this transaction does not say that he practiced deceit, but the scenario that follows makes apparent this intent.

Then Peter said to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out as well." (Acts 5:9)

She too fell dead at Peter's feet and the young men who had just returned from burying her husband repeated their mission with her body.

And great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things. (Acts 5:11)

This episode presents us with important truth concerning the Holy Spirit, but as already stated, it presents us with some major questions.

The most important truth is the statement concerning the Divinity of the Holy Spirit. Peter declared to both Ananias and Sapphira that they had lied to the Holy Spirit – putting Him to the test.

To Ananias:... *why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit (verse 3)*

To Sapphira: *Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? (verse 9)*

In his condemnation of Ananias, Peter also declared that the Holy Spirit (the one to whom the lie had been told) is God, *You have not lied to men but to God. (verse 4)* Thus, the Holy Spirit is described as *God*, a clear recognition of His Divinity.

It is important to note that Peter did not condemn holding back part of the money. He said that Ananias had the power and right to do so. What was wrong was the deception.

A number of obvious questions arise from this episode:

- How was lying to the apostles lying to the Holy Spirit?
- Is lying to church leaders always lying to the Holy Spirit?
- Why were these two slain, and all who lie to the church today are not slain?

To answer these questions we must first take into account that these were the inaugural days of the Church. Certain truths must be firmly stated and established during any inaugural period, because this is the season in which future standards and direction are established.

The appropriateness of the public exposure of their lies, as well as the penalty for attempting to deceive the apostles, becomes apparent when we consider what the result would have been if Ananias and Sapphira had been able to get away with the deception. No doubt the avarice would have become known by some of the Christian community – that's just the way things go. The members of the church would have concluded that the Church is just another organization with which one could play games; that God is no different from the pagan gods who could be tricked; that God is not omniscient; that the Holy Spirit can be deceived. One can only imagine what effect this would have on the faith of the fledgling saints and the future of the Church.

Another important aspect of this inaugural era was the role of the apostles. These men were and are unique in the foundation of the Church. These were the ones who had the very special role of imparting the truths of Jesus Christ to the world. These are the ones who presented to all future generations the doctrines to be taught and practices to be followed in the Kingdom. Today, these apostles still lead the church, through the Scriptures, which the Holy Spirit imparted through

them and their associates. Since they were the vessels that the Holy Spirit was using to lead the Church, lying to them was lying to the Holy Spirit.

Writing to the Gentile Church in Ephesus, Paul emphasized the foundational place of the apostles and the prophets associated with them.

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:19-22)

that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief.⁴ By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ,⁵ which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; (Ephesians 3:3-5)

In the first quote above (Ephesians 2:19-22), the foundation is spoken of as having already been laid. Thus, this does not refer to future church plants, or to any individual church, but to the Church – the foundation of which was laid once and for all.⁵⁵

These things being true, it becomes apparent why this scene played out as it did. Everyone came to realize that things related to the Church, and especially when it involved the apostles, was serious business. These were holy matters and, as in the Mosaic economy, to treat Holy things as common was to risk death.

And great fear came over the whole church⁵⁶, and over all who heard of these things. At the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were taking place among the people; and they were all with one accord in Solomon's portico. But none of the rest dared to associate with them; however, the people held them in high esteem. (Acts 5:11-13)

As we will see in future episodes, the administrator of the Church is the Holy Spirit. In our age, when elders are Spirit-led, prayer will be their *modus operandi*. Prophetic words also have a place in leading a church – when leadership is Spirit-led.

⁵⁵ It is important to remember that figures of speech will be used in different places to teach different truths. For example, in Corinth, where different groups in the church were becoming aligned with different apostles, Paul emphasized that the foundation of the local church is Christ, not any apostle (I Corinthians 3:10ff). In Ephesus, Paul was emphasizing the doctrinal truth of the Gospel for all races and the importance of the source of that doctrine. Thus, in that epistle, he used the figure of a foundation in a different way, citing the apostles and prophets as the vehicles of that revelation.

⁵⁶ This is the first time that the word, *Church* (ἐκκλησία) is used by Luke to describe the gathered believers. In the Septuagint, two words are used for the congregation of Israel: *synagoge* (συναγωγή) and *ekklesia* (ἐκκλησία). The Jews increasingly had begun using the first of these terms for their meetings and meeting place. The Christians, no doubt led by the Holy Spirit, came to be known by the second term, which in English is rendered, *Church*.

The Holy Spirit launches a season of abundant miracles

At the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were taking place among the people; and they were all with one accord in Solomon's portico. But none of the rest dared to associate with them; however, the people held them in high esteem. And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to their number, to such an extent that they even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and pallets, so that when Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on any one of them. Also the people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together, bringing people who were sick or afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all being healed. (Acts 5:12-16)

The obvious supernatural knowledge demonstrated by Peter, and the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira, produced two responses, somewhat related:

- Reverential fear of the apostles
- An acknowledgement of the supernatural powers present in the apostles

Solomon's porch, a portion of the Temple, became the regular meeting place for the Church. Because of the obvious power resident in the apostles, both believers and non-believers kept a respectful distance between the apostles and themselves. Even so, the desire for physical healing overcame the fear of the apostles' presence. The abundance of healings at this time does not seem to be the result of some new power resident in the apostles but, rather, the result of a new zeal for healing. The atmosphere was similar to that in Jesus' early Galilean ministry (Mark 1:32-34; Luke 4:40-41). Trust in Peter's shadow is similar to the belief that touching the fringe of Christ's garment would produce healing (Mark 6:56). Even though such a view might smack of a bit of superstition, God used it to bring increased numbers of people into the Kingdom. Noting that great numbers from surrounding cities came to Jerusalem to seek healing from the apostles probably was the beginning of the extension of the Gospel into Judea – beyond Jerusalem.

Of significance is the fact that thus far in the Acts record, only apostles are reported as performing miracles. The power to heal the sick and other supernatural manifestations was not given to any other than the Twelve, at this point in the Church's life.

The language concerning the addition of new converts emphasizes important truth. There was a great surge of believers – literally, *and the more were believers added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women...*

- The Greek of this verse is best understood as describing those who believed the Lord were *added to the Lord*.
- This also is the first mention of women converts. On Pentecost the number saved was described as *three thousand souls* (Acts 2:41). The next count reported only men (4:4). Here, the report of the great surge in converts includes men and women (Acts 5:14).
- The tense of the verb is imperfect, implying that men and women kept on being added.
- The voice of the verb is passive, indicating that it was God who was doing the adding. He was and is the source of any increase (Acts 2:47; I Corinthians 3:6).

The Holy Spirit is a witness to the exaltation of Jesus

Acts 5:17ff records the next episode in the drama surrounding the infant Church. The High Priest and his fellow Sadducees were filled with jealousy over the popularity of the apostles. The people were giving authority and esteem to the Twelve that the Jewish Temple establishment coveted for itself. The apostles were arrested and put into the local public jail. During the night, an angel of the Lord appeared to them, opened the gates to the prison, and told them to go to the Temple and to continue preaching *the whole message of this life* (Acts 5:20). They proceeded to the Temple, arriving at about daybreak and began fulfilling their preaching mission.

The High Priest called together a special council of Jewish dignitaries to decide what to do about their rivals. When the officers of the court went to the jail to retrieve the apostles, they found the cells locked and the guards in place, but the cell that should have contained the Twelve was empty. Quite naturally, everyone in the room was *greatly perplexed* (Acts 5:24). Word came to the gathered authorities that the apostles were back in the Temple, teaching the people. A coterie of soldiers was sent to bring the apostles before their court. Because the people favored the apostles, the soldiers were careful to treat the apostles with respect; the soldiers were afraid of being stoned by the crowd.

The court reminded the apostles of the warning that they had given to them earlier. Peter and the apostles responded as they had the last time, *We must obey God, rather than men* (Acts 5:29). Peter then summarized why they could not keep silent.

The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him. (Acts 5:30-32)

The portion of Peter's discourse that is within the purview of our study is the last line, *we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him.*

Peter declared that he and the apostles were witnesses of the crucifixion, burial, resurrection, and ascension. The only way that they could know that Jesus had been exalted to God's right hand was by revelation – that is the business of the Holy Spirit. This is the message that Peter had proclaimed at Pentecost – even then, preaching what the Holy Spirit had revealed and put into his mouth.

Another aspect to the Holy Spirit's witness is his presence in the life of everyone who obeys God. This certainly includes the assumption that obeying God is accepting the Gospel, repenting, and receiving the forgiveness of sin, as Peter stated in his reply. Here, again, is the repetition of the promise of Pentecost, recorded in Acts 2:38

Repent, and each of you be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit's indwelling presence in each Christian brings an inner testimony to the believer with respect to the position and ministry of Jesus (John 15:26; I Corinthians 12:3)

The first deacons were to be men full of the Holy Spirit.

The Church had become so large that properly distributing the daily rations to the many widows became a serious problem. The Greek speaking Jews complained that the Aramaic speaking widows received preferential treatment. The apostles seemingly acknowledged that they no longer were doing a good job of this important ministry and so they told the congregation to pick seven men to take on this task. The qualifications were few but specific, *Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task.* (Acts 6:3) The requirements were three:

1. Good reputation – men who had demonstrated integrity and were trusted by the community at large;
2. Full of the Spirit – they were men who fulfilled Ephesians 5:18 and displayed Galatians 5:22-23. By this qualification it is intimated that some in the Jerusalem congregation were not “full of the Holy Spirit.”
3. Full of wisdom – men who had the ability to handle situations that might arise.

The installation of these seven men is a watershed moment in the history of the Church. For the first time, men other than apostles had a leadership role. In this case, it was managerial, rather than governmental.

The other signal event is the emergence of miracle workers, other than apostles. Until this time, only apostles had demonstrated supernatural powers. After the apostles laid hands on them, at least two of the seven became miracle workers – Stephen (Acts 6:8) and Philip (Acts 8:6-7). Given statements made in later writings about bestowal of supernatural ability through the laying on of hands, we naturally assume that this is what happened here.

Stephen's martyrdom

Stephen seems to have launched into miraculous ministry almost immediately after being set into the role of deacon in Jerusalem.

And Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people. (Acts 6:8)

His miraculous work was accompanied by preaching, which stirred opposition among the members of the Synagogue of Freedmen. Unable to defeat Stephen in debate, his opponents put forth lying witnesses who accused Stephen of saying blasphemous things against Moses and God. As a result, he was dragged before the council and interrogated (Acts 6:8-15). Stephen preached a brilliant sermon, summarizing God's covenant history, from Abraham to David. He then leveled a charge at the council,

You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did (Acts 7:51)

In the past, when prophets had called Israel to repentance, it had been the Holy Spirit who had spoken through them – Stephen declared that Jewish leaders of the past had killed the prophets, instead of heeding their warning. This accusation is an echo of Genesis 6:3, in which God, reaching the end of His patience, stated, *My Spirit shall not always strive with man*, and Jesus

lament, *Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her!* (Matthew 23:37; Luke 13:34).

The council erupted in anger. Quickly they grabbed Stephen, drove him out of the city and stoned him to death. (Acts 7:54ff)

From the very moment of his being dragged before the council, in fulfillment of Jesus' promise (Matthew 10:18-19; Mark 13:9-11; Luke 21:12-15), Stephen had been an instrument through which the Holy Spirit was speaking. Thus, already being full of the Holy Spirit, and especially so at this moment, he was given a vision of Christ standing beside the right hand of God.

But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; (Acts 7:55)

The Greek terms referring to Stephen's being full of the Holy Spirit indicate that he already was "full of the Holy Spirit" at the time of the event described. There is no sense of a filling that occurred at this moment – the Greek terms do not allow that interpretation.⁵⁷ The term ὑπάρχων (*huparchon*) when used with a predicate nominative, as it is here, refers to an existing state of being. Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit when this event occurred. When did this *full of the Holy Spirit* condition begin? Note that when he was selected to be a deacon, one of the qualifications was that he be *full of the Spirit* (Acts 6:3). Therefore, his being full of the Holy Spirit preceded the laying on of the apostle's hands. It was a precondition for his being chosen as a deacon.

Those who argue for a single event in a person's life, usually referred to as, "the baptism," and after that event the believer is a Spirit-filled person, could use the language in this episode as a case in point. This is the only episode encountered in Acts, thus far, in which the language forthrightly could be understood in this manner. According to this view, sometime in the past Stephen was "immersed in the Holy Spirit," and from that time on he was Spirit-filled. We do not have a record of such an event, but that does not mean that it did not happen.

On the other hand, it could be that Stephen was one of those who exemplified what Paul exhorted in Ephesians 5:18 (discussed above). He received the Holy Spirit at conversion and lived such a submitted life that he always was under the influence/control of the Holy Spirit. That quality is what the apostles required for the deacons. Stephen lived that way. Furthermore, when he was before the council, the Holy Spirit used him to deliver the message to the council. Harking back to the language used for Peter under a similar circumstance (Acts 4:8), it would not be incorrect to say that Stephen was filled with the Spirit when he addressed the council. Thus, Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit at the time that the council began *gnashing their teeth at him*, and he looked up and saw Jesus.

Whether one accepts the view just expressed, or the one in the previous paragraph, will depend upon conclusions that the exegete has made earlier. Stephen's being full of the Holy Spirit can be explained by either of these views.

⁵⁷ ὑπάρχων δὲ πλήρης πνεύματος ἁγίου (*huparchon de pleres pneumatou hagiou*). The verb, ὑπάρχων in this passage is a masculine singular nominative present active participle of the verb, ὑπάρχω.

The Samaritans receive the Holy Spirit through the laying on of the apostles' hands

Because of Saul's persecution, the church scattered to the four winds. Only the apostles remained in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1). One of the deacons, Philip, fled to Samaria, the major city of the province by the same name, occupied by half-breed Jews. Immediately upon his arrival, he began preaching the Gospel (Acts 8:4-5). His preaching was confirmed by miracles.

The crowds with one accord were giving attention to what was said by Philip, as they heard and saw the signs which he was performing. For in the case of many who had unclean spirits, they were coming out of them shouting with a loud voice; and many who had been paralyzed and lame were healed. (Acts 8:6-7)

Philip is the second person, other than apostles, who is reported to be a miracle worker. The first was Stephen. Both of these were among the seven deacons on whom the apostles had laid hands (Acts 6:5-8). Thus, according to the record, the only ones who had worked miracles, up to this point, were apostles and two of the Jerusalem deacons on whom the apostles had laid hands.

For a long time the citizens of Samaria had been seduced by a magician named Simon. Through his magic arts he had impressed the people to the point that they called him *the Great Power of God* (Acts 8:9-12). When Philip began preaching the Gospel and performing miracles by the power of the Holy Spirit, Simon's magic paled in comparison. As a result, hordes of people forsook Simon and following Philip's instructions, were immersed. Even Simon, recognizing the difference between what he had been doing and Philip's miraculous activities, became a believer and was immersed.

But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being immersed, men and women alike. Even Simon himself believed; and after being immersed, he continued on with Philip, and as he observed signs and great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed. (Acts 8:12-13)

When the apostles in Jerusalem received word of Philip's evangelistic success, they sent Peter and John to Samaria.

Before proceeding into the account, some interesting elements need to be noted. First, this is the last time that John is mentioned in the Acts narrative. As in every other occasion of his being mentioned in Acts, he is Peter's silent partner. John and his brother James, while following Jesus, had suggested that fire from heaven be poured out on Samaria (Luke 9:52-55) because of the city's inhospitable attitude. This time he approached the city with a different attitude.

Jesus had banned his disciples from entering Samaria when He dispatched the Twelve on their evangelistic tour.

These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: "Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; (Matthew 10:5).

Not only was this restriction rescinded at Pentecost, but Jesus declared Samaria to be a target of the apostles' Spirit-empowered mission.

but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

The Samaritans were not Gentiles, but rather, mixed-breed Jews. When the Northern Kingdom of Israel was taken into captivity, farmers and others were left behind in Israel to till the land and care for the economic affairs of the region. People from other nations were transplanted into this region by Israel's conquerors. The Israeli remnant and the Gentiles intermarried, producing a mongrel race with Jewish blood. Some of the Mosaic rites were maintained by Samaritans and they were Jehovistic in their worship. The Samaritans claimed that their copy of the Pentateuch was the oldest and only authentic copy.⁵⁸ Jesus made a distinction between Gentiles and Samaritans in His restriction, mentioned above (Matthew 10:5).

Thus, after Philip's evangelistic activity in Samaria, the Gentiles still had not received the Gospel. He had preached to half-breed Jews, not Gentiles.

Many times after the division of the Kingdom, and prior to the captivity of Israel, Judah had tried to bring the Northern Kingdom under the authority of the Davidic throne. Every such effort failed. This history of hostility, plus the fact that Samaritans were half-breed cousins rather than pure blood Jews, resulted in the Jews' having no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus' enemies slandered Him by stating, *Do we not say rightly that you are a Samaritan and have a demon*'' (John 8:48). When Jesus had a conversation with the woman at the Samaritan well, she was astonished that He would ask her for water, because of this prejudicial rejection.

Therefore the Samaritan woman said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. (John 4:9)

All of these historical and social factors are behind the events that followed Philip's successful evangelistic thrust into Samaria.

No portion of Acts has generated more theological debate than Acts 8:14-18.

Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been immersed in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money,

Having spent considerable time in reading all points of view, plus meditating on the Greek terms in the passage, I must say that honesty requires me to conclude that any explanation of this passage must remain in the realm of opinion.

The first challenge that we face in understanding this account is seeking an answer to the question, "Did the Samaritan converts receive the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit when they were immersed – or was the usual pattern suspended?"

On Pentecost, Peter declared that the Holy Spirit would be received when a convert is immersed into Christ.

Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38)

⁵⁸ Under the Roman Cerealis, during the Jewish Wars, the Samaritans were slaughtered. Today a small community of about 200 in Nabulus is all that remains of this people. Their pride still is their ancient copy of the Pentateuch.

Paul's query to the disciples of John whom he met in Ephesus, clearly demonstrates that he assumed that one received the Holy Spirit when he was immersed (we will comment on this episode later).

Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus, and found some disciples. He said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said to him, "No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." And he said, "Into what then were you immersed?" And they said, "Into John's immersion." (Acts 19:1-3)

Paul taught that the indwelling Holy Spirit is a characteristic of all who are Christ's.

However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.¹⁰ If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.¹¹ But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. (Romans 8:9-11)

Furthermore, as mentioned and quoted earlier, Paul declared that the sealing of the Holy Spirit is the evidence and guarantee that one is saved (see page 44).

So, what happened in Samaria? Based on the unequivocal statements just quoted, many exegetes contend that the Samaritan converts did receive the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit when they were immersed. As one author argues,

“There is no hint of any deficiency in their faith. Certainly Philip recognized none, else he would not have baptized them. Nor did Peter and John find anything lacking, for as far as we know, they preached nothing more to them before laying hands upon them. It is hard to believe, then that the Spirit's work of regeneration had not been done in their lives. And yet the apostles prayed that these Samaritans might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them. How does this fit with the teaching elsewhere that Christians are, without exception, both born of the Spirit and endowed with the Spirit at new birth?”⁵⁹

Cessationists tend to argue that the converts did receive the indwelling Holy Spirit when they were immersed, because the promises of God declared that this happened. As noted in the *Preface*, Cessationists argue that Peter and John, through the laying on of their hands, imparted supernatural gifts to the Samaritans. This impartation was in addition to the indwelling Holy Spirit that all converts normally receive at the time of their immersion. They partially base their argument on the language – *He had not yet fallen on any of them*, whereas the normal reception of the Holy Spirit at the time of immersion is more fittingly described as being *received* (these terms will be discussed below). Cessationists argue that Philip received these supernatural gifts when the apostles had laid hands on him at the time he was set apart as a deacon of the Jerusalem Church (Acts 6:5-6). After all, it was Philip's miraculous ministry that convinced the Samaritans of the validity of his message. This was an extension of Jesus' promise to the apostles in Acts 1:8. Because there were no Scriptures, supernatural gifts were necessary to credential the preaching and witnessing that they would continue after Philip left the scene. Even though the need was there, Philip could not pass on to others the gifts that he possessed. Thus, Cessationists argue, Peter and John had to make the trip to Samaria for the sake of future Samaritan evangelism.

⁵⁹ Williams, page 156

There is a similarity between this view and the view of traditional Pentecostals, i.e., that following conversion and the reception of the Holy Spirit's indwelling presence, there is a second experience of the Holy Spirit – usually referred to as “the baptism.” The difference between the traditional Pentecostal view and the Cessationist view is that Pentecostals consider the second encounter with the Holy Spirit to be ongoing – from generation to generation, whereas Cessationists argue that it ended with the death of the apostles and all on whom they laid hands.

The problem with the Cessationist understanding of Acts 8 is that it requires reading one's preconceived pneumatology into the text. There is no evidence in the text that the Samaritan converts were possessors of the Holy Spirit prior to the ministry of Peter and John. Also, an objective reading of the text, without other supporting Scriptures, leads to the obvious conclusion that the Samaritans received the Holy Spirit for the first time through the ministry of the apostolic team.

If the Samaritans did not receive the Holy Spirit when they were immersed, we must ask, “Why was the normal pattern not operative?” A number of reasons could be put forth to explain this scenario. All of these relate to the fact that the episode involves Samaritans, who were not Gentiles, but not quite Jews, and intensely despised by Jews. Considering the background outlined above, the following must be considered.

1. This was an inaugural event. Prior to Philip's evangelistic foray into Samaria, only full-blood Jews or Jewish proselytes had been evangelized. For that matter, it was the view of many in the Jerusalem Church that one could not become a Christian without first being a Jew or a proselyte (Paul wrote *The Epistle to the Galatians*, for the express purpose of refuting this view). There is no consistent pattern in the inaugural events, (Acts 2, 10, and here). The only thing consistent in all of them is the presence of faith in Jesus Christ, and the outward sign of immersion in/into/upon the authority of His name.
2. Peter's role as the custodian of the Keys of the Kingdom must be considered. Protestants have worked too hard to remove Peter's essential role in the foundation of the Church. Jesus gave Him a special role.

He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven."

(Matthew 16:15-19)

It is important to realize that Jesus did not give Peter *carte blanche*, concerning binding and loosing. The King James Version has created confusion by rendering the verbs as if they were a simple future, *shall be bound in heaven* and *shall be loosed in heaven*. The New International Version has not done any better by rendering the verbs, *will be bound...will be loosed*. The New American Standard Version does a much better job of communicating what the Greek actually says, *shall have been bound...shall have been loosed*. The verbs are

periphrastic future perfect tense,⁶⁰ passive voice in both instances. A near literal translation of each of these passages would contain the thought, *already has been bound ...already has been loosed*. Thus, Peter could only bind and loose on earth, what heaven already had declared bound and loosed. He was the agent carrying out heaven's decrees.

The language of Matthew 16:16-19 indicates that Peter was given a unique role. When Matthew recorded Jesus' promise to Peter, *I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven*, he used the second-person singular, *you*.⁶¹ Matthew removed any doubt concerning Peter's unique role. Had Jesus indicated that He was giving the keys to the kingdom to the apostolic band, or to the church, Matthew would have used a plural *you*. Thus, an accurate paraphrase of Jesus' statement would be, *I give the keys to you, Peter*. Therefore, it was Peter's role to use the keys as God directed him. Peter fulfilled that role on Pentecost, as he opened the gates of heaven to the Jews. In the household of Cornelius, Peter unlocked the gates of heaven to Gentiles. It is a natural conclusion to see Peter's performing this same role in Samaria. Even though Phillip was the evangelist that God used to bring Samaritans to faith, Peter's role involved imparting the Holy Spirit to Samaritans, that which is the seal of our salvation and our guarantee that heaven is our inheritance.

3. Removing the division between Jews and Samaritans in the Kingdom of God required God's stamp of approval upon Samaritan converts.

As already noted, the religious wall that separated Jews from Samaritans was quite thick. This was in spite of the fact that the Samaritans observed the fundamental rite of circumcision. Jesus' Parable of the Good Samaritan was a slap in the face of the Jewish establishment. In order for the Jerusalem Jewish Christians to embrace a Samaritan Church, some significant credentials would have to be in place.⁶² The involvement of Peter and John in this new outreach did credential the extension of the Gospel to Samaritans. The fact that the Holy Spirit was imparted to Samaritans – through Peter and John - removed beyond any doubt that God's blessing was upon this addition to the Kingdom.

4. With respect to their Jewish cousins, the Samaritans had a "second-class citizen" view of themselves.

They were Jews, but they were not Jews. When the Samaritans asked permission to share in the building of the Temple under Zerubbabel, they claimed to serve Jehovah and to sacrifice to Him as did the Jews (Ezra 4:1ff). Their proffered friendship was turned down and the Samaritans set themselves to frustrate the work in which they were not allowed to share (Ezra 4:4ff; Neh. 4:7ff etc.). In the intercourse of the day, they constantly were recipients of the message that they were not people of influence or importance.

When Peter and John came to their city and bestowed the Holy Spirit upon them the Samaritan Christians received the assurance that they were equal to their Jewish counterparts,

⁶⁰ The form of the verb is perfect tense. However, when a perfect tense verb is used with a future tense of the state of being verb, *eimi*, the tense becomes periphrastic future perfect.

⁶¹ δώσω σοι (*doso soi*)

⁶² The degree of the difficulty that Jewish Christians had in accepting the fact that non-Jews could be admitted to the Kingdom is illustrated by the need for a Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) and Paul's Epistle to the Galatians.

since the Samaritans now had the same Gift that the Jews possessed and the two leading apostles had imparted this Gift to them.

Such considerations as these make plausible the view that the Gift of the Holy Spirit was delayed until Peter and John came from Jerusalem and bestowed the Gift of the Spirit upon the Samaritans.

The language of Acts 8:14-19 adds to the confusion.

On Pentecost, Peter promised the converts that upon their immersion *you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

The Greek term translated, *receive*, in this promise is λαμβάνω (*lambano*), which implies cooperation on the part of the recipient. When used in a more active sense, the word means *take, take hold of, grasp*; when used in a more passive, less aggressive sense, the word implies, *get, obtain, receive* i.e., a gift is presented but it must be accepted. This is in keeping with one's making a decision to accept salvation, which, according to so many passages already noted, involves receiving the Holy Spirit when one accepts immersion.

This is the term that is used in Act 8:15, *who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.*

This also is the term that is used in Acts 8:17 *Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit.*

Simon the sorcerer used that term when he tried to bribe the apostles (Acts 8:19) saying, *"Give this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."*

The matter would be very simple, were it not for the statement in Acts 8:16 *For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been immersed in the name of the Lord Jesus.*

In middle of these verses containing λαμβάνω, occurs a verse stating that before the laying on of the apostles' hands, the Holy Spirit had not *fallen upon* any of them – the term is ἐπιπίπτω (*epiipito*), which literally means *to fall upon*, and sometimes is used to mean, *come upon*.

Here then is the problem. Two verses describe the purpose of the apostles' visit and the action that they took resulting in the Samaritans' accepting the Holy Spirit. The sorcerer asked for the ability to do what apostles had done – give the Spirit and the people receive the Spirit. In the middle of these statements is a violent picture of *falling upon* – a term that has absolutely no hint of the recipient's cooperation or acceptance of the Spirit – one might picture a tiger leaping upon its prey. It must be noted that in the description of what actually happened, there is no mention of the Holy Spirit's falling upon anyone, but rather, as already noted, the Samaritans *received* (λαμβάνω) the Holy Spirit.

Because of the problematic issues surrounding this account:

- the question as to whether or not the Samaritans received the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit at the time of their immersion, then received a supernatural endowment when Peter and John laid hands on them;
- the confusing mixture of terms describing the event;
- no other episode in Acts being exactly like this one – although there is a similarity in Acts 19:1-7;

any honest exegete must leave whatever opinions or conclusions that he reaches in the realm of possibility, probability, and speculation. To do otherwise is to allow one's preconceived pneumatology to be in control his exegesis.

Two Certainties:

In the midst of these uncertainties, two things are clear:

1. Whatever view one takes concerning this episode, it is clear that there was some type of visible manifestation of receiving the Spirit. It is difficult to understand Simon's response were no visible manifestations demonstrated.

Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, saying, "Give this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." (Acts 8:18-19)

If Simon could lay hands on people, and they would demonstrate some sort of phenomena, then he would be able to restore some of his lost credibility. If there were no outward manifestation of receiving the Spirit, it would not have profited Simon to be able to bestow the Spirit.

2. An obvious presence of the Holy Spirit is essential to every expression of the Church – in all nations and in every generation. The apostles in Jerusalem sent Peter and John to Samaria. The term rendered as, *sent*, is the Greek term, ἀποστέλλω (*apostello*), which means to *send on a mission*. The significance of this term is that it emphasizes the purpose, the mission, rather than on the fact that they were sent. If the emphasis were on being sent, another Greek term would have been used. So, we must notice the nature of the mission. The obvious purpose, as demonstrated by what they did in Samaria, was the impartation of the Holy Spirit. Until the Holy Spirit was visibly present in the Samaritan Church, something was lacking. The greatest functional difference between the Church and all human organizations is the fact that the Church is an expression of God, through the guiding presence, the empowering presence, and the experiential presence of the Holy Spirit. Our Lord never has intended for the Church to rely on human schemes, ability, and strength.
3. The contention that only apostles could impart special empowerment of the Holy Spirit is challenged by Saul's experience.

So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." (Acts 9:17)

Ananias is described only as a *disciple* (Acts 9:10). He was not an apostle, and as far as we know, he did not hold any leadership role in the church. The language concerning what Saul received from Ananias – *filled with the Holy Spirit* – seems to be more descriptive and even stronger than the language used in the account of Peter and John's results – *receiving the Holy Spirit*.

For this reason, even if there were no other, we cannot conclude that the Acts 8:14ff account solidifies the Cessationist argument.

An Ethiopian Jewish Proselyte receives the Gospel

Peter and John returned to Jerusalem, but on the way back home, they preached to many Samaritan villages (Acts 8:25). Philip, meanwhile, was called to a new mission. He had come to Samaria while fleeing from Saul's persecution of the Church in Jerusalem. His ministry ended by Divine direction.

But an angel of the Lord⁶³ spoke to Philip saying, "Get up and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert road. So he got up and went; (Acts 8:26-27a)

The angel directed Philip to leave Samaria and go to an intersection of two highways. The Roman road from Jerusalem to Gaza was paved and well-traveled. The intersection to which Philip was directed was about fifty miles from Samaria and about ten miles southwest of Jerusalem. That means that Philip probably left Samaria two days before the rendezvous, given that the average person on a journey walks twenty miles per day. God's foreknowledge and timing are evident in this episode. Another interesting aspect of this account is that Philip was not told the purpose of his trip – an angel told him to go to the intersection and he went.

...and there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure; and he had come to Jerusalem to worship, and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go up and join this chariot." Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?"(Acts 8:27a-30)

Philip approached the intersection from the north. The intersection was at a point where the Jerusalem-Gaza road turns west and rises through a *wady* to the Philistine plain.⁶⁴ Philip, still not knowing his mission, saw a wealthy Ethiopian pass by on the Jerusalem-Gaza road, traveling from east to west. Suddenly, the Holy Spirit told Philip to run and catch up with the chariot. Philip still did not know why he was to do so, he just obeyed. When he caught up with the chariot, he heard the Ethiopian reading from Isaiah and initiated a conversation by asking the Ethiopian if he understood what he was reading.

Several comments are appropriate at this point.

1. Because he is described as an Ethiopian, he either was a Jew who had attained prominence in Ethiopia⁶⁵, or he was a Jewish proselyte. Since he was an eunuch he would be barred from mingling with the Jewish congregation as well as being barred from entering the Jewish court of the Temple. He was not barred from the court of the Gentiles, in which men from all nations, clean and unclean, were at liberty to worship.⁶⁶ Thus, even though unable to enter

⁶³ Some have speculated that this angel is the Angel of Jehovah that was so prominent in the Old Testament. That probably is not the case, since there is no definite article attached to this description – *an angel of the Lord*, rather than *the angel of the Lord*

⁶⁴ McGarvey, page 151

⁶⁵ It was not unusual for Jewish men born and reared in foreign lands to achieve eminent positions, especially in the realm of finances. McGarvey, page 152

⁶⁶ While emasculated men were shut out from the assembly of Israel in the same manner as Gentiles, both, if obedient to the Law were encouraged to worship Jehovah and to send in sacrifices with the

the Temple, he had traveled this great distance to worship in Jerusalem. No doubt he had obtained a scroll of Isaiah, while in Jerusalem – a very expensive item, which in itself testifies to his great wealth.

2. It is significant that an angel first instructed Philip to leave Samaria and travel to this intersection, but it was the Holy Spirit who took over the direction of the evangelist when he arrived at the point of rendezvous. We can only speculate as to how the Holy Spirit spoke to Philip – probably, when he saw the Ethiopian, he experienced an inner-knowing that this was the target of his travel, even though the purpose of the encounter was, as yet, unknown.
3. The eunuch was reading aloud and so Philip had a perfect opening by asking the reader if he understood what he was reading. If the eunuch had been a Christian, he would have answered in the affirmative and Philip would have known that he had met a brother. If he expressed confusion, and openness to dialogue about the passage, then Philip knew that he had a potential convert.

After Philip explained the prophecy and preached Christ, the chariot passed a pool of water and the eunuch asked to be immersed. The chariot was stopped, Philip immersed the eunuch, and then Philip vanished.

When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he kept preaching the gospel to all the cities until he came to Caesarea. (Acts 8:39-40)

The Holy Spirit was in full control – directing Philip to the chariot, no doubt directing Philip in asking the right question, anointing Philip’s response, and then ending the event by snatching Philip away.

This is another activity of the Spirit that is not repeated anywhere else in the New Testament. Many questions occur to curious minds: why did God do it this way, precisely how did this happen, did Philip travel like Superman, or was he at one place one moment and suddenly at another the next moment, without any sense of travel? These questions and others concerning this unusual event cannot be answered and we must accept the account as it stands.

Saul of Tarsus is converted and filled with the Holy Spirit

Three accounts of Saul’s conversion are recorded by Luke. The first, Acts 9:1-18, is Luke’s historical account of the event. The second, Acts 22:3-16, is Saul’s recounting of the event before the Jerusalem crowd, when he first was arrested. The third, Acts 26:9-20, is Paul’s defense before King Agrippa. Each of these accounts adds a detail or two that the others do not contain. Therefore, to get the most complete picture of the event, the three accounts must be harmonized.

The only mention of the Holy Spirit in these accounts is the explanation that Ananias gave for his coming to Saul and this comment is found in the historical record of the event (Acts 9:17), not in the two later oral accounts.

assurance that they would be accepted. The Jews based this practice on their understanding of Isaiah 56:1-8.

So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." (Acts 9:17)

Interestingly, the only phenomena reported as taking place was the falling of the scales from Saul's eyes and the restoration of his eyesight. No mention is made of any outward manifestation of his being filled with the Holy Spirit. Saul's report of the incident, as he defended himself before the Jerusalem crowd, contains his recollection of Ananias' words, the nature of which implies a special possession of the Holy Spirit.

And he said, "The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will and to see the Righteous One and to hear an utterance from His mouth." (Acts 22:14)

Indeed, time and again the record of Saul/Paul's life displays the fulfillment of this promise. We can only conclude that a special filling was given to Saul, on this occasion, the evidence of which was reserved for the not too far distant future. An example of hearing *an utterance from His mouth* would be that which he reported to the Galatians, i.e., that the Gospel which he preached had been imparted to him directly by God, and that he did not learn it from the Twelve (Galatians 1:11ff).

The Church in Palestine experiences the comfort of the Holy Spirit

So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.

The language in this verse recalls the promise of a comforter that Jesus given to the Eleven on the night that He was betrayed (John 14:15-27; 15:26-27; 16:7-14). The term that Jesus used for the Holy Spirit in John's account was *παράκλητος* (*parakletos*), literally, *one called alongside*. The term in John 9:31 is *παράκλησις* (*paraklesis*), literally, *the calling alongside*. So, this verse is a hand-in-glove fit with the promise of Jesus. The Church enjoyed the companionship of the Holy Spirit in a noteworthy manner during this period.

J. W. McGarvey makes an interesting comment concerning this description of the Church's prosperity,

"It might have been imagined by some that, as the Church had sprung into existence among strife and persecution, it would languish when opposition was withdrawn; but its present prosperity proves that it was not the obstinacy of human passion, but the legitimate working of an unchangeable truth, which had brought it into existence."⁶⁷

We must agree with McGarvey's comment that the commitment to an unchangeable truth was a force in moving the Church forward. However, McGarvey fails to mention the presence of the Holy Spirit at the beginning and the abiding presence of the Spirit through the subsequent seasons. The *παράκλητος*, doing the work of *παράκλησις* was the driving and life-giving force in the Church.

⁶⁷ McGarvey, page 191

Peter's miraculous tour of encouragement

Acts 9:32-43 summarizes Peter's extensive tour of churches, north and west of Jerusalem. Although the Holy Spirit is not mentioned in this account, it is obvious that Peter ministered in the power of the Holy Spirit. The evangelistic successes that attended this trip were the result of Peter's experiencing the fulfillment of Jesus' promise recorded in Acts 1:8.

NOTE: The next mention of the Holy Spirit in Acts is the preaching to Gentiles in the home of Cornelius. That event already has been discussed in conjunction with the section on Pentecost. (page 45)

Barnabas, a man full of the Holy Spirit and faith is sent to encourage the new believers at Antioch

The same pastoral concern that had prompted the apostles to send Peter and John to Samaria, stirred them to send Barnabas to the new church in Antioch (Acts 11:19ff). From Luke's description of Barnabas it is clear as to why he was chosen.

for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And considerable numbers were brought to the Lord. (Acts 11:24)

The description echoes the qualifications that the apostles set for those who were the first deacons in Jerusalem (Acts 6:3-5) and is an exact duplication of Luke's description of Stephen. Barnabas was a man who was a model of what Paul enjoined in Ephesians 3:18 – he kept being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Agabus, the first prophet named in Acts, speaks as a vessel of the Holy Spirit

Now at this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them named Agabus stood up and began to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world. And this took place in the reign of Claudius. (Acts 11:27-28)

This is the first mention of New Testament prophets in Acts and Agabus is the only one named in this account. The manner in which these prophets were introduced makes it apparent that they were not a new addition to the Church; they obviously had been around for a while. The number of prophets in this group is not given, but it seems that there at least was a small company of them. This fits Paul's description of the Church in Ephesians 4:11. Agabus will crop up again, later in Acts.

Enabled by the Holy Spirit, Agabus predicted a great famine that was going to engulf the Roman Empire. The result was an offering collected at Antioch to assist the brethren in Judea. Even though Antioch would experience hardship, they knew that things would be much worse for the beleaguered Church in Jerusalem.

The Holy Spirit calls the first missionaries

After ministering for a short time in Antioch, Barnabas sought out Saul to come and assist him in the work. The Church grew larger and stronger under the ministry of these two. In addition to Barnabas and Saul, there were four other leaders, described as prophets and teachers. During a season in which the six were praying and fasting, the Holy Spirit spoke.

While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." (Acts 13:2)

In obedience to the Holy Spirit, they continued to fast and pray, then they laid hands on them and *released them*. Even though most versions say, *sent them away*, or something similar, the Greek term, ἀπολύω (*apoluo*), literally states that they *released them*. This is a very important distinction. The Church did not send out the missionaries. The Church merely cooperated with what the Holy Spirit was doing and released these men to do what the Holy Spirit was calling them to do. The next verse describes who sent them.

So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus. (Acts 13:4)

A couple of pertinent comments flow out of this episode.

1. Throughout the Acts record and even in Paul's epistles, when someone leaves a location for the purpose of new ministry, ordinarily those with whom they are associated are involved in the decision/discernment. Thus, the New Testament pattern is not that of an individual's receiving a call, informing the elders, and then expecting them to jump on the bandwagon. With the exception of Philip's fleeing Jerusalem because of persecution and ending up in Samaria, it is difficult to think of instances in the New Testament in which individuals launched into new ministry without leaders first confirming, or even initiating the call. Every example that we have encountered thus far in Acts fits the pattern just described.
2. The role of the Church in sending missionaries, based on this example in Acts, is not to send missionaries, but to release them, after the call has been confirmed. Throughout the New Testament fasting and/or prayer by leaders accompany the launching of each new ministry. This is the example here, the pattern in ordaining elders (Acts 14:23), ordaining deacons (Acts 6:6), as well as other examples that could be cited.

The Holy Spirit directs Saul to pronounce a curse upon an opposing false prophet

When the new missionaries arrived on Cyprus, their first foray into the world of apostolic missions, they encountered opposition from a Jewish false prophet/magician. The ruler of the region was open to the Gospel. The magician realized that he would lose his position of influence if the ruler became a Christian. Therefore, he tried to discredit Barnabas and Saul.

But Saul, who was also known as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fixed his gaze on him, and said, "You who are full of all deceit and fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to make crooked the straight ways of the Lord? "Now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and not see the sun for a time." And immediately a mist and a darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking those who would lead him by the hand. (Acts 13:9-11)

Once again we encounter the aorist passive participle, which commonly is understood as meaning, *having just been filled*. Rather than repeat the discussion of aorists, we refer back to page 48.

Those who argue that God would not sanction a negative miracle or a curse, have to deal with this episode, as well as the incident in Acts 5, the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira. Paul, clearly led by and empowered by the Holy Spirit, in this moment, caused the magician to become blind.

The Gentile converts in Antioch of Pisidia were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit

Paul and Barnabas left Cyprus and arrived in Pisidian Antioch. The plan that they followed became their custom: first speaking in the synagogue to Jews, and then preaching to Gentiles. Another pattern emerged in Antioch: the Jews became jealous, instigated a persecution against the preacher and drove them out of the city. Before the apostles were expelled, many Gentiles were converted.

When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. (Acts 13:48)

Even though the apostles were driven out of the city, they left behind a body of believers who were sustained by the Holy Spirit.

And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 13:52)

What a wonderful truth this verse displays. When believers are filled continually with the Holy Spirit, they are encouraged and have joy that does not depend on the presence of gifted and entertaining teachers. Their attitude springs from within, where the Holy Spirit dwells.

The Holy Spirit's role in the Jerusalem Council

In the Jerusalem council, convened to discuss whether or not Gentile converts had to submit to circumcision, Peter cited the Gentiles' immersion of the Holy Spirit as confirmation that they did not need to keep the law.

"And God, who knows the heart, testified to them giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us; (Acts 15:8)

This, of course, is in reference to the immersion in the Holy Spirit that took place in the home of Cornelius. Since we already have engaged in extensive discussion of this event there is no need for further comment here.

Reflecting the truth that Peter had stated earlier (verse 8), the Jerusalem leaders declared that they were partnering with the Holy Spirit in their decision.

For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials: (Acts 15:8)

The Holy Spirit uses sickness to bring the Gospel to Galatia

The Acts record of this portion of the missionary trip is quite sparse. By turning to Paul's epistles we are able to flesh out the details of what happened.

They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them; and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. (Acts 16:6-8)

The brevity of this account causes the casual reader to assume that nothing of importance took place on the journey through the Phrygian and Galatian region. Paul's epistles reveal what really happened. Paul and his team were pressing on to what they considered to be fertile fields. He wrote to the Galatians that a sickness which had beset him forced him to pause in Galatia and as a result Galatia received the Gospel.

I beg of you, brethren, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You have done me no wrong; but you know that it was because of a bodily illness that I preached the gospel to you the first time; and that which was a trial to you in my bodily condition you did not despise or loathe, but you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus Himself. Where then is that sense of blessing you had? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me. (Galatians 4:12-15)

The success of this venture is displayed in Paul's later comments to the Corinthian Church – there not only was a single church, but churches in Galatia.

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. (I Corinthians 16:1)

So, the comments in Acts 16:6-8, concerning the Holy Spirit's forbidding ministry in Asia and Bithynia must be harmonized with Galatians 4:12-15, which describes the delay in Galatia, occasioned by Paul's sickness. The Holy Spirit clearly was in control of this trip. It is natural to conclude, therefore, that the Holy Spirit was in control of Paul's becoming sick and that through this disabling illness Galatia received the Gospel.

Disciples of John the Baptist receive the Holy Spirit

When Paul arrived back in Ephesus, after a trip to Jerusalem, he found twelve disciples in whom he apparently detected a deficiency.

He said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said to him, "No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." (Acts 19:2)

Some argue that Paul went about laying hands on Christians so that they could receive "the baptism in the Holy Spirit." According to this view, he naturally made that inquiry of all believers when he met them, and that is what he did here. Such a view really doesn't fit the picture of Paul's life and ministry, nor does it fit the series of questions that Paul posed following the revelation of their ignorance of the Holy Spirit.

When they responded that they had never heard of the Holy Spirit, Paul asked,

"Into what then were you immersed?" And they said, "Into John's immersion." (Acts 19:3)

From Paul's question it is obvious that he assumed that a convert received the Holy Spirit when he was immersed into Christ. He must have been puzzled by something that betrayed their lack

of the Holy Spirit, otherwise, why would he have asked the question – unless as stated above, he was on a “baptism in the Holy Spirit” mission, a view that it is difficult to accept.

Their response, *into John’s immersion*, identifies them as having the same deficiency that Apollos displayed prior to being enlightened by Aquilla and Priscilla⁶⁸ (Paul had yet to meet Apollos). Paul quickly explained Christian immersion to them, and they were immersed *into the name of the Lord Jesus*. Paul did not stop there.

And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying. (Acts 19:6)

The term rendered, *came upon them*, is an accurate translation (ἐρχομαι - *erchomai*). Luke did not write that they were *filled*, nor does Luke use terms implying cooperation or acceptance, but he uses a term that indicates an action on the part of the actor – the Holy Spirit – without input from or cooperation on the part of the recipient – ἐρχομαι.

There is some similarity between this event and that in Samaria (Acts 8), the main one being that an apostle laid hands on the newly immersed converts and they received the Gift of the Holy Spirit.

The differences between the two events must be noted:

1. The converts in Acts 8 had been immersed into Christ but had not received the Holy Spirit. In Acts 19, the men had been immersed into John’s immersion.
2. The language used in Acts 8 to describe the manner in which the Holy Spirit was given and received is more placid than the *came upon them* of Acts 19.
3. In Acts 8 some manifestation of the reception of the Holy Spirit is implied, but not described. Acts 19 is explicit – *they began speaking with tones and prophesying*.
4. Peter, to whom had been given the keys of the Kingdom was the main actor in Acts 8. Peter is absent in this event. Of course, the Acts 19 converts were not new territory, since disciples of John the Immerser had been a part of the Church from the beginning.

An obvious question to ask about this episode is, “Did they receive the indwelling Holy Spirit at the time of their immersion, and Paul then laid hands on them and they received a ‘Pentecostal Impartation’; or was what they received through the laying on of Paul’s hands the initial reception of the Holy Spirit?” The language of the account appears to describe an initial reception, which, in this case was accompanied by the Spirit’s falling on the converts causing them to display tongues and prophecy. This view flies in the face of both traditional and Pentecostal pneumatologies but it is the view that is most consistent with the language of the text.

Here again we have encountered an account of an episode that is unique. It does not fit the exact template of any other record in Acts. We take it at face value and leave behind any effort to create a systematized pneumatology from this event.

⁶⁸ Acts 18:24-26

Paul's miraculous ministry in Ephesus

Following Luke's report of Paul's ministry to the twelve former disciples of John, he describes Paul's very lengthy fruitful stay in Ephesus. During the two years that the school of Tyrannus was Paul's base of operations, great numbers came to Christ. A noteworthy feature of this season was the miraculous activity that accompanied Paul's teaching. Luke goes the limit in describing what happened when he states,

God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, (Acts 19:11).

We are inclined to ask, "Luke, is there such a thing as an ordinary miracle?" Be that as it may, here is another example of the fulfillment of Acts 1:8, even though the Holy Spirit is not mentioned by name.

Paul purposes in the Spirit/spirit to go to Jerusalem

Now after these things were finished, Paul purposed in the spirit (Spirit?) to go to Jerusalem after he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome." (Acts 19:21)

A crucial question must be asked concerning this verse: Should the verse read, *Paul purposed in the spirit*, or *Paul purposed in the Spirit*? In other words, did Luke refer to the Holy Spirit or did he refer to Paul's spirit. Was the Holy Spirit the source of Paul's decision to make the trip, or is this something that Paul decided on his own?

It is interesting to see the inconsistencies in the various English versions.

The King James Version

The King James Version (1611 AD) does not capitalize – *spirit*

The New King James Version does capitalize – *Spirit*

The King James Version Pocket Interlinear New Testament does capitalize – *Spirit*

Here then we see the newer renditions of the King James Version capitalize *Spirit*, whereas the original did not.

Modern versions

The most popular modern versions are inconsistent:

The New American Standard Version does not capitalize – *spirit*

The Revised Standard Version does capitalize – *Spirit*

The New International Version does not translate, but by its non-translation the producers of the version indicate that they would not capitalize – *Paul decided to go to Jerusalem*.

How one understands Acts 19:21 will determine how one understands the comments made by Luke in the record of Paul's trip to Jerusalem. Here are the verses:

Acts 20:22-23 *"And now, behold, bound in spirit (Spirit?), I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me.*

Acts 21:4 *After looking up the disciples, we stayed there seven days; and they kept telling Paul through the Spirit not to set foot in Jerusalem.*

Acts 21:10-12 *As we were staying there for some days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands, and said,*

"This is what the Holy Spirit says: 'In this way the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" When we had heard this, we as well as the local residents began begging him not to go up to Jerusalem.

Influenced by versions that do not capitalize *spirit*, some have argued that Paul was not completely free from the Law and that because of this he felt compelled to get to Jerusalem to observe Pentecost. Those who hold this view point to the statement in Acts 19:21, arguing that Paul himself decided to go to Jerusalem. Not only was he not being led by the Spirit, but he even pressed on in spite of the warnings that the Spirit put in his path.

In response to the charge that Paul was not free from the Law and thus was obsessed with getting to Jerusalem by Pentecost, we would point out that both *The Epistle to the Romans* and *The Epistle to the Galatians*, the portions of the New Testament that speak loudest against the rule of the Mosaic Law in the life of a Christian, were written by Paul before he embarked on this journey. It is difficult to read Paul's vigorous argument in these two epistles and believe that the author of them still could be bound by the Law.

A second response is that throughout his journeys Paul was sensitive to the Spirit's guidance – this especially is apparent on the second journey when the Spirit twice forbade the team to take a particular direction.

Yet, getting to the heart of the matter, we address the two verses that describe Paul's motivation – 19:21 and 20:22-23 (quoted above). The question that must be asked in both of these passages is, "which is correct, **Spirit** or **spirit**?" If the word is rendered with a small "s" then everything is of Paul's doing. If the word is rendered with a capital "S" then everything is of the Holy Spirit's doing.

When the New Testament was written, the Greek language consisted of all capitals. There was no lower-case script. So capitalization of terms was impossible. Our answer must be sought through an inductive analysis of the use of these terms elsewhere in Scripture.

The Greek phrase in Acts 19:21 is ἐν τῷ πνεύματι (*en to pneumati*). The definite article precedes the noun, so it is *the S/spirit*, rather than *spirit*. This pattern occurs seven times in the New Testament.

- In four of these instances, there is a defining term associated with **S/spirit** that makes apparent whether or not the term should be capitalized in that particular passage:
 1. In two of these instances (Mark 12:36; Luke 10:21), the Spirit is defined by the term, ἅγιος (*hagios*), meaning, "holy." So, in these two instances, clearly the term refers to the Holy Spirit.
 2. In one instance (I Corinthians 6:11) the term is modified by τοῦ θεοῦ (*tou theou*), meaning, "of God." So, in that instance, the correct rendering is *The Spirit of God*.
 3. In one instance (Romans 1:9) the term is modified by μου (*mou*), which means, "of me." So, the correct rendering is *my spirit*.
- The term occurs in Luke 4:1 without an associated defining term. Jesus is described in this verse as being led about *en to pneumati*- "in the spirit/Spirit." Earlier in the verse, Jesus is described as being "full of the Holy Spirit," Since the earlier reference in the verse is to the Holy Spirit's

filling Jesus, then one would conclude that the Holy Spirit did the leading – grammatically it is the antecedent.

- In Luke 2:27, Simeon is described as coming to the Temple, *en to pneumati*. Because the earlier verses speak of the activity of the Holy Spirit in this event (verses 25-26), the expression, *en to pneumati*, surely refers to the Spirit – not Simeon’s spirit.

Since the expression, *en to pneumati*, is used consistently to describe the state of *being in the Holy Spirit*⁶⁹, the weight of evidence is on the side of Acts 19:21’s being correctly rendered, *Spirit* (i.e. the Holy Spirit), rather than *spirit* (i.e. the human spirit).

Luke’s report of Paul’s description of his journey (Acts 20:22-23) further aids us in understanding Acts 19:21. Luke reports that Paul described himself as, *bound in the S/spirit - δεδεμένος ἐγὼ τῷ πνεύματι (dedemenos ego to pneumati)*. Most translations (although not all) render this expression as referring to the Holy Spirit. Both the interlinear text tied to the KJV and the interlinear text tied to the Nestle text render the expression *Spirit*, indicating that the scholars associated with both texts considered this to refer to the Holy Spirit. Here is why.

The term, *dedemenos* is the perfect, passive, participle of the verb, *δέω (deo)*.

- The Greek perfect tense refers to a present condition that is the result of a past action.
- The passive voice means that the subject is acted upon by an entity other than himself. Paul is the subject and the other entity that acted upon him is the Spirit.
- If the voice were middle, rather than passive, the statement would refer to something that Paul had done to himself. However, it is not middle, but passive, which means another entity acted upon him.

Thus, according to the tense and the voice of the verb, the Spirit did something to Paul in the past, creating a condition that continued to the time that Paul made the Acts 20:22 statement.

What did the Spirit do to Paul in the past? The Spirit *bound* him and he still was bound (Greek perfect tense). As a result Paul was on his way to Jerusalem as the Spirit directed. One might say that he was tied to the Holy Spirit in this enterprise.

What are we to make of the prophecies given to Paul concerning the fate that awaited him in Jerusalem? Note that in none of these instances did the Holy Spirit Himself tell Paul to stop the journey. The Spirit, through prophecy, informed Paul of the fate that was ahead

Acts 20:23 *except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me.*

Acts 21:4 *After looking up the disciples, we stayed there seven days; and they kept telling Paul through the Spirit not to set foot in Jerusalem.*

Acts 21:10-12 *As we were staying there for some days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands, and said, "This is what the Holy Spirit says: 'In this way the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" When we had heard this, we as well as the local residents began begging him not to go up to Jerusalem.*

⁶⁹ The one exception being Romans 1:9, which as pointed out the exception is made clear by the addition of *mou* – “my spirit.”

In the last two instances, those who received the prophecies begged Paul to abort his trip to Jerusalem. The end of the account in Acts 20 (verse 38), informs us that the Ephesians experienced grief, but did not try to dissuade Paul from his forward journey.

What about Acts 21:4, which states that the brothers and sisters in Tyre *told Paul, through the Spirit, to not go up to Jerusalem?* Since all the material examined leads to the conclusion that Paul was being led of the Spirit, Acts 21:4 must be interpreted in the light of the rest of the material. When the Tyrenians received prophecies from the Holy Spirit, concerning Paul's fate in Jerusalem, they must have assumed that the prophecies were given to dissuade Paul from continuing on to Jerusalem. They grieved like the Ephesians and, like the Caesareans, implored him to abandon the trip. It was not the Holy Spirit, but those who loved Paul who sought to deter him from a journey that would end in imprisonment. However, Paul was *bound in the Spirit*. If he had given in to the pleas of the saints, he would have been disobedient to the Spirit.

Paul was like Jesus, who, knowing His fate, set His face toward Jerusalem, even though His disciples sought to restrain Him (John 11:8, 16; 18:4; etc.).

So, rather than ignoring the warning of the Holy Spirit, it is apparent that Paul obediently moved forward in union with the Holy Spirit, gladly accepting what lay ahead because God was leading him into it. The prophecies were to prepare him for his arrest.

The Holy Spirit makes men overseers of the local church

Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. (Acts 20:28)

This is a portion of the charge that Paul gave to the elders of the Ephesian Church (verse 17). The important point for our purposes is Paul's assertion that the Holy Spirit, not men, choose men to be elders of the local church. How that is done is beyond the limits of this study.

Throughout Acts, there are statements and intimations that enforce the truth that the Holy Spirit is the administrator of the Church. If we are to be faithful to this revelation, we, like the Jerusalem Council, will conduct our selves in a manner that will allow us to say, *it seemed good to the Holy Spirit – and to us...*

The concluding record of Paul's experience

During Paul's journey to Rome supernatural events occurred. Although the Holy Spirit is not mentioned, each of these is a fulfillment of Acts 1:8. The Spirit's presence is more than implied.

- Acts 27:31 records Paul's knowledge about what to do to save fellow travelers from the sea. This knowledge may have come from the information given by the angel (v22-23), but Luke's record does not indicate that the angel was the source of this knowledge.
- Acts 28:3-6 records Paul's being bitten by a poisonous snake, without suffering ill effects
- Acts 28:8-9 reports that Paul healed many by the laying on of hands
- Acts 28:25 In an unrelated aside, Paul ascribed to the Holy Spirit the origin of Isaiah's prophecies

Summary Conclusions From Acts

Having traced the topic of the Holy Spirit through Luke's historical record of the earliest years of the Church, it is time to reflect upon this information and seek to arrive at conclusions. It must be noted that *Acts* is history and thus most events occur without comment. Propositional truths are stated in the various speeches and Luke's passing explanations give us further understanding, but for the most part the book is history, and a rather sparse history at that. For this reason, developing a pneumatology from Acts is not easy – if not impossible.⁷⁰

In our efforts to draw doctrinal and procedural truth from the Acts record, it is important that we recognize that it is a mistake to study Acts as if we were in a sterile environment. The atmosphere in which we study *Acts* is contaminated by the epistles, the 2000 year history of the Church, and our own personal experience. To deny this is to deny reality and to build a barrier to the apprehending and comprehending the truth available to us. With such a caveat in mind, what does Luke's historical record reveal about the role of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament Church?

One thing that becomes abundantly clear is that Our Lord never intended for the Church to operate upon the wisdom, the cleverness, and the power of human leaders. Jesus' promise at the beginning of the book, *but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you*⁷¹ is the background for the book – and the book illustrates this truth time and again. Thus, Acts is the story of the Holy Spirit and God's servants who were His vessels.

Furthermore, there is absolutely nothing in this record that indicates that the Holy Spirit flew the coop in the First Century and that subsequent generations of the Church have had to function without that empowerment, albeit the expression of that power has not been identical in every age of the Church. God sovereignly bestows and directs in each age.

One of the difficult issues encountered in our reading of Acts is an understanding of *immersion in the Holy Spirit*. Honest exegetes, sincerely seeking God's truth, arrive at different, and somewhat conflicting views on this subject. Because of this disparity, the following excursus will explore the various views on this topic, as well as tangential material that touches on the subject.

Excursus: Immersion in the Holy Spirit

Three general views are held on the topic, *immersion in the Holy Spirit*. The operative word is, *general*, because within these general views there are many degrees and subsets of understanding. Here are the three general views on the subject.

VIEW # 1 Immersion in the Holy Spirit occurred twice:

- the Jewish Church received the Holy Spirit on Pentecost;
- the Gentile Church received the Holy Spirit in the home of Cornelius.

⁷⁰ The Pentecostal/Charismatic world derives its pneumatology from Acts, whereas the non-Pentecostal segment of Christianity focuses on the epistles.

⁷¹ Acts 1:8

All other ministries and manifestations of the Holy Spirit (including the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit) are possible because of these two bestowals. Immersion in the Holy Spirit is not repeatable, since the Church in its entirety is included in these two events.

VIEW # 2 Immersion in the Holy Spirit is an inaugural event experienced by every person at his moment of conversion.

At the moment of conversion, the convert is immersed in the Holy Spirit and the Spirit takes up residence in the convert's spirit, thus guaranteeing that the individual is saved and that heaven is his inheritance. Many view immersion in the Holy Spirit as taking place concurrent with the convert's being immersed in water as a part of the salvation process. Outward phenomena rarely accompany immersion in the Holy Spirit.

VIEW # 3 Immersion in the Holy Spirit is a personal event that follows salvation; it is in addition to the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit that one receives when he is saved.

- Usually, immersion in the Holy Spirit is administered through the laying on of hands, although this immersion can occur as a sovereign act of God without any human agent.
- Phenomena, such as tongues, prophecy, falling under the power, etc., are expected to be manifested as evidence that this immersion has taken place, although the certainty of such occurrence is debated among those who hold this view of immersion in the Holy Spirit.
- Most of the advocates of this view consider the ability to speak in tongues, prophecy, etc., experienced at the time of the immersion is an ongoing ability; a minority would argue that the phenomena is not an ongoing endowment, but a single episodic event.
- The one constant among those who hold to this view of the immersion in the Holy Spirit is that it is accompanied by some type of experience whether it is repeated, ongoing, or episodic.

Which of these three views is embraced by a particular individual or group depends upon:

- one's hermeneutical approach to Scripture;
- one's view concerning the degree to which biblical events should be imposed as a template upon the ongoing Church;
- one's experience;
- the programming that one has received by the group with which he associates;
- one's commitment to a particular pneumatology/theology;
- one's reaction to a particular group and its views.

I certainly would not display the hubris of declaring that I can resolve this issue, which has caused debate between some of the greatest scholars and most devout servants of Christ throughout recent Church History. We can however, note the elements relevant to the debate. The following recap will repeat some of the things noted earlier, but we here organize them into a manageable format.

FACT: Only two events are labeled *immersion in the Holy Spirit*: Pentecost and Caesarea (Acts 2 and Acts 10-11)

- In both of these events, no human agent was used in the bestowal – the Spirit sovereignly fell upon each group without the ministry of laying on of hands or any other human activity.
- Prior to Pentecost, the Apostles and their companions, in obedience to the command of Christ, prayerfully waited for the immersion in the Holy Spirit. They did not know what that meant, but they obeyed and waited.
- At Caesarea, no one expected the falling of the Spirit upon the audience. They were not “seeking the immersion.”
- In the first event, Pentecost, the never-again-repeated tongues of fire rested upon those who were speaking in other languages.
- In the first event, the manifestation was displayed by the preachers; in the second event the manifestation was displayed among the converts.
- Both of these events were identified as the fulfillment of the promise of Jesus, *you will be immersed in the Holy Spirit*.

FACT: Several days (perhaps weeks) after the Pentecostal experience, a group of believers passionately prayed for God to move powerfully so that evangelism could succeed. (Acts 4:27-31)

- In response from heaven, the house was shaken, the group was filled with the Spirit and they glorified God.
- There is no mention of tongues or other supernatural phenomena displayed by those in the meeting.
- The shaking of the building is the only supernatural phenomena that took place.

FACT: Philip, a deacon from Jerusalem, preached the Gospel in Samaria, among half-breed Jews. Many in the city responded to the Gospel and were immersed into Jesus Christ. Peter and John traveled from Jerusalem to Samaria because the Spirit had not fallen on any of them (Acts 8:5-17)

- Philip, the evangelist who took the Gospel to Samaria, did not (could not?) bestow the Holy Spirit – two apostles traveled from Jerusalem for the explicit purpose of bestowing the Holy Spirit.
- Peter and John laid hands on the converts and they received the Holy Spirit
- Although the text does not mention charismatic phenomena, it is clear that these signs did take place, given the response of the sorcerer Simon.
- The bestowal of the Holy Spirit was post-conversion.

FACT: After his encounter with Jesus Christ, Saul tarried for three days in Damascus. A disciple in that city was commissioned by Christ to go to Saul and lead him forward in his conversion to Christ. Among other things, Ananias stated that he was sent to Saul in order for Saul to receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:17)

- The account contains no mention of any phenomena, other than the falling of scales from Saul’s eyes.
- This is an event in which the agent was not an apostle, but a “certain disciple.”

FACT: When Paul visited Ephesus for the second time, he encountered disciples of John the Baptist who had not heard about Christian immersion. Paul immersed them into Christ, laid hands on them, and the Holy Spirit came upon them and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. (Acts 19:1-6)

- The impartation was performed by an apostle – Paul.
- The impartation was post-conversion
- Supernatural manifestation – tongues and prophecy- resulted from the Spirit’s coming upon them.

With this summary before us, the following becomes obvious:

- The only two events that are labeled, *immersion in the Holy Spirit*, were events in which the Holy Spirit fell upon the recipients without any human mediator, resulting in the manifestation of tongues and/or prophecy.
- The only two events in which the Holy Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of hands, resulting in tongues and/or prophecy, resulted from the laying on of hands of foundational apostles.
- There is no record of an impartation of the Holy Spirit, followed by tongues and/or prophecy, resulting from the laying on of hands of non-apostles.

What does this mean – what do we do with this information? It is at this point that one’s hermeneutic and theology come into play. Here are the two most prominent responses:

Response #1 Since only two events are labeled *immersion in the Holy Spirit*, and since the only events other than these in which tongues and/or prophecy were displayed were those in which foundational apostles were the instruments, then none of this is to be repeated today.

Response #2 Whether administered sovereignly without human hands, or administered through the agency of human hands, the resulting phenomena define the nature of the event. If tongues and/or prophecy take place, then *immersion in the Holy Spirit* has taken place. Whatever the apostles did, we can do. The laying on of hands for the *immersion in the Holy Spirit* should be practiced in every generation.

External Data

Looking at these responses, we must remind ourselves, as stated above, that we cannot study Acts in a sterile environment. We must pay attention to other data that relate to this account, including present day experience.

First, we note that Jesus did not command us to immerse people in the Holy Spirit. We are commanded to make disciples, and to immerse converts in water, but there is no command anywhere in Scripture to immerse people in the Holy Spirit. The contemporary practice of inviting people in a church meeting to come forward to be immersed in the Holy Spirit does not have Scriptural precedent, unless one would interpret Samaria (Acts 8) and Ephesus (Acts 19) as being rather oblique examples of this practice.

Second, all of the predictions and comments on immersion in the Holy Spirit state that Jesus is the immerser. No human agent is implied, as is required in water immersion. The two events in

Scripture that are labeled, *immersion in the Holy Spirit*, do not have a human agent as the administrator.

Third, the statement in I Corinthians 12:13 must be considered: *For in⁷² one Spirit we were all immersed into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.* More comment will be made on this verse later, but we cannot overlook this verse as a part of our present discussion. The statement *in one Spirit we were all immersed into one body*, unambiguously declares that Holy Spirit immersion is the means whereby we become a part of the Body of Christ. This statement so clearly echoes statements made elsewhere in Scripture concerning our entering into Christ through water immersion that historically this passage was understood to be a restatement of John 3:3-8 (see page 26 Excursus: water and Spirit).

Fourth, in Paul's correspondence with Timothy, he twice refers to the gift of God within Timothy which was imparted by the laying on of hands.

Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the elders. (I Timothy 4:14)

For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. (II Timothy 1:6)

We puzzle over whether Paul referred to two different events - one in which the elders laid hands on Timothy and one in which Paul laid hands on Timothy - or were these the same event and Paul participated with the elders. This question cannot be answered with certainty, but it seems that I Timothy 4:14 does substantiate the contention that gifts, at least, can be imparted by church leadership other than apostles. However, the impression given is that this happened when Timothy was commissioned to become a part of the Barnabas/Saul apostolic team and the gift that was imparted was equipping for the ministry that was ahead. This is different from the situations in Acts 8 and Acts 19.

Fifth, is the reference to the immersion performed by John as contrasted with the immersion in the Holy Spirit, administered by Jesus.

John answered and said to them all, "As for me, I immerse you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will immerse you with the Holy Spirit and fire..". (Luke 3:16; Mark 1:7-8; Matthew 3:11)

...for John immersed with water, but you will be immersed with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." (Acts 1:5)

- The obvious difference between the two immersions was the elements – John's immersion was water; Jesus' immersion would be the Holy Spirit and fire.
- John immersed individuals, not a nation.

⁷² The three most popular modern versions KJV, NIV, and NAS, render the Greek preposition, ἐν, as "by." The English Standard Version gives a clearer understanding by rendering the proposition as "in," which is what is being communicated by the verse. The Holy Spirit is not the one who immerses us, but the Holy Spirit is the agent in which we are immersed into one body. The identical term is used in reference to John's immersion, "in" water or "with" water, not "by" water (Matthew 3:11)

The comparison of Jesus' immersion in the Holy Spirit and John's immersion, argues against the idea that groups rather than individuals would be immersed in the Holy Spirit (Jews, then Gentiles). Of course, some could argue that even the two events labeled *immersion in the Holy Spirit*, were manifested through individuals.

Sixth, is the experience of present day Christians. That many present day Christians have had an encounter with the Holy Spirit, through the laying on of hands, cannot be denied. Also, many have had an encounter without a human agent's being involved. I know enough hard-headed, rational individuals who have had an encounter with the Holy Spirit, manifested through some phenomena, that to deny that this happens I would have to deny reality. The ongoing results in their lives belie the assertion that what happened to them was just some sort of emotional experience, produced by a manipulative preacher. Furthermore, the fruit of the experience vetoes any assertion that the event was the result of a demonic delusion. Good theology does not deny reality. Good theology and reality arrive at the same conclusion. Truth does not contradict truth.

Summary of Excursus

At one level, the question becomes one of terminology. Is it correct to call every encounter with the Holy Spirit (initial or otherwise), in which some phenomena are manifested, *immersion in the Holy Spirit*? On the basis of the various things stated in this excursus, it is my opinion that the weight of the evidence is against using that terminology for present day encounters with the Holy Spirit, especially those that are implemented through the laying on of hands. This is not a denial of the validity of the encounter, but a question concerning the nature of the encounter. Please note that the controlling term in the preceding statement is, "my opinion."

PAUL'S EPISTLES: THE INNER AND MORAL MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Acts of the Apostles is charismatic in its report of the activity of the Holy Spirit. This is not surprising since it reports events. Paul's epistles, on the other hand, focus more on the inner workings of the Holy Spirit, although Charismatic topics are discussed.

Paul's Epistle to the Romans is his masterpiece. That being true, and since it is the first of the epistles in our English New Testament, we will follow Romans as an outline for the first portion of our study of the Holy Spirit in Paul's epistles. Parallel passages in other epistles will be cited when needed. Following our study of Romans, we will move into other epistles to discuss aspects of the Spirit's ministry that are not mentioned in Romans.

Romans

Romans 1:1-4

Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,

The expression, *the Spirit of holiness*, is understood by some to refer to the Holy Spirit. This understanding does not hold up to scrutiny for two reasons:

- In the Greek text, no definite article precedes *Spirit*. The normal manner of referring to the Holy Spirit is to precede *Spirit* with a definite article, i.e. *the Spirit*. For ease of reading in the English language, the definite article is added in most English versions.
- Paul is contrasting Christ's *σάρχ* (*sarx*), Christ's flesh, which descended from David, with Christ's *πνεῦμα* (*pneuma*), Christ's spirit, which is the *logos* of John 1:1, etc.

Literally the two contrasting phrases read,

Being born from seed of David according to flesh...Being declared Son of God in power, according to spirit of holiness, resulting from rising from dead, Jesus Christ, the Lord of us.

Since this verse is contrasting Christ's flesh with His spirit, it is not within the purview of our study.

Romans 1:11

For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established

Several things present themselves in this statement. First, is the impression given in this epistle that at this time no apostle had been to Rome. We deduce this from the following statements made in the epistle:

- Paul expressed a hesitancy to go anywhere that another apostle had established a church (Romans 15:20)
- Paul expressed a passionate desire to preach the Gospel in Rome (Romans 1:14-15)

Coupling together these two statements we conclude that when Paul wrote this epistle, Rome had not been the recipient of apostolic ministry. Paul looked forward to being the first.

A second thing that thrusts itself before us in this verse is the need to define the nature of the *spiritual gift* that Paul longed to impart. Was this in reference to the charismatic gifts that Paul discusses in I Corinthians 12-14, or was this more of a natural gift – that of encouragement, teaching, etc.?

The question is not easy to answer. The term for *gift* in this passage is *χάρισμα* (*charisma*), which as noted earlier is the term used for gifts of the Holy Spirit in I Corinthians 12-14. However, in Romans Paul does not restrict this term to the charismatic gifts. In this epistle, Paul used the term to describe three gifts from God:

- Functional gifts (Romans 12:6)
- The gift of God's saving grace (Romans 5:15, 16; 6:23)
- The gift of God's call on Israel (Romans 11:29)

Thus, on the basis of the terms used, a firm case cannot be made one way or the other as to the meaning of these terms in Roman 1:11

It seems to me that we strain at a gnat when we try to isolate supernatural from more natural gifts in Paul's statement here. Paul longed to visit Rome and in so doing would bring the whole load – the benefit and influence of his apostolic presence, his teaching, as well as his ministry of imparting gifts of the Spirit.⁷³ Both they and he would be encouraged and blessed by the encounter (Romans 1:12).

Romans 2:29

But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

This section of Romans (2:25-29) contrasts a person who has kept the covenant with a right heart toward God, versus the one who has kept the covenant outwardly, without a right heart. The Mosaic Covenant was not aimed at achieving mere mechanical obedience. The covenant emphasized a contrite heart. There always was "an Israel within Israel."

The circumcision of the heart is not achieved by token outward obedience, but by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 5:1

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance;

⁷³ Those who argue for the position that only apostles could impart supernatural gifts (as per Acts 8 and Acts 19), attempt to use this verse as a contributing passage, i.e., if no apostle had been to Rome, then Paul needed to visit the city and empower some of them with supernatural gifts of the Spirit. Otherwise, the church would be devoid of such empowerment.

*and perseverance, proven character;
and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint,
because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts
through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*

Follow the flow of thought in this passage

- We should rejoice in tribulation because it produces perseverance.
- Perseverance develops proven character (the term used here refers to being approved as a result of being put to a test, as metal is tempered by fire).
- Proven character produces hope.
- The hope thus produced will not be disappointed.
- We know that it will not be disappointed because we are filled with love.
- The Holy Spirit is the source of this love, and thus, the presence of this love is evidence that we have the Holy Spirit, which is the guarantee that heaven is ours.

The final truth of this passage is the same as Ephesians 1:13-14 and II Corinthians 1:22 (see page 44).

Romans 7:1-6

Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives?

For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living;

but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband.

So then, if while her husband is living she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress though she is joined to another man.

Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.

For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death.

But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

In this section, Paul uses the term, *law*, with a wider connotation than the Mosaic Law.

Although the Mosaic Law in his view, he is dealing with a wider application of the principle. In order to make his point, Paul uses the analogy of death; when one dies the written codes that govern this present life no longer have any authority.. So, she is free to find a new mate.

Paul bounces back and forth in this illustration. He begins by saying that when a person dies the law no longer has jurisdiction over him (v 1). Then, when a woman's husband dies (vv 2-3), she is free from the law of marriage (the Greek says that she no longer is bound by the "law of the husband"). Then, he bounces back to the person dying as being freed from the law (v 4). In all of this, he is making the point that the Law no longer has a place in the life of the believer, because in immersion (Chapter 6) the old man died. Therefore, the believer is free to be joined

to another, the resurrected Christ, in order to bear fruit unto God. The former life had no higher goal than the gratification of the senses. The new life is permeated by the Spirit.

Again, the question has to be faced, “in the expression, *serve in newness of the Spirit*, is the reference to the Holy Spirit or to the spirit (attitude) of the servant of Christ?” The question is irrelevant because

- If the expression refers to one’s attitude, that attitude is the fruit of the Holy Spirit.
- If the expression refers to the Holy Spirit, His presence would be demonstrated in attitude.
- Therefore, whether in a primary or a secondary sense, the Holy Spirit is in view in this passage (Galatians 5:22-26)

Romans 8

Romans 8 is an expansion of *Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord* (7:25a). The chapter has been labeled, *The Christian’s Triumphant Hymn of Hope*, and indeed, that it is. Romans 8 describes the Christian’s life which Paul described to the Colossians as being *hid with Christ in God* (Colossians 3:3).

This chapter contains many statements about the Holy Spirit, the Christian’s human spirit, and the relationship between the two. We will consider only the portions of the chapter that refer to the Holy Spirit. This will be done section by section⁷⁴.

One of the difficulties of Romans 8 is determining when Paul refers to the redeemed human spirit and when he refers to the Holy Spirit. The same comment made in the closing statement of the previous section applies in these instances as well, “whether in a primary or secondary sense, the Holy Spirit is in view in every passage that the spirit or the Spirit is mentioned.”

Verses 1-4

Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did:

sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin,

He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Verse 1 The opening statement is a conclusion drawn, not from a single premise, but from all of the conclusions reached in the previous sections. It is a conclusion from conclusions. The condemnation spoken of in this verse is *katakrima* (κατάκριμα), which refers to legal judgment. Eternal legal judgment against a Christian ended at the time of his conversion. This verse speaks of the life after justification, the life that is *in Christ* (note that this is the preposition, *en*, which refers to one's location, rather than *eis* which refers to movement from one place or state to another). One whose life is located *in Christ* is free from condemnation, by a process to be explained more fully in verse 3.

⁷⁴ Most of the commentary on this section is an adaptation of the author’s *Commentary on the Book of Romans* (doulospress.org) 2005

This does not mean that if those in Christ commit sin they will be free from any responsibility for their action. If a Christian sins, forgiveness is freely available if he acknowledges his sin and repents (I John 1:5-9; 2:1). Thus it remains true for those in Christ, that there is no ground for condemnation.

Note the KJV adds to verse 1, the phrase, *who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*. Manuscripts discovered since the KJV was produced testify to the fact that this phrase was not in the autograph.

Verse 2 *The law of the Spirit of life* refers to the authority exercised by the Spirit. Law, as used here, does not refer to a legal code, but an authority that produces a regulated action. The term, "the law of gravity," which produces and controls the behavior of matter, is a good illustration of the principle that Paul is elucidating in this expression. The law of the Spirit of life produces life.

The genitive case of the Greek (τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς ζωῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ - *tu pneumatotes zoes en Christo Iesou*) describes the effect of the truth just expressed, i.e., "the Spirit brings life because the Spirit essentially is life," is the sense of this expression.

This authority of the Spirit, operating through the union with Christ, has set us free from the authority (the same sense as that of *the law of the Spirit of life*) exercised by sin and ending in death.⁷⁵

Verse 4 *in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit*, raises the question of whether or not capitalize (S)pirit in this statement. Is the reference to the Holy Spirit or the redeemed human spirit. If the reference is to the human spirit, the contrast is between one whose spirit is in control, versus one whose flesh in control. Since a redeemed human spirit would follow the lead of the Holy Spirit, the question as to which is referenced in this verse becomes a moot question.

In order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled... The Law required righteousness. As has been demonstrated in the previous sections, only those who come into Christ occupy a position of righteousness. Abraham had a working faith (James 2:14ff), but even a working faith requires the grace of God.

Verses 5-8

For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

*For the mind set on the flesh is death,
but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,
because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God;*

*for it does not subject itself to the law of God,
for it is not even able to do so,*

⁷⁵ *The law of sin and death* harks back to Romans 6:14, *For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace*. When we were under law, from the standpoint of law, we were under the reign of sin and death.

and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

Paul is using flesh in an ethical sense. He does not mean, for example, that a man who has worked hard all day and comes home hungry is minding the things of the flesh when he craves food. Neither is he condemning care for one's physical health (1 Timothy 5:23). Nor is he condemning the desire for sexual activity in marriage (I Corinthians 7:1-5). The truth in this passage is the same as Paul's constant advice to the churches was to exercise care as to how they lived (examples: I Thessalonians 4:1-8; Galatians 2:20; 5:16-26; I Corinthians 3:3-4; etc).

Verse 9

However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.⁷⁶

This is one of the most important statements in the Bible. In answer to the question, "Are you saved, and if so, how do you know," the Bible's answer is, "I have the Holy Spirit." (see discussion on page 44)

One who has the Holy Spirit, knows that he has the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, so many statements in Scripture are meaningless. For example, when Paul was arguing with the case for salvation by faith, rather than works, one of his arguments presented to the Galatians was that they had the Holy Spirit. Paul asked, "How did you get the Holy Spirit?" If there had been any uncertainty as to whether or not they had the Holy Spirit, his argument would have been powerless.

This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? Did you suffer so many things in vain-- if indeed it was in vain? Does He then, who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?(Galatians 3:1-5)

The argument that Paul presented to the Galatians was based upon the certainty of each individual that he possessed the Holy Spirit. The fact that he is speaking of individuals rather than a group is seen in his reference to individual's doing the works of the Law on the one hand and hearing by faith on the other.

A number of passages in the New Testament indicate that the indwelling presence not only is promised to believers, but the possession of the Holy Spirit is the individual's guarantee that he has an inheritance in heaven. Here are some examples:

- **John 14:17** *that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you.*
- **Acts 2:38** *And Peter said to them, "Repent, and let each of you be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*
- **Romans 8:16** *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,*
- **2 Corinthians 1:21 - 22** *Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.*

⁷⁶ Of course, Paul does not mean that those in Christ do not have flesh and blood bodies. He is continuing the terminology that he uses in the preceding verse.

- **2 Corinthians 5:5** *Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge.*
- **Ephesians 1:13 - 14** *In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.*
- **Ephesians 4:30** *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*
- **1 Thessalonians 4:8** *Consequently, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.*

If the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is essential for salvation, how can we know that we have the Spirit? One answer is the character of one's life. Galatians 5:16-26 is a key passage.

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.

Note that this passage speaks of the "deeds" of the flesh (literally, "works"). This is contrasted with the product resulting from the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit - the product is "fruit."⁷⁷ These characteristics in the life of the believer are evidence of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

Are there other evidences? Some contend that tongues is the evidence that one has the Holy Spirit.⁷⁸ Tongues cannot be an evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit in a person's life for several reasons:

⁷⁷ Note that Paul did not write, "fruits." The fruit is singular. There are not different "fruits of the Spirit." There is a single fruit, and here are its characteristics. This is like saying that the fruit of the McIntosh Apple tree is red skinned, with a white inner body, and seed at the core. So, if these characteristics are present in the life of a believer, then this is evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

⁷⁸ Some consider it *an* evidence, but not *the* evidence.

- Tongues exist in many heathen and heretical religions. For example, Mormons speak in tongues. In Corinth, tongues was a feature of the pagan worship services, and that is one reason that some of the Corinthian Christians wanted them banned from the church service. Paul had to say to the Corinthians that if the tongues were motivated by the Holy Spirit, that they were OK (I Corinthians 12:1-3), and that speaking in tongues should not be forbidden (I Corinthians 14:39). Even so, tongues cannot be an evidence because the source might be other than the Holy Spirit.
- Paul stated that the Corinthians had the Holy Spirit (note Scriptures cited above). However, he stated that not all spoke in tongues (I Cor. 12:30). So, some who have the Holy Spirit do not speak in tongues. Thus, it cannot be *the* evidence.
- Paul went further to state that if they were craving an abundance of tongues in their service, they were asking for the sign of God's displeasure. In I Cor. 14:21-22, Paul quoted Isaiah 28:11ff. In this Isaiah passage, God accused the inhabitants of Jerusalem of being unbelievers. One of the signs that God had judged them for their unbelief would be the presence of people overrunning their land who spoke foreign tongues. In a curious argument, Paul indicated that the abundance of tongues in a service was a sign that God had judged them as unbelievers.

So, tongues may or may not be evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Since it is uncertain, it cannot be an evidence. Tongues can be the sign of something other than the Holy Spirit.

A longing (an inward groaning) for the resurrection and the final dwelling with God is a sign of *having the first fruits of the Spirit* (Romans 8:23).

The verses considered in the previous section describe a Spirit-occupied life as one that is holy and an expression of Jesus Christ (I Thessalonians 4:1-8; Galatians 2:20).

Although feelings never can be a measure (because they are of the soul and not of the spirit), still they are an element in the evaluation. One who possesses the Holy Spirit will sense, at least in a general way, the presence of God, although there may be times when he does not have that sense and the heavens seem as brass.

Christ, the Word, and the Holy Spirit all will dwell in us if any one of them dwells in us.

Verse 10

And if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.

The death penalty is the result of Adam's sin. The spirit (human spirit) is alive, not in the mere sense of existence, but in the full sensible, ethical, and useful life. The redeemed human spirit is alive because of the *law of the Spirit of life* (v 2). In an unredeemed man, his evil spirit is alive, but not in the ethical or full sense.

Verse 11

But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.

The closing phrase of this verse is uncertain in the manuscripts. Some manuscripts read, *dia tou enoikountos autou pneumatos* (διὰ τοῦ ἐνοικοῦντος αὐτοῦ πνεύματος), which has the noun, the participle, the pronoun, and article in the genitive. This would be translated, *through His Spirit*. Other manuscripts have *dia ton enoikoun autou pneuma* (διὰ τοῦ ἐνοικοῦν αὐτοῦ πνεύμα), in which the noun, participle, pronoun, and article are in the accusative. This would be

translated, *on account of*, or *because of* His Spirit. The evidence on either side of the issue is fairly equal.

Those who follow the KJV, for the most part have accepted the evidence for the accusative. More recent scholars have tended toward the genitive, but not adamantly. Intrinsicly, neither reading is preferable over the other and Paul might have used either one. The prominent idea is that since the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of life, that where He dwells life will dwell. The accusative indicates that because of the indwelling Spirit, God will resurrect or bodies. The genitive indicates that the Holy Spirit Himself is the agency whereby that resurrection will occur.

- We are born into the world by natural birth;
- we are born into the Kingdom of God by spiritual birth;
- we are born into the Everlasting Kingdom by supernatural birth.

Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment. (John 5:28-29)

Verse 12 - 13

So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

There is no valid obligation to the devil and sin. Following the way of the devil means death. The responsibility to put to death the deeds of the body is the responsibility of the Christian. Passively waiting for the Holy Spirit to act is not God's way. An act of the believer's will, a decision, is required. However, the Holy Spirit will aid in this. Paul prayed for this ministry of the Spirit to the Ephesians,

...that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, (Ephesians 3:16)

The Holy Spirit's involvement is exercised in a manner that keeps the responsibility on the shoulders of the believer. This is consistent with Paul's comments in Romans 6:11-16

Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness;

but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be! Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?

Acknowledging that will-power is not sufficient to overcome temptation allows the Holy Spirit to enter into the situation. The progenitors of Alcoholics Anonymous discovered this truth and

thus, at the heart of the famous Twelve Steps is the acknowledgment of one's helplessness and surrendering to a "higher power."

Verses 14 - 18

For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again,

but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"

The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,

and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ,

if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

Excursus: *Abba, Father*

Many popular contemporary teachers have stated that *Father* is formal and *Abba* is affectionate, similar to, "daddy." This just isn't true.

Abba (אבא) is Aramaic, the language spoken by the Palestinian Jews. *Ho Pater* (ὁ πατήρ) is Greek. Both of these terms express the same intimacy with one's father. This brings home to us the fact that Christianity had its birth in a bilingual people. We have to wonder why most English Bibles render this as, *Abba, Father*, rather than, *Father! Father!*, thus translating both the Aramaic and Greek, rather than just translating the Greek.

Mark 14:36 is the first record of these terms, *And He was saying, "Abba! Father! All things are possible for Thee; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what Thou wilt."* Noting that Mark was written for the Gentile Roman world, J.B. Lightfoot suggests that Jesus prayed in Aramaic, *Abba*, and that Mark added the Greek, *o pater*, as an interpretation.

Lightfoot has the same explanation for Galatians 4:6, the only other place where the dual terms are used, *And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"* He argues that Paul is interpreting the term, *Abba*, for his Gentile Galatian readers. According to this argument, this would be true for Romans 8:14.

Much more probable is the intense nature of the prayers described in these three passages. Mark records this very intense prayer uttered by Jesus, who used both languages. In that intense prayer, concentrating into this "word of all words" an inexpressible depth of meaning, felt impelled spontaneously to repeat the word. Some of Jesus' disciples, noting the prayer of Jesus, copied Him and passed this on as a traditional prayer element. It is noteworthy that among the limited resources that we have of Jewish Christianity, the only time that this combination of terms is found is in documents that refer to the prayer of Christ. It does not seem to be a pattern that they customarily displayed in their prayers.

In the two instances in which Paul used these terms, the same things said about Jesus in the Garden would be true. In both Romans and Galatians Paul uses the very strong word, *krazomen*, (κράζομεν). It describes a loud irrepressible cry, describing the intensity with which the consciousness of sonship breaks forth from the heart of the Christian in prayer. In both Galatians and Romans Paul slipped into the first person, *we cry*. He is not just writing about prayer but is caught up in the prayer at the moment that he writes. In his native Aramaic tongue, then in the Greek language, the literary language of those to whom he was writing, he cries out, *Father! Father!*

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. Wescott and Hort punctuate the English in a way that makes the statement express better what Paul is saying, i.e., *In that we cry, Father, Father, the Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.*

Our own spirit tells us that we are children of God, but that is done at the inspiration of and the impulse of the Holy Spirit.

Three proofs that we are children of God are given in these verses:

Verse 14 We are led by the Spirit of God (including Scripture, of which the Holy Spirit is the author)

Verse 15-16 Our own spirit witnesses with His Spirit

Verse 17 We suffer with Him

The concept of being heirs and joint heirs must not be pressed beyond the scriptural intent. Joint heirs does not mean that we will be Deity. We always will be poor sinners, saved by the grace of God. We will enjoy the beauty, joy, and marvels of heaven.

Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. (I John 3:2)

So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. (I Corinthians 15:45-49)

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; 21 who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. (Philippians 3:20)

Verse 17, *If indeed we suffer with him* calls to mind Paul's statements to Timothy, *It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him* (2 Timothy 2:11) and *indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted* (2 Timothy 3:12).

If we live for Christ, there will be suffering. There are stones that are crueller than the ones hurled at Stephen. Few have suffered more for Christ than Paul, but even he could write this magnificent statement. Home with Christ is beyond our ability to express. No redeemed person in heaven will want to return to earth, nor will he be sorry that he endured suffering because of his faith. The realization of this, while in the midst of suffering, is a gift of grace, made real by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Verses 19-25

For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.

For the creation was subjected to futility,

not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it,

in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves,

waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope;

for who hopes for what he already sees?

But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is described as the *first fruits of the Spirit*. This passage makes interesting statements concerning the hope that resides in the believer as a result of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Paul stated that the universe, so to speak, yearns for the time in which God will consummate His plan, even as all who possess the Holy Spirit also await that moment.

Excursus: The longing of the whole creation.

Nature is personified in this section as in Isaiah 24:4-5 and Ezekiel 31:15:

Isaiah 24:4-5 The earth mourns and withers, the world fades and withers, the exalted of the people of the earth fade away. The earth is also polluted by its inhabitants, for they transgressed laws, violated statutes, broke the everlasting covenant.

Ezekiel 31:15 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "On the day when it went down to Sheol I caused lamentations; I closed the deep over it and held back its rivers. And its many waters were stopped up, and I made Lebanon mourn for it, and all the trees of the field wilted away on account of it.

Paul refers to the new heavens and the new earth described in 2 Peter 3:10-13

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

Peter looks to the *new heavens* (plural), referring to the celestial heavens. All of creation, the earth, planets, stars, etc., were in some way impacted by the entrance of sin into creation. In God's time, these will not be annihilated, but the elements will be melted and renovated. In this renovated creation, only righteousness will dwell. The disease of sin will be absent.

And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

Christ died for the body as well as the spirit of man. In heaven, there will not be any disembodied human spirits. We will have some sort of a body with which to express ourselves. Note that the resurrection is described as the event in which our adoption as sons takes place. Thus we see the figure of adoption is used to describe two events in the life of the believer:

1. Our entrance into the family of God at conversion;
2. Our entrance into the glorified family of God at the resurrection.

In the *Epistle to the Romans*, Paul pictures our first entrance into the heavenly family as occurring at the time of our resurrection from the watery grave of baptism (Romans 6). In the passage before us, he pictures our entrance into the glorified family by being resurrected from an earthen grave.

The Greek word, *elpis* (ἐλπίς), translated, *hope*, carries the idea of something more than just an object of longing or a wish. It carries the idea of certain expectation. Thus, Faith and hope are almost synonyms. We are convinced that in the future the thing hoped for will happen.

Since we hope, it is obvious that we have not come into the fullness of redemption. The *aorist* tense is used here, *we were saved by hope*, is literal. Our salvation was qualified from the beginning by a reference to a hope of something yet to be. We have been saved from our past sins, but we look to our future complete redemption. The trite statement has become popular, "I am saved, I am being saved, I will be saved."

The important point that Paul makes, concerning the Holy Spirit in this passage, is that the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is our guarantee. Possessing the Holy Spirit is the *first fruits of the Spirit*, which is the promise of something greater yet to come. The possession of the Holy Spirit is what gives certainty to our hope. This, of course, is another statement confirming what we have observed elsewhere in Scripture.

Verses 26-27

*In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness;
for we do not know how to pray as we should,
but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words;
and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is,
because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*

These verses are at the heart of much that is taught about intercessory prayer. Some have taught that the groaning of verse 26 refers to praying in tongues. This really is a stretch. The Greek term translated *too deep for words* (NAS), *that words cannot express* (NIV), *which cannot be uttered* (KJV), is *alaletos* (ἀλάλητος). The idea conveyed by this word is something that is not uttered or something that cannot be uttered. The term is derived from the word for "speak," *laleo* (λαλέω) and the prefix, *a* (ἀ & λαλέω). In Greek, this prefix is used to indicate the absence or exact opposite of something. In English the same process is used. For example, a *moral* person versus an *amoral* person (one who does not have morals). The concept conveyed by ἀλάλητος is that this is a silent groaning. It is something that cannot be uttered.

This poses an interesting question, "Does the Holy Spirit intercede for us with an intensity that is beyond expression and we are not aware of its taking place, or does the Holy Spirit produce in us some sort of inner groaning that defies being put into language?" The second of these options does not fit what these verses say because the believer himself is not within the purview of the statement. The Holy Spirit is described as both the source and the vehicle. Whether or not the believer is aware of the Holy Spirit's intercession cannot be proven one way or the other.

It is inappropriate, therefore, to use this verse to describe our intense intercession for the nations, etc. This does not mean that we should not, with great intensity of spirit, intercede for others. Indeed, Paul had an intense prayer life in which he experienced anguish for the various churches and individuals in them.

There is a blessed assurance in the knowledge that the Holy Spirit is interceding for us. We do not know that for which we should pray for nor do we know how to pray about it. The Holy

Spirit knows what and how, and He acts accordingly. All of his prayers are in line with God's will.

Romans 9:1-2

I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart.

The expression, *in the Holy Spirit*, occurs often in Paul's writings, referring to being in the will of the Spirit, guided by the Spirit, empowered by the Spirit. This especially is true when he writes concerning prayer, as we will see in later sections.

This verse opens up a very important truth concerning the role of the Holy Spirit in our sense of right and wrong. We are not born with an inherent sense of right and wrong. The conscience is the result of training and programming during our earliest years. Paul's discussion of the conscience in Romans 14 recognizes this reality.⁷⁹ The believer's sense of right and wrong must be informed by Scripture and by sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, not by his humanly developed conscience. Paul declares that the Holy Spirit is the auditor of the messages that his conscience communicates to him – and that in this instance he has no sense that he is lying or self-deceived. Thus, the statement, *I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart*, is totally true because the Holy Spirit is auditing his sentiments and his statements.

Romans 11:29

for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

Looking at the flow of thought in this section of Romans (Romans 9-11), it seems apparent that Paul referred to the gifts that were enumerated in Romans 9:4-5.

who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises, whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

The unfortunate rendering of the key term in many English language versions has caused many to conclude that once God bestows a gift on someone, it cannot be recalled or revoked. Whether or not this is true (an argument could be made to that effect), such is not the meaning of Romans 11:29. The term in question is ἀμεταμέλητος (*ametameletos*), which means *not repented of* or *not regretted*. The term is a negation of μεταμέλομαι (*metamelomai*) which refers to sorrowing over something that one has done. Romans 11:29 declares that God does not sorrow over the fact that He gave gifts and a calling to Israel.

Romans 12:3-8

For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he

⁷⁹ In Romans 14, Paul discusses a mis-informed sense of right and wrong – a conscience that declares something to be evil when it is not evil.

who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

The Holy Spirit is not mentioned in Romans 12. It is not clear that these “functional gifts” are in the same category as the Holy Spirit imparted gifts discussed in I Corinthians 12-14. As we noted in discussing Romans 1:11 (pages 85-86), Paul used the term, *charisma* throughout the epistle to refer to anything that God gives as a grace gift – something that is not earned. Therefore, the fact that he used that term in 12:6 does not tell us anything about the gifts referred to in this chapter, except that they are sovereignly determined and given by God, without any attention to the recipient’s merit.

Paul stated that every believer has been given *a measure of faith*. The Greek terms picture a person who dips a measuring instrument into a container filled with *faith*, and measures out a specified amount to each individual. Clearly, in this section, *faith* refers to the functional ability metered out to each individual. This appears to be a permanent functional ability sovereignly bestowed by God – probably through the Holy Spirit.

Romans 14:17; 15:13

for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.... Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In this section (Romans Chapters 14-15) Paul addressed the problem of differences of opinion over non-essentials. He urged the Romans to allow one another liberty and to be non-judgmental in these matters. Each one should put his brother’s welfare above his own rights and desires. Even though the question of eating and drinking certain things was a concern in the Mosaic Covenant, they are not concerns of the New Covenant. Righteousness, joy, peace in the Holy Spirit, hope by the power of the Holy Spirit – these are traits and constituent elements in the Kingdom. Living in the Holy Spirit will be characterized by these conditions.

Romans 15:15-16

But I have written very boldly to you on some points so as to remind you again, because of the grace that was given me from God, to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Under the Mosaic Covenant, only animals without spot or blemish could be offered. Paul describes his ministry to the Gentiles as offering them up to God, and they are made without spot or blemish by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 1:13 is a parallel passage.

Romans 15:18

For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed, in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

Paul acknowledges that even though he has been diligent in fulfilling God’s call upon his life, the Gentiles who accepted the Gospel did not do so because of his persuasive skills. They did so because of the activity of the Holy Spirit. A major reason Paul received a hearing was because

of the credentialing and confirming miracles performed through him, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Summary of the Holy Spirit in Romans

The underlying message of Romans, concerning the Holy Spirit, is the necessity of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

- If one does not have the Holy Spirit, then he is not in God's Kingdom.
- The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is the guarantee that the believer is adopted into the Family of God.
- The indwelling presence of the Spirit is the guarantee that heaven is the believer's future possession.
- The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit makes one acceptable to God (as contrasted with seeking to be acceptable through obedience to the law)
- The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit provides guidance in life's choices.
- One who possesses the Holy Spirit will demonstrate the Spirit's presence by the quality of his life.
- The Holy Spirit makes intercession for those who seek to live in and by the Spirit.

Although Romans includes other incidental facts concerning the Holy Spirit, the indwelling presence is the dominant theme concerning the Spirit.

I Corinthians

I Corinthians 1-3: The Holy Spirit's role in evangelism

Paul's first mention of the Holy Spirit in I Corinthians is in Chapter Two. In order to sense the force of Paul's statements in Chapter Two, we must be aware of the background that brought forth these pronouncements.

When Paul arrived in Corinth, he was alone. He and Silas had been beaten and jailed in Philippi. Leaving Philippi, Paul, Silas, and Timothy went to Thessalonica and before many days passed, they had to flee from an angry mob. They left Thessalonica and went to Berea, and before many days had passed they faced another angry mob. Because the Berean disciples were concerned for Paul's safety, they put him into a boat and took him to Athens, leaving Silas and Timothy behind to encourage the new believers in Berea.

Paul felt quite lonely when he landed in Athens and so he asked those who had transported him to urge Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible. It seems that Timothy hurried to him, while Silas remained in Berea to continue discipling the new converts. Paul never seemed to be free from the burden of concern for the churches. He carried the heart of a father for each church that he and his associates had planted.⁸⁰ After Timothy's arrival in Athens, Paul began to be anxious about the persecuted church they had left behind in Thessalonica. So, even though he craved Timothy's company, he sent him off to Thessalonica.⁸¹

All alone and lonely in Athens, Paul occupied himself by preaching in the synagogue and in the market place – the agora. Many prominent philosophers lived in Athens and they met regularly in the Areopagus to dialogue and hear new ideas. When some of them heard Paul speaking in the agora, they asked him to come and speak to them in the Areopagus. Never one to turn down an opportunity to proclaim the Gospel, Paul accepted their invitation and preached an uncompromising sermon. He concluded his address with a declaration of the resurrection of Christ and a coming judgment. Some of the audience began to sneer when Paul spoke of the resurrection, but some, including two influential Athenians, became believers. Shortly thereafter, Paul hiked the narrow 50 mile isthmus that led to Corinth.

Corinth was the commercial and political capitol of Greece. It was a city with two harbors and it always was filled with seamen and seafaring travelers. Corinth was a place of great frivolity and evil. The Temple of Aphrodite was staffed with 1000 prostitutes and Bacchus, the god of wine, was worshipped along with Aphrodite. The ancients described a profligate individual as one who "lived like a Corinthian." Many religions had prominent status in the city. Not wanting to lag behind Athens, the city fathers made certain that Corinth had its share of philosophers and rhetoricians. Considering all that Paul had been through before his arrival in Corinth – fleeing from mobs, being lonely, facing the intellectual elite in Athens, feeling anxiety for the churches that had been planted and quickly left behind, and now arriving in what probably was the

⁸⁰ II Corinthians 11:28

⁸¹ I Thessalonians 3:1-2

greatest thriving cesspool of sin in the ancient world, it is not surprising that he described himself as entering this arena with *fear and trembling*.⁸²

Shortly after arriving in Corinth, Paul met two devout Jewish tentmakers, Aquila and his wife, Priscilla. The couple immediately became Paul's lifetime friends. Paul lived with them in Corinth, and since he had been trained as a tentmaker, he joined them in their business. True to his calling, Paul began speaking in the Corinthian synagogue every Sabbath. He sought to convince both Jews and Greeks that Jesus is the Christ, the fulfillment of that which had been spoken by the prophets. When Silas and Timothy finally arrived, Paul ceased his work as a tentmaker and devoted himself fully to the declaration of the Gospel. Shortly thereafter, the Lord appeared to Paul in a night vision and exhorted him,

*Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking and do not be silent; for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city.*⁸³

With this background in mind, we observe the flow of thought that runs through the first three chapters of I Corinthians. The underlying message is that evangelism is the work of God.

1. The first fact presented is the role of God's Spirit in opening the hearts of certain hearers. When the Lord told Paul, *I have many people in this city*, no Corinthian Church existed. Jesus was speaking of those Corinthians whom He had chosen to be receptive to the Gospel. Not only would the chosen ones be exposed to the Gospel and hear the sound of Paul's words with their physical ears, nor would they merely understand the words with their human minds, but they would be convinced in their hearts that the message was true. These were the ones who were *called*. Thus Paul wrote,

*For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*⁸⁴

The work of God on the hearts of the hearers, through the Spirit, is one side of the coin.

2. The other side of the coin is the Holy Spirit's involvement with the preacher. Chapter Two addresses this element in evangelism. Paul declared that the Holy Spirit revealed the truth to be preached and then empowered his words. Those who were convinced were not responding to Paul's persuasive oratorical skills, but to the convincing power of the Holy Spirit.

*And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God...
and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom,
but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,
so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men,
but on the power of God...*

⁸² I Corinthians 2:3

⁸³ Acts 18:9-10

⁸⁴ I Corinthians 1:22-25

*but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery,
the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory...
For to us God revealed them through the Spirit;
for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.
For who among men knows the thoughts of a man
except the spirit of the man which is in him?
Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.
Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God,
so that we may know the things freely given to us by God,
which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom,
but in those taught by the Spirit,
combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. ...
But we have the mind of Christ.⁸⁵*

3. Thus, in the light of the exhortation recorded in Acts 18:9-10, and the recognition that those who would believe were the ones who were called, Paul's task was to be boldly obedient. God's responsibility was to use that obedience to accomplish His purposes. Reflecting this truth, Paul wrote in Chapter Three,

I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth.⁸⁶

In these three chapters, Paul clearly declares that everything is of God, through the Spirit.

- God chooses those who will respond to the message
- God supplies the message to be preached
- God empowers the spoken words
- All of this is done through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

The numerical success of Paul's evangelism in Corinth was the result of God's involvement. On the one hand, Paul delivered Holy Spirit informed speech and Holy Spirit empowered speech. On the other hand, God made receptive the hearts of chosen hearers.

Excursus: the mystery

We encounter the term, *mystery*, twenty times in Paul's letters. This is a rendering of the Greek term, *μυστήριον* - *musterion*. When an English speaker uses the term, *mystery*, he is referring to something that cannot be understood ("it's a mystery to me!"), or a secret that we are challenged to figure out (i.e. a murder mystery story).

The Greek term, *μυστήριον*, as it is used in the New Testament, refers to facts that could not be known or deduced by human reason or discovery,⁸⁷ but are known because God has revealed

⁸⁵ I Corinthians 2:1, 4-5, 7, 10-13, 16

⁸⁶ I Corinthians 3:6-7

⁸⁷ *Μυστήριον* occurs twenty-seven times in the New Testament. Three occurrences are in the Gospels: Matthew 13:11; Mark 4:11; Luke 8:10; Twenty are in Paul's epistles: Romans 11:25; 16:25; I Corinthians 2:7; 4:1; 13:2; 14:2; 15:51; Ephesians 1:9; 3:3, 4, 9; 5:32; 6:19; Colossians 1:26, 27; 2:2; 4:3; II Thessalonians 2:7; I Timothy 2:9, 16; Four times in the Apocalypse; Revelation 1:20; 10:7; 17:5, 7.

them. The term always refers to something that is known because God has revealed it. It never refers to unknown, secret knowledge. To illustrate this, think of visiting a theatre to watch a live stage drama. The curtain is closed and all sorts of noises emanate from behind the curtain – the sound of moving scenery, muffled voices, etc. We wonder what is there and in our minds we might imagine all sorts of things. We might speculate as to the color of the set, what is on the set, cardboard trees, artificial mountains, etc. Then the curtain rises and we see beyond any doubt what really is on stage.

This is the manner in which *μυστήριον* occurs in the New Testament. A good example of this is Paul's statement concerning the Second Coming in I Corinthians 15:51-52

Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

In the verses preceding this statement, Paul talked about the resurrection of Christ, which was a known historical fact; no revelation was needed to know this. The fact that believers would spend eternity with Christ had been spoken many times before. The question was, *how can this happen, how will it happen; will we be disembodied spirits for all eternity?* Paul answered these queries by describing the events that will occur at the coming of the Lord. How could Paul know what would happen at that time? He knew because of a *μυστήριον* – truth that God had revealed and truth that could be known only because God had revealed it.

It is interesting that Paul used the term, *μυστήριον*, for the doctrine that he preached. By so doing, he declared that the source of his teaching was revelation, that came from God through the Holy Spirit. The use of this term adds force to the clear statements in Chapter Two that Paul made concerning the origin of his Gospel. (I Corinthians 2:10ff)

I Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; Ephesians 2:19-22: Three Temples of the Holy Spirit

Three times in his epistles, Paul refers to the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit as a *temple*. In each of these instances, he refers to a different entity. We will examine each of the passages.

I Corinthians 3:16-17

The local Church is a Temple of the Holy Spirit

Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.

The section from which this passage is taken is a rebuke against those in the Corinthian Church who were threatening its destruction through division. One of the expressions of that division was the presence of groups within the church that were loyal to various preachers – *I am of Paul... I am of Apollos*. Paul used two figures to combat this evil:

1. The figure of a farm – one plants, another waters, but God gives the increase. Paul, Apollos, and others were merely farmers in God's cultivated farmland. (3:5-9)
2. The figure of a building – Paul laid a foundation and others, including Apollos, built upon the foundation. (3:10-17)

The second of these figures is the one that is pertinent to our study. Here is the flow of thought in this section:

- The two preachers, Paul and Apollos, were not fellow-workers with God, but were fellow-workers under God. They belonged to Him. (3:3-5)
- The Corinthian Church was God's Temple. Paul laid the foundation and others built upon that foundation. (3:10)
- The spirit of division that plagued the Corinthian Church threatened its destruction. (1:10-13; 3:3)
- Since the local church in Corinth was a Temple of the Holy Spirit, anyone who destroyed the church would be destroying a Temple of the Holy Spirit. (3:16-17)
- God will bring destruction upon anyone guilty of destroying a local church. (3:17)

This passage is a serious warning to those who through pride, ambition, jealousy, or a seditious spirit bring about disharmony in a local church. Individuals who are guilty of destroying a local church through such fleshly manifestations will themselves be destroyed by God.

An ingredient in Paul's warning is the manner in which those who followed him built upon the foundation that he had laid. The Corinthians constructed their dwellings of wood, hay, etc. These homes were vulnerable to fire. Their temples and important public buildings were constructed of stone. They adorned their temples with precious metals and jewels. The public buildings were not vulnerable to fire. In Paul's analogy, those who built a church that was divided over the popularity of various leaders were building with wood, hay, and stubble. Those who built a church whose total loyalty was to Christ, with human leaders being viewed as servants, were building a stable and precious temple.

This description of the local church brings to mind the promise of Christ,

For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.
(Matthew 18:20)

The promise of Christ concerning the Lord's Supper also seems pertinent.

While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins. "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom. (Matthew 26:26-29)

The point of this section is that a local church is a sacred entity and should be viewed with reverence. The Sunday meeting itself is more than a group of people gathered together to do what they want/like to do. It is a gathering in which the very God Himself is present through the Holy Spirit.

I Corinthians 6:19-20

The body of each individual believer is a Temple of the Holy Spirit

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

A man in the Corinthian Church had been living incestuously with his step mother. The church seems to have been a bit arrogant over their tolerant attitude toward sexual matters. Paul strongly rebuked the church and told them to excommunicate the man.⁸⁸

In the first part of Chapter Six, Paul discussed the moral life of the Corinthians and reminded the believers of what they had been, individually, before being converted.

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. (I Corinthians 6:9-11)

Paul concluded the section (verses 13-20) by focusing on the special sin of adultery and fornication. Because the Corinthian culture accepted harlotry as normal, and even an act of religious devotion in the Temple of Aphrodite, Paul gave special attention to this sin that was a Corinthian routine.

- Mystically, the Christian's body is member of Christ's body.
- Sexual intercourse makes the flesh of two as one.
- God forbid that anyone should take the Body of Christ and make it one flesh with a harlot.
- Functionally, such an action is equivalent to a satanic marriage.
- The Christian does not own his own body – Jesus has purchased the believer's body, therefore a Christian's body should only be used in a manner that glorifies God.

The point that Paul makes is that sexual sin for a Christian is identical to the sin committed by those who used the sacred Temple of Jehovah vessels for profane activity. This is what was done when the Babylonians used the sacred Temple vessels in Baal worship and as drinking vessels in their bacchanals.⁸⁹ This is what was done when Gentile conquerors used the sacred Altar of Jehovah as a place to offer pagan sacrifices.⁹⁰

The description of the Christian's body as being a Temple of the Holy Spirit is another means of describing the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit that Paul has referenced elsewhere. For example, Romans 8:9-11:

However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.

⁸⁸ I Corinthians 5

⁸⁹ Daniel 5

⁹⁰ Antiochus IV, also known as *Ephphanes* (Ἐπιφανής). See I Maccabees 1:20-24, 54; II Maccabees 6:2; Josephus, *Antiquities*, XII, v,4

But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. (Romans 8:9-11)

Ephesians 2:19-22

The world-wide Church is a Temple of the Holy Spirit

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

In this section of the Ephesian Epistle, Paul described the manner in which God brought both Jew and Gentile into the New Covenant, and thus, into the Church.

...remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ... who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, ... so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man... and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross... for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. (Ephesians 2:12-18)

The final phrase of this passage we will discuss later, but for our present purposes, we observe that Paul described the unity of Jew and Gentile in the world-wide Church. There is no difference from race to race and all are important building blocks in the *Holy Temple in the Lord* – the *dwelling of God in the Spirit*. Every church in every culture is a part of the Grand Temple of the Holy Spirit. This is true even if the various churches do not know of one another's existence. All together they mystically constitute a Temple of the Holy Spirit.

Excursus: Identifying the Temple

Two Greek words are used to describe a temple. The first is ἱερόν (*hieron*). This term describes the temple and its environs. The second term is ναός (*naos*), which refers to the inner sanctum – the Holy of Holies – the *sanctum sanctorum*.

The ναός is the holy room where the Ark of the Covenant was kept. This was the room in which dwelt the Holy Shekinah – the cloud symbolizing the very presence of Jehovah. This room was so sacred that no one could enter it, except the High Priest, and he only once a year. Fear and reverence attended this room. The ναός was the most sacred spot on earth.

ναός, is the term used in each of the three instances in which the Temple of the Holy Spirit is referenced: the local church, the body of the believer, and the world-wide Church. The term describes a room, rather than a building.

Considering the reverence that was attached to the ναός by God Himself, we are impressed by the implications of Paul's use of the term:

- The local church is a Holy of Holies
- The body of each believer is a Holy of Holies
- The world-wide Church is a Holy of Holies

Each of these entities is to be revered. Satan is dedicated to profaning them.

I Corinthians 7:39-40 Paul's advice to widows is in harmony with the Holy Spirit

A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. But in my opinion she is happier if she remains as she is; and I think that I also have the Spirit of God.

In the Corinthian letter, Paul responded to questions that were raised in a letter that they had sent to him. Paul made reference to their letter when he began a section by saying, *περὶ δὲ (peri de) now concerning*⁹¹ ... Chapter Seven begins with, *now concerning the things about which you wrote*, then he quotes from their letter, *it is good for a man not to touch a woman*.

Unfortunately, most versions do not indicate this as a quote (they are ambiguous), and some even indicate it as an affirmative statement from Paul (NJB, NLT). Some modern versions, such as the ESV do indicate that Paul is quoting from their letter. To understand this as an affirmative statement from Paul is absurd, since he elsewhere argues that such a view is a doctrine of demons (I Timothy 4:1ff). Paul would have to contradict himself if he affirmed the statement, *it is good for a man not to touch a woman*. From a reading of the epistle it appears that some ascetics were putting pressure on singles to stay single and on married people to live together without having sexual intercourse (a practice that began in the Second Century among some ascetics and continued for a time). In certain sections of the chapter, Paul based his argument either on Scripture or clear statements from Christ. In a couple of instances, he stated that neither Scripture nor Christ addressed the issue that they have presented. In these instances, he gave his opinion (verses 25 and 40). In the instance before us he stated *and I think that I also have the Spirit of God*. This can be understood two ways:

- Some of the Charismatics in the church had argued that they had the Spirit and Paul didn't (it is apparent from this letter that this view was present in Corinth). Paul's statement in verse 40 was an assertion that he had the Spirit.
- Paul gave his opinion and said that he believed that the Holy Spirit had guided him in that opinion.

Both of these views end up in the same place, i.e., Paul expressed the will of the Holy Spirit when he gave his opinion concerning this matter.

I Corinthians 12-14 Paul's instructions for the oversight of spiritual manifestations in the corporate meeting⁹²

The topic of the three chapters before us is the corporate meeting of the local church. Because of the somewhat spectacular nature of this chapter's subject matter, most readers tend to miss the central truth of the section.

⁹¹ 7:1, 25; 8:1 [cf, 8:4]; 12:1; 16:1, 12

⁹² This section is an adaptation of a portion of a paper written in 2002, *Manifestations of the Spirit in the Corporate Meeting*, James Garrett, available at doulospress.org.

Chapter 12 addresses the appropriate view of the gifts of the Spirit

In I Corinthians 12 Paul presents the human body as an analogy to illustrate the role and function of spiritual gifts in the corporate meeting. There is diversity, interdependency, and unity in a body. Chapter 12 can be summarized as follows:

- The Holy Spirit imparts gifts to Christians
- These are gifts, not rewards
- The Holy Spirit sovereignly chooses to whom each gift is given
- Each gift is important
- No believer has all of the gifts
- No believer should feel that his gift has made him superior
- All gifts are given for the good of the body

Verse 1 *Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware.*

As noted earlier, the *now concerning* (περὶ δὲ), is the flag that indicates that Paul is responding to something that they had stated or asked in their letter.

A challenge presented by this verse is the definition of the term that most versions render as, *spiritual gifts*. The Greek term *ton pneumatikon* (τῶν πνευματικῶν), is the genitive, plural form of the adjective, *pneumatikos* (πνευματικός). Since the genitive plural of this adjective is spelled the same way for masculine, feminine, and neuter objects, the gender of the term has to be determined by the context. Literally, the term means, *the spirituals*, but that doesn't make any sense. If the term is masculine, then a proper rendering would be, *spiritual men*. If the term is neuter, the proper rendering would be, *spiritual things*. Some argue that the term should be rendered, *spiritual men*, since the Corinthian interlopers that challenged Paul said that he was deficient, but that they were *spiritual men*. In Chapter 14, Paul used this term both in the neuter and masculine genders (neuter in verse 1 and masculine in verse 37).

The repeated, *you*, of verses 2-3, and the fact that Paul wrote, *to each one*, as he lists manifestations of the Spirit in verses 7-10, definitely point toward understating the term as meaning, *spiritual men*. Furthermore, the point of I Corinthians 12-14 is the management (not control) of these manifestations, which requires the obedience of men. The immediate context, however, would allow for *spiritual things*. Howard M. Ervin suggests, *Now concerning supernatural endowments, brethren...*⁹³ as a means of encompassing both the *spiritual things* and the *spiritual men (and women)* who were manifesting the *spirituals*. This suggestion removes the challenge of deciding whether the gender of the term.

Verses 2-3 *You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to the dumb idols, however you were led*⁹⁴. *Therefore I make known to you, that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is accursed"; and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.*

⁹³ Howard M. Ervin, *These are not Drunken as ye Suppose* (Plainfield, NJ, Logos International 1963) p

⁹⁴ Verse 2 is one of the most difficult verses in the Bible, because it is an *anacoluthon* (it doesn't follow grammatically) since the "when" clause has no main verb. As Gordon Fee comments, "Either something dropped out in the transmission of the text, or else Paul himself intended his readers to supply a second 'you were' at some point in the sentence. Literally, the verse reads, *you know that when you were pagans, to mute idols whenever you would be led, being carried away*. The best solution is to repeat the verb 'you were' with the final participle 'carried away,' so that the sentence reads, *When you were*

As pagans, they had worshipped inarticulate idols. However, these idols did represent evil spirits (10:20-21) who spoke through their devotees.⁹⁵ Thus, inspired speech was not evidence of being led by the Holy Spirit. They already knew that from their pagan past. Because pagans spoke in tongues, some Corinthian Christians rejected tongues as being either of the devil or inappropriate among Christians.

Many pages could be written wrestling with the various explanations of Paul's statement that only by the Holy Spirit could someone say, *Jesus is Lord*. Any hypocrite could make that statement. It is not profitable for us to get involved in this discussion here. It is important, however, that we not miss the point of this paragraph. Gordon Fee has written,⁹⁶

...it continues to stand as a particularly important word for the church, in which many of these spiritual phenomena are recurring. The presence of the Spirit in power and gifts makes it easy for God's people to think of the power and gifts as the real evidence of the Spirit's presence. Not so for Paul. The ultimate criterion of the Spirit's activity is the exaltation of Jesus as Lord. Whatever takes away from that, even if they be legitimate expressions of the Spirit, begins to move away from Christ to a more pagan fascination with spiritual activity as an end in itself.⁹⁷

Fee's warning is very appropriate for the contemporary Church. Sadly, in our present era, many run to one meeting after another, seeking manifestations, wanting to be "on the cutting edge of what God is doing." Clearly, these are seeking experience, rather than yearning to exalt Jesus as Lord.

Verses 4-7 *Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.*

The question has to be asked: "Are the members of the Trinity (the Holy Spirit, the Lord, and God), individually mentioned in connection with one of the three terms, *gifts*, *ministries*, and *varieties of effects*, because each of them, individually, is the source of the element described, or is Paul using a rhetorical device for emphasizing unity in diversity?"

If Paul meant to delineate each Divine Being's activity in this arena, here is the delineation:

- The Holy Spirit bestows varieties of supernatural abilities on believers.
- The Lord determines when, where, and how these abilities are to be used.
- God the Father determines the results.

pagans, you were carried away, as you were continually being led about to mute idols." Gordon Fee, *First Corinthians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 1987) pp. 576-77.

⁹⁵ One clear difference between the inspired speech of idol worshippers was the ecstatic state of idolaters. Idolatrous inspired speech occurred when the devotee was possessed by the spirit of the idol and spoke in an ecstatic state (not in control of himself). Paul points out that the believer is responsible for his behavior, even when speaking in tongues or when prophesying (the entire argument of Chapter 14 assumes this to be true, or else the chapter makes no sense).

⁹⁶ Gordon Fee, one of the finest exegetical scholars of our generation is an ordained Assemblies of God minister.

⁹⁷ Fee, *op. cit.*, p. 582

Whether or not Paul intended to make such a partitioning of roles can be debated. However, the main points of the paragraph are clear:

- The *charismata* are manifestations of the Holy Spirit.
- The Holy Spirit ministers to the Church is through human instruments.
- There is unity (the Divine source) in diversity (different believers manifest different *charismata*).
- The purpose of the *charismata* is to bless the corporate church.

Verses 8-10 *For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.*

Because the Corinthians were experiencing the nine manifestations listed, and probably even more than nine, Paul was not concerned with the question as whether or not the manifestations were valid. Paul was moving toward the conclusion that there should be unity in diversity. Because in our day there is confusion and controversy concerning the nine listed gifts, it is fitting for us to consider them individually.

- **The Word (λόγος - *logos*) of Wisdom (σοφία - *sophia*)**

The phrase means either, *an utterance conveying wisdom* or *an utterance originating in wisdom*.

It is significant that this *gift* does not occur in any other list or discussion. The reason seems rather clear. Earlier in the letter Paul addressed the Corinthian obsession with wisdom, as characterized by the Greek Gnostic understanding of the term. To the Greek Gnostics, secret wisdom was a mark of spiritual superiority. Because of this, many rejected Paul's Gospel (1:17-2:16). Paul defined true wisdom, not as some special understanding or deeper mystery (as the Greek Gnostics would define it), but the recognition that *Christ crucified* is the true wisdom of God (1:30-31; 2:6-9). Any spiritual utterance that declares what God has done in Christ fits Paul's description of an *utterance of wisdom*.

Can the term be limited to this or is Paul describing something more? The question is not easy to answer. Since the gift of wisdom occurs only here, and is not included in the spontaneous *charismata* described in Chapter 14, we are not compelled to consider it as something restricted to the occasional manifestations described in that chapter. Most of us have known individuals who have wisdom beyond their years. Because of their youth they could not have gained this wisdom from experience.

- **Word (λόγος - *logos*) of Knowledge (γνώσις - *Gnosis*)**

In the opening paragraph of the epistle, Paul thanked God that the Corinthians *in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge* (1:5). The Greek terms *logos* and *gnosis* in 1:5 are the same the terms that describe this *charisma*. It seems that this is another effort by Paul to rescue them from their Greek fascination with *wisdom, knowledge, and rhetoric* (the point of 1:18-2:16), as well as confronting the pride that accompanied these obsessions.

How this gift differs from *revelation* is not clear. In 14:6 this gift is listed between *revelation* and *prophecy*, so it is clear that the *word of knowledge* and *revelation* cannot be the same thing. This also is one of the gifts that Paul stated will cease when the perfect comes (13:8).

Some have argued that since *gnosis* (knowledge) is in the descriptive genitive case, that this refers to the Holy Spirit's imparting of insight into Scripture. This could not be Paul's intent. If Paul were describing the gift of insight into Scripture, *logos* would be in the genitive, and not *gnosis* (i.e., knowledge of the Word).

Most consider this gift to refer to manifestations such as that demonstrated by Peter's knowledge of the misdeeds of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11), or Jesus' knowledge of Nathaniel's whereabouts before they met (John 1:47-50).

- **Faith**

In the opening chapters of the epistle, Paul described saving faith as a work of the Spirit.⁹⁸ Here, however, as confirmed by reference to this gift in 13:2, Paul referred to the gift of faith *to move mountains*. Jesus spoke of mountain-moving faith on two occasions:

1. Matthew 17:20, after casting out a demon
2. Matthew 21:21, after cursing the fig tree (also reported in Mark 11:22).

This measure of faith is a *gift* imparted by the Holy Spirit. This not something that can be worked up or chosen to possess. In Romans 12:3, as a prelude to a discussion of functional gifts of the Holy Spirit, Paul wrote of God's having *allotted to each a measure of faith*. We readily think of men such as George Mueller, to whom God gave faith for providential provision for the care of thousands of orphans and the legendary Smith Wigglesworth who seemed to know in various situations what God was doing and in that knowledge ministered supernaturally.

- **Gifts of Healings**

Often people pray for *The Gift of Healing*, as if they can become endowed with the ability to heal. Because the Greek terms for both *gifts* and *healings* are plural, this *charisma* is best understood as a group of healing gifts that the Holy Spirit presents to a particular believer for him to distribute to others. God stays in control. He hands the person chosen to administer these gifts, a gift of healing to be given to this sick person, and another gift of healing to be given to that sick person. The one to whom the *Gifts of Healings* are given has the privilege of dispensing the gifts.

⁹⁸ The Greek word, πίστις (*pistis*) is the word that we translate as, *faith*. Note that in each of the following passages, *faith* has a different meaning.

Galatians 1:23 *but only, they kept hearing, "He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy."* In this sentence, *faith* means the Gospel

Romans 14:23 *But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.* In this context, *faith* refers to the conviction that this is what God wants me to do.

1 Timothy 5:11-12 *But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry; having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith.* (KJV) In this passage, *faith* refers to a pledge or a promise made to the Lord. In both the NIV and the NAS, the "dynamic equivalency" style is used in this verse. Therefore, neither of these versions have the word, *faith*, in their translations. The NAS says, *pledge*; the NIV *first pledge*. In the Greek, however the word is *faith* (πίστις)

In a Sunday service, a sick person may come to a servant of God whom God is using to distribute these gifts, and even though the infirm individual receives the laying on of hands he may walk away without being healed. The Sovereign God had not given His servant a *Gift of Healing* for that particular individual. If someone, with all good intentions, approaches church leadership, asking for the laying on of hands in order to receive the *Gift of Healing*, the appropriate question should be, “Why, are you sick?”

- **The Effecting of Miracles (Literally: *operations of powers*)**

In II Corinthians 12:12, Paul wrote of himself, *The signs (semeia - σημεῖα) of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs (semeia - σημεῖα) and wonders (terata - τεράτια) and miracles (dunamis - δύνάμεις).*

In this self-description Paul made a distinction between *signs*, *wonders*, and *miracles*. The term translated *miracles* is the common Greek word for *power*. Once again we must note that both terms, *operations* and *powers*, are in the plural. This would imply that there are varying operations of powers. Certainly this would include supernatural healing, exorcism, and any of the broad range of events that we would call, *miraculous*. Jesus’ ministry was filled with such manifestations. In the post-Pentecostal apostolic ministry, most miracles were healing miracles.

One has to ask if the healings resulting from this gift are a different manifestation than the *gifts of healings*. It would seem to be so. For example, cloths that had touched Paul’s body were distributed in Ephesus and everyone who touched the cloths were healed (Acts 19:11-12). Peter and the apostles had such a flamboyant and consistent healing season in Jerusalem, that sick people were placed beside the path, hoping that Peter’s shadow would fall on them (Acts 5:12-16).⁹⁹

Be that as it may, Paul wrote that the Holy Spirit gives to certain ones, *operations of powers*, obviously describing a ministry that is characterized by supernatural activity.

- **Prophecy**

After the close of the Old Testament canon (Malachi), prophecy ceased in Israel.¹⁰⁰ On the Day of Pentecost, Peter declared that in fulfillment of Joel’s prediction, prophecy was restored to Israel.

... but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: 'And it shall be in the last days,' God says, 'That I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall

⁹⁹ The Western Text of this verse 15 concludes with, “for they were being set free from every sickness, such as each of them had.”

¹⁰⁰ Here are some quotes from I Maccabees, a history of the Jews, written during the inter-testamental period:

*4:46 and stored the stones in a convenient place on the temple hill **until there should come a prophet to tell what to do with them.***

*9:27 Thus there was great distress in Israel, such as had not been **since the time that prophets ceased to appear among them.***

*14:41 And the Jews and their priests decided that Simon should be their leader and high priest for ever, **until a trustworthy prophet should arise...***

*dream dreams; and on My male slaves and My female slaves, I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit and they shall prophesy.*¹⁰¹

The Greek term, *propheteia* (προφητεία), refers to speech that emanates from divine inspiration and declares the purposes of God. This may be something that the Holy Spirit imparts impromptu in a meeting, or it can be something that the Holy Spirit has given to someone in the prayer closet (14:26). Prophecy can include prediction, but that is not its essential nature. Joel declared that when God's Spirit was poured out, prophecy would not be restricted to prophets but that it would become a widespread phenomenon among God's people.¹⁰²

- **The Distinguishing of Spirits**

The Greek term rendered, *distinguishing* or *discerning*, is the term, *diakrisis* (διάκρισις), which has as its primary meaning, *a separation*, thus, *a judging*. Since the terms are plural, a better and more accurate rendering is *discernments of spirits*.

Interestingly, the term rendered *discernments* is the noun form of the verb used in 14:29, which speaks of judging whether or not prophecy is from God. Thus, *discernments of spirits* must include judging of prophecy. Here are some related passages:

1 Thessalonians 5:19-21a *Do not quench the Spirit; do not despise prophetic utterances. But examine everything carefully.*

1 John 4:1 *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*

2 Thessalonians 2:2-3, 9 Paul declared the necessity of judging the spirit behind both doctrinal teaching and miracles: *that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one in any way deceive you, ... that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders*

Some believers will be given the ability to discern spirits, whether it be the spirit behind a prophecy, a teaching, or a miracle.

- **Various Kinds of Tongues**

The Greek terminology is important. *Gene glosson* (γέννη γλωσσῶν), translated literally, *families of tongues* (i.e. languages), fits the Acts 2 experience, in which the disciples *began to speak with other tongues* (languages that were not their native tongue) and were understood by visitors from various countries. The term, *families of tongues*, obviously refers to actual languages.¹⁰³ The terminology forces us to conclude that the reference is to a

¹⁰¹ (Acts 2:16-18).

¹⁰² Joel 2:28-32

¹⁰³ Many modern commentators have sought to demonstrate that the expression, *tongues*, refers to the ecstatic speech or unintelligible speech, found in the Greek religions. In a very detailed scholarly work, Christopher Forbes has demonstrated that this is not case: Christopher Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech in Early Christianity and its Hellenistic Environment* (Peabody, Mass., Hendrickson Publishers, 1997)

language spoken somewhere in the world, or formerly was spoken somewhere in the world, or a language spoken by angels (13:1). It is neither gibberish, nor uncontrolled mutterings.¹⁰⁴

This manifestation never was used for preaching or proclamation of the Gospel. It always was manifested in praise or prayer. Interestingly, in the earliest days of the Pentecostal movement, the belief persisted that God would give earthly languages to baptized believers so they could quickly evangelize the world. Those who went to foreign fields with this expectation, always experienced failure.¹⁰⁵

Even so, there are many credible reports of the Holy Spirit's bestowing a "foreign" language upon a believer, which was understood by an auditor. Dr. Howard Ervin, a man of unquestioned character, has written of his own experience in this realm. We include this extensive quote because of the controversy over this point.

"In our own day, there is an increasing number of testimonies by Christians who have spoken known languages 'in the Spirit.' On one occasion the present author [Ervin] was participating in a healing service in a church on the West Coast of the United States. As he prayed in tongues, an Armenian Baptist woman listened to his 'tongue,' and identified it as prayer in Russian. Again while praying with a small group for the healing of a missionary who speaks Spanish fluently, the missionary identified his "tongue" as a Spanish dialect. The vocabulary was clearly identified, but the inflections were strange to her. On another occasion, while praying for the healing of the little daughter of a Japanese Buddhist woman, he spoke a "tongue" she later identified to mutual friends as Japanese. Still more

¹⁰⁴ The renowned scholar, A.T. Robertson makes the following comment: Acts 2:4 - **With other tongues** (ἑτέρας γλώσσας) Other than their native tongues. Each one began to speak in a language that he had not acquired and yet it was a real language and understood by those from various lands familiar with them. It was not jargon, but intelligible language. Jesus had said that the gospel was to go to all the nations and here the various tongues of earth were spoken. One might conclude that this was the way in which the message was to be carried to the nations, but future developments disprove it. This is a third miracle (the sound, the tongues like fire, the untaught languages). There is no blinking the fact that Luke so pictures them. One need not be surprised if this occasion marks the fulfillment of the Promise of the Father. But one is not to confound these miraculous signs with the Holy Spirit. They are merely proof that he has come to carry on the work of his dispensation. The gift of tongues came also on the house of Cornelius at Caesarea (Ac 10:44-47; 11:15-17), the disciples of John at Ephesus (Ac 19:6), the disciples at Corinth (1Co 14:1-33). It is possible that the gift appeared also at Samaria (Ac 8:18)... Paul explains in 1Co 14:22 that "tongues" were a sign to unbelievers and were not to be exercised unless one was present who understood them and could translate them. This restriction disposes at once of the modern so-called tongues which are nothing but jargon and hysteria. It so happened that here on this occasion at Pentecost there were Jews from all parts of the world, so that some one would understand one tongue and some another without an interpreter such as was needed at Corinth. The experience is identical in all four instances and they are not for edification or instruction, but for adoration and wonder and worship. A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, 6 Volumes, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1932) III Page 22

¹⁰⁵ Charles Parham, first advocated this view. The leaders of the Azusa Street revival also had this expectation. These sent out missionaries based on this premise. However, they found difficulties when putting the belief into practice. For example, A.G. Carr, the first white man to speak in tongues at Azusa, went to India, expecting the Spirit to enable him to speak Hindi. When this didn't happen, Garr and his wife moved to China and studied Chinese. The consistent experience of the early Pentecostal missionaries was that if foreigners did understand them, it was a rare exception, rather than the rule.

recently, in a ministry service in his own church, an Armenian man, for whom he prayed, identified two foreign languages spoken in prayer. The one was a dialect spoken by the Indian colonial troops of the British Empire which he had heard as a young man in the seaport cities of the Orient. The second language he described as Kurdish, a language he himself speaks. Most recently of all, in fact just a few weeks ago, the phenomenon repeated again. While praying with a young man, acquainted with both Spanish and Portuguese, the writer prayed in a language identified by the young man as Portuguese. When asked what was said, he replied: "You told God my need in high Portuguese." Needless to say all of these languages are unknown to the writer, and consequently were spoken "as the Spirit Himself gave utterance."

The same author [Ervin] identified the last sentence of a song sung 'in the Spirit' as Biblical Greek, although the man who was singing knows no Greek. A Norwegian woman received the baptism in the Holy Spirit at a service in the present writer's church. The next day she prayed in tongues in the presence of some Italian friends who identified the "tongue" speaking as Italian, a language with which she is not conversant. In charismatic services in the author's church, other languages have been identified on several occasions. It is also significant to note that each participant in these services prays in a distinctive and clearly recognizable tongue. Vocabulary, inflections, intonations are all distinctive and clearly distinguishable.¹⁰⁶

We have to disagree with those who speak of a "prayer language" as something other than the same manifestation as was experienced on Pentecost (see footnote 105).

- **The Interpretation of Tongues**

Those who claim that *tongues* are ecstatic utterances, rather than genuine languages, argue that *tongues* require *interpretation*, rather than, *translation*.¹⁰⁷ This is a faulty argument. The Greek term, *ermeneia* (ἑρμηνεία), can mean either *interpretation* or *translation*. It is much the same in idiomatic English. When a missionary travels among people whose language he does not know, he works with an *interpreter*, whom the missionary trusts to *translate*.¹⁰⁸

Thus, we have to conclude that this manifestation is an Holy Spirit given ability to translate/interpret the languages being spoken by the tongues speakers. This becomes more evident and crucial in Chapter 14.

¹⁰⁶ Ervin, *op. cit.* pages 127-128

¹⁰⁷ Paul's statements in Chapter 14, which instruct tongues speakers and those prophesying to regulate their activity, clearly speak against an ecstatic state.

¹⁰⁸ Kittel cites all of the possible understandings of ἑρμηνεία. He then concludes that in this passage, it must mean *interpretation* rather than *translation*, since tongues speakers are in an ecstatic trance when manifesting a *tongue*. He argues that tongues are "non-speech." This violates the Paul's description of the phenomenon as argued above. Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964) Volume 1, pages 661-665

Verse 11

But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.

The three truths of this verse are foundational to our understanding of this section:

- The Holy Spirit is the source of the *charismata*
- The Holy Spirit gives *charismata* to individual Christians
- The choice of the *charisma* that is given and the choice of the individual to whom it is given rests solely in the will of the Holy Spirit.

This verse is a verse of great hope. As Gordon Fee has written, “The hope, of course, lies with verse 11, that the one and the same Spirit will do as He pleases, despite the boxes provided for Him ...”¹⁰⁹

Verses 12-13

In these two verses, Paul emphasized the unity of the Body on the basis of the role of the Holy Spirit

For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all immersed into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

The terminology of most English versions, *by one Spirit we were all immersed*, is misleading. A better rendering would be *in or with*, rather than, *by*. The English, *by*, could be understood to mean that the Holy Spirit is the immerser. There is no declaration elsewhere in Scripture that the Holy Spirit immerses anyone. Jesus is the immerser, *in or with* the Holy Spirit. If Paul declared the Holy Spirit to be the immerser, he would contradict every other statement in Scripture that comments on this subject.

Not only is the theological issue opposed to the Holy Spirit’s being the immerser, but Greek grammar also opposes that idea. The Greek terms in this phrase, ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι (*en eni pneumati*), are dative. In classical Greek, one encounters the dative of agency, in which the noun in the dative is the one doing the acting. However, in the New Testament Koine Greek, one is hard-pressed to find a clear example of such usage. Many grammarians contend that such usage cannot be found. Blass and Debrunner state,

“Dative of agency is perhaps represented by only one genuine example in the New Testament and this with the perfect [verb tense]: Luke 23:15”¹¹⁰

Eminent grammarian, Daniel B. Wallace, writes,

“In summary, we can say that there are no clear examples of the dative of agency in the NT, and even if the category does exist, it is, by all counts, exceedingly rare.”¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Fee, p. 600

¹¹⁰ Friedrich Blass and Albet Debrunner, *A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press) 1979, page 102, paragraph 191

¹¹¹ Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House) 1996, page 373

Thus, we must conclude that Paul used the dative of means or dative of sphere in this verse, which is best rendered, *with* or *in*. The Holy Spirit is not the one who did the immersing, but the element in which the immersion took place.

This clear statement that every Christian is immersed in the Holy Spirit is the strongest argument against *immersion in the Holy Spirit's* being something that follows conversion. If immersion in the Holy Spirit is a post-conversion event, which is experienced by laying on of hands at some point, and which some converts never receive, then something is wrong with Paul's statement in this verse. The early church understood immersion in water to be the time that the convert encountered the Holy Spirit – immersion in water and immersion in the Holy Spirit were concurrent events.¹¹²

The two parallel statements emphasize the essential role of the Holy Spirit in initiating us into one Body and then sustaining the life in the Body.

*For by one Spirit we were all immersed into one body...
and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.*

Jew or Greek, bond or free, the Holy Spirit has made all of us members of one Body and all of us depend on the same Spirit to sustain us in that Body. Thus, regardless of what gifts the Holy Spirit has given to any individual, or how the Holy Spirit manifests Himself through any individual, all of us are united in the origin and the ongoing existence of our spiritual life.

Verses 14-26

For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. And if they were all one member, where would the body be? But now there are many members, but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."

On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; and those members of the body, which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our unseemly members come to have more abundant seemliness, whereas our seemly members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, that there should be no division in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

The point of these verses is quite apparent. Paul is arguing for unity in diversity and in this section, he emphasizes diversity. The Holy Spirit has given diverse manifestations to diverse individuals, and each of these manifestations has been given for the good of the church. No one "has it all." Each one is deficient without the others. This is by Divine design. Realizing our common origin, the common possession of the Holy Spirit which makes us one, and the common source of our gifts, there should be no division among us. When we care for one another and rejoice when one of our members is honored, either by God or man, we really are caring for and

¹¹² See page 26, Excursus: Water and Spirit

rejoicing for ourselves – for all of us constitute the body. This paragraph and Romans 12 present the same truth.

Verse 27

Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it

- *You* (ὅμεις plural, *you* – the local church at Corinth) *are Christ's body*;
- *Individually* (focusing on each individual Christian) *are members of it*

Verse 28

And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.

Paul continues to emphasize the diversity.

- The first three, apostles, prophets, and teachers, he ranks, one, two, three. Paul saw these as the order of precedence in founding and building up the church.
- *Miracles* and *gifts of healings* are in the reverse order of Paul's previous list, thus suggesting the irrelevancy of rank in the list from this point on.
- *Helps* and *administrations* are not mentioned in the list of *charismata*, nor are they mentioned anywhere else in the New Testament.¹¹³
- Paul ends the list with *various kinds of tongues*. It is not surprising that he lists tongues last, since this *charisma*, and the pride associated with it, was the source of controversy in Corinth.

The manner in which Paul constructed this list, mixing *charismata* with ascension gifts (Ephesians 4:11), listing things not listed elsewhere, and listing them in a different order from the other lists in this section, emphasizes the point that he is making – diversity.

Verses 29-30

All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they? All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?

The rhetorical questions in verses 29-30 are questions to which Paul anticipated a negative answer. We know this by the manner in which he asked the questions. In Greek, one can ask a question in a manner that indicates whether the questioner anticipates a “yes” or a “no.” If a “yes” is anticipated, the question begins with *ou* (οὐ). If a “no” is expected, the question begins with *me* (μή). By using this technique, Paul thus stated that not everyone is an apostle, not everyone is a prophet, not everyone is a teacher, not everyone works miracles, not everyone has

¹¹³ Κυβέρνησις, here translated as *helps*, means to govern, or to offer wise counsel. A related word from the same root, κυβερνήτης, means *helmsman* or *sailing-master*. This is a different term from the one used in Romans 12:8, προϊστάμενος which means, *the one taking the lead*.

Ἀντίληψις, here translated, *administrations* does not occur in any other New Testament passage. However, it is found in the Septuagint with the meaning of *aid* or *help*. Romans 12 has a different term, διακονία, which conveys a similar idea. Because Romans 12:7 uses the term, διακονία some argue that this is referring to the work of deacons. Although this may include the work of deacons, it certainly cannot be limited to deacons.

gifts of healings, not everyone speaks in tongues, and not everyone interprets tongues. God determined that it should be so.

Paul made these statements for one purpose – to emphasize the diversity in God’s design and the mutual dependency of believers. Paul declared that this is so because of the will of the Holy Spirit. This is God’s deliberate decision. For our era, his statements are important for an additional reason. The contemporary assertion, made by some Pentecostals and Charismatics, that everyone can and should speak in tongues flies in the face of Paul’s argument. If everyone could or should, then Paul’s argument that God willed this diversity, would be a failed argument. Of special interest is the inconsistency in the lists found in Chapter 12.

- Paul lists nine *charismata* in verses 8-10
- He presents a mixed list in verse 28, including two that are not found elsewhere
- In the rhetorical questions in verses 29-30, the list is different from the previous two lists.

Because of this, we should not assume that any of the lists exhausts the manner in which the Holy Spirit manifests Himself in the Church.

Verse 31

But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.

What are the greater gifts? Dr. Ervin, argues that the greater gifts are those enumerated in verse 28, *God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, etc.*

“It intimates that when he said, ‘*first* apostles, *secondly* prophets, *thirdly* teachers,’ he was expressing a value judgment upon this specific category of gifts. The apostles therefore are possessors of the most important spiritual gift...”¹¹⁴

Dr. Ervin’s position doesn’t fit the context of Paul’s discussion in Chapters 12-14. Paul is correcting and instructing the church concerning the manifestation of gifts in the public service. Exhorting all of them to have an earnest desire to become apostles would be totally irrelevant and even contradictory to the point that he is making. An ascending spirit seems to have been one of the problems at Corinth. An exhortation to earnestly desire the role of an apostle is contrary to the heart attitude of any true apostle.¹¹⁵

Much more appropriate is the traditional understanding of *the greater gifts*, i.e., those mentioned in Chapter 14 as being more beneficial to the church in its public meeting.

¹¹⁴ Ervin, p. 141

¹¹⁵ Paul consistently made the point that he did not choose to function as an apostle, but that such was God’s sovereign choice:

2 Corinthians 1:1 *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God...*

Galatians 1:1 *Paul, an apostle (not sent from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead),*

Ephesians 1:1 *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God...*

Colossians 1:1 *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God...*

1 Timothy 1:1 *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, who is our hope,*

2 Timothy 1:1 *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life in Christ Jesus,*

Chapter 13 reveals when the charismata will cease

Chapter Thirteen is an interlude in the discussion, yet an important one. The essential point of the chapter is that unless love is the motivation and the atmosphere in which one ministers a gift, the ministry is of no benefit to anyone, including the minister himself.

The comments made concerning the cessation of the gifts are at the very heart of our study. As noted in the *Preface*, Cessationists cite statements made in I Corinthians 13 as evidence for the validity of their position.¹¹⁶ The next few pages will evaluate the Cessationist argument that is based on statements made in I Corinthians 13.

Cessationist argument from I Corinthians 13

I Corinthians 13:8-12 states that the miraculous manifestations are temporary and will pass away

Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away.

When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.

Prophecy, tongues, and supernatural knowledge will cease when God's full revelation is given. The full revelation described in this passage is the Bible.

Here is how one Cessationist, Robert B. Blazek, presents this portion of the argument. His presentation summarizes the most common Cessationist argument with respect to I Corinthians Chapter 13.

“Verse 9 speaks about that which is partial, but in contrast, verse 10 speaks about that which is complete. In showing this contrast, the best way to translate *teleios* in verse 10 is ‘complete.’ Since revelation, at the time Paul wrote I Corinthians, was only partial, through the miraculous gifts of knowledge and prophecy, the perfect must refer to the finished and complete revelation of God.

In other words, at that time the Christians had pieces and parts of God's revelation, but Paul was saying that there was a time coming when they would have the total and at that time the parts would be absorbed into the whole. Prophecies, tongues, knowledge – and all the rest of the gifts - shall pass away when the ‘perfect’ is come, namely, the gospel fully revealed and the church fully instructed. The gifts came in with the apostles and went out with them...

Every other time this word [*teleios*] appears in the New Testament in the neuter gender, it refers to the will of God or the law of God (Romans 12:2; James 1:25). Thus, it is not unusual for God's revelation to be called perfect (*teleion*).

What do we learn then from these verses? First, that love will never end. Second, that tongues will come to an end. Third, that miraculous knowledge and prophecy were only partial. Fourth, that miraculous knowledge and prophecy would be done

¹¹⁶ We considered the Cessationist view concerning Acts 8, when we surveyed that portion of Scripture. For an evaluation of the Cessationist argument from Church History, see Addenda B.

away when the ‘perfect’ came. Fifth, that the ‘perfect’ is the complete revelation, which we have today in the Bible. My conclusion is that this passage teaches that miraculous gifts would pass away when the completed canon of the New Testament was written. And history bears this out.”¹¹⁷

Here is the flow of the argument:

- Miraculous knowledge, prophecy, tongues, etc., will be done away when *the perfect* comes.
- The Greek term translated, *the perfect*, is in the neuter gender.
- This term is used in the neuter only two other times in Scripture, and in both instances it refers to the will of God or the law of God (Romans 12:2; James 1:25).
- Thus, the term refers to the Gospel fully revealed and the Church fully instructed (i.e., the completion of the canon).

The first flaw in the Cessationist position

The first quite obvious flaw in the Cessationist argument from I Corinthians 13 is the allegation made concerning the neuter gender of *teleios* (τέλειος). *Teleios* is an adjective. An adjective must agree in gender and number with the noun that it modifies. *Teleios* occurs nineteen times in the New Testament, describing various things as being *perfect* or *complete*, in each instance agreeing in gender and number with the noun that it describes or replaces (when an adjective is used in place of a noun [technically called, “substantive use of the adjective”] it is in the gender of the implied noun).¹¹⁸ Thus, *teleios* is found

- thirteen times in the masculine gender
- twice in the feminine
- four times in the neuter

Here are the four New Testament instances of *teleios* in the neuter gender:

Romans 12:2 *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect*

In this verse, *teleios* describes *will*, which in the Greek language is a neuter noun. Therefore, *teleios* must appear in the neuter gender.

1 Corinthians 13:10 *but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away.*

This the verse under debate.

James 1:4 *And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*

Here, *teleios* describes *result* (the Greek term, ἔργον *ergon* - literally, *work*) a neuter noun, therefore, *teleios* must appear in the neuter gender.

¹¹⁷ Robert B. Blazek, “The Perfect Has Come,” *The Christian Standard*, July 17, 1977, page 9-10

¹¹⁸ For example, the adjective, *good*, can be used in place of *good things* (as in, “let us always seek the good”) or in the place of *good men* (as in, “the good die young.”).

James 1:17 *Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.*

In this verse, *teleios* describes *gift* (the Greek term, δῶρημα *dorema*), which is a neuter noun, therefore, *teleios* must appear in the neuter gender.

It is obvious that the Cessationist assertion is faulty. Instead of two neuter uses of *teleios*, in addition to I Corinthians 13, there are three. One of the examples cited by the Cessationist (James 1:25), does not contain a neuter, but rather a masculine gender *teleios*.¹¹⁹ Looking at the three examples of a neuter *teleios*, listed above, one would be hard pressed to find any sort of commonality in what the neuter *teleios* modifies or describes:

- In one instance it refers to the will of God which is discerned through a renewed mind
- In one instance, the term refers to the result of living through trials, i.e. a mature character
- In one instance it refers to gifts that God bestows – all perfect gifts come from Him.

We can only conclude that the neuter use of *teleios* in I Corinthians 13 is of no help in determining the identity of the *perfect*.

The second flaw in the Cessationist position

The second flaw in the Cessationist argument from I Corinthians 13 is a diminishing of Paul's statement concerning our total knowledge, when the *perfect* comes. Paul described a time in which we will know everything clearly, rather than having to be content with our present state in which all that we see is but a reflection of heavenly truth. When *the perfect* comes, we will know all things fully, even as God now knows us fully.

Today we have the Bible, the canon is complete. Untold hours are spent in meditating on Scripture as well as detailed and reverent study of the Word. Yet, can anyone honestly say that he has no questions, that we know all things clearly, that we know everything as fully as God knows us? Certainly, not. *The perfect* must refer to something other than the completed canon.

When will this perfect, complete knowledge come? We can reach but one conclusion. It will come when we die and face Our Lord, or when Jesus comes for His Church. In either of these cases, we no longer will need spiritual gifts because we will be experiencing full knowledge. No other option can measure up to Paul's statement concerning full clarity of knowledge and understanding.

A third flaw in the Cessationist argument

There is no evidence that the concept of a completed New Testament canon ever occurred to New Testament Christians. The writers of the four Gospels wrote their individual accounts for particular audiences. Paul and the other authors of epistles wrote to specific audiences, usually dealing with particular issues. Each document was written as an individual document, without any thought on the part of the author that he was creating a piece of a corpus that someday would be known as "the Bible." It is true that Peter labeled Paul's writings as Scripture (II Peter 3:15-

¹¹⁹ The form of *teleios* found in James 1:25 is, *teleion* (τέλειον). This is the spelling of the adjective in both the neuter and masculine, singular, accusative. The reason that *teleion* in this verse must be understood as masculine, is because it modifies *nomon* (νόμον), the accusative singular form of the masculine noun *nomos* (νόμος).

16), but it is quite a stretch to say that Paul wrote his letters with the understanding that he was contributing to a canon that would provide the full revelation of which he wrote in I Corinthians Chapter 13.

Chapter 14 gives guidelines for management of the *charismata* in the corporate meeting

The statements made in Chapter 14 bring us to the heart of the matter. From Paul's statements in this section it becomes apparent that the Sunday meeting must have been some sort of a vocal melee.

- Tongues speakers were exercising this gift in the meeting without interpretation
- Given Paul's statements at the close of Chapter 12 and the entire argument of Chapter 13, we can only conclude that there was controversy over the hierarchy of gifts. Pride was rampant.
- There was general disorder in the meeting. More than one person was speaking at the same time: prophets prophesying, tongues speakers praying out loud, a general noise without any edification of the general body taking place.
- Some were trying to silence the tongues speakers, fearing that they might be blaspheming God

Two overriding themes flow through this chapter:

1. The importance of order in the corporate meeting;
2. All manifestation of *charismata* in the corporate meeting must be for the edification of the saints, not for the edification or elevation of the individual exercising his gift.

Verse 1

Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.

The imperatives in this verse serve as a transition from the previous arguments to the matter at hand, which is the abuse of tongues. Those who manifest the gifts should seek to be vessels of love and as such, they should function in a manner that benefits the body. For that reason they are exhorted to *desire, earnestly, spiritual gifts*.

The term translated, *spiritual gifts*, is the same word that Paul used in the beginning of this section in 12:1, *pneumatikos*. Here, since it clearly is referring to the topic of *gifts*, as is seen in the following verses, it is *neuter* in gender, and refers to *things*, rather than, *men*. Given the context, *spiritual gifts* is the best rendering.

Upon reading this verse, we immediately face the question, "is the exhortation distributive or collective?"

- If it is distributive, Paul urged each individual believer to earnestly desire to prophesy.
- If it is collective, he is urging the Church to desire that prophesy be fluent in their gathering.

Nothing in the Greek terminology leans one way or the other. However, since the balance of the chapter addresses the performance of individuals, it is best to understand this as an exhortation to individual believers to desire to receive gifts that bless the gathered church, of which prophesy is the prime example. Chapter 12 always must be in the forefront of their desire: the Holy Spirit will distribute manifestations as He wills.

Verses 2-5

For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one understands, but in his spirit he speaks mysteries. But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church. Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying.

These verses set forth the basic contrasts and the central themes of what follows.

- The concern is for edification (vv. 3-5)
- The issue is intelligibility.

Uninterpreted tongues (v. 5) is not understandable; (v. 2) hence it cannot edify the church (v. 4). Prophecy is addressed to people for their edification (v. 3) and in that sense it is the greater gift.¹²⁰

Notice the contrast displayed in these verses:

- The one who speaks in tongues speaks *not* to people, but to **God**
He speaks *mysteries* by the Spirit
- The one who prophesies speaks to **people**
(he speaks) *edification*
(he speaks) *encouragement*
(he speaks) *comfort*
- The one who speaks in tongues *edifies himself* (because he is praying)
- The one who prophesies *edifies the church* (because he brings the word of God)¹²¹

Even though Paul seeks to decrease their zeal for congregational tongues speaking/praying, he is not demeaning the gift itself. He states three positive things about tongues.

- The tongues speaker is communing with God. Paul understands the phenomena to be a form of prayer and/or praise
- The content of the tongues can be *mysteries*. As noted earlier the Greek term translated, *mysteries*, is the term, *musterion* (μυστήριον). This term refers to something that God has revealed and it could only be known by revelation. So, the one praying in tongues may be speaking truths that could only be revealed by the Spirit.
- Tongues speech (prayer) is edifying to the one manifesting the tongue. This is not a negative thing, it is just not the purpose of manifestations in the meeting. This is appropriate for one's private devotions, but not for a public gathering.

The edifying benefit of prophecy passes the test of Chapter 13. Love is expressed by our serving one another through those things that build each other up.

The two words translated *exhortation and comfort*, are quite synonymous. The first of the two, *paraklesis* (παράκλησις) can be rendered, *encouragement, comfort, exhortation, or appeal*. The second term, *paramuthia* (παράμυθία) may be rendered, *comfort or consolation*. So, by

¹²⁰ Fee, *op.cit.* page 653

¹²¹ Adaptation of Fee, page 655

using these three terms in this fashion (*edification, encouragement, comfort*), Paul describes prophecy as a rather full-orbed love-gift from God.

When Paul states that *the one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues*, this is because of the intelligibility of prophecy in the language of the audience. When one prays in a tongue and it is interpreted, then the congregation can say, “Amen.” So, it would seem that this would refer to a public prayer in tongues that is a prayer on behalf of the congregation (much as the public prayer offered in a traditional service today), and it then is interpreted so that the congregation can affirm what has been spoken in the prayer. The next paragraph expands this thought.

Verses 6-12

But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, what will I profit you unless I speak to you either by way of revelation or of knowledge or of prophecy or of teaching?

Yet even lifeless things, either flute or harp, in producing a sound, if they do not produce a distinction in the tones, how will it be known what is played on the flute or on the harp? For if the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle? So also you, unless you utter by the tongue speech that is clear, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air. There are, perhaps, a great many kinds of languages in the world, and no kind is without meaning.

If then I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be to the one who speaks a barbarian, and the one who speaks will be a barbarian to me. So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek to abound for the edification of the church.

Much could be noted here concerning how this paragraph relates to the Corinthians’ attitude toward Paul, but this is not the goal of our study. The only thing to note here is Paul’s emphasizing the importance of intelligibility in verbal elements of a meeting. We also could involve ourselves in seeking to determine the meaning of *revelation* and how it differs from *prophecy*, but whatever conclusion we reached could only be speculation.

Since Paul continually presents tongues speaking as communication between the believer and God, we must conclude that his comment about coming to them with revelation, prophecy, or teaching in tongues is an hypothetical statement, an argument by analogy. He uses this common debating technique to advance his point concerning intelligibility. To decide otherwise would force us to go against everything else he has said in this section concerning the use of tongues. The point of the paragraph is that unintelligible speech/prayer is of no profit to the Church.

Throughout this section Paul keeps emphasizing the purpose of a gathering of believers. It is to edify one another. This emphasis is presented strongly in Hebrews 10:23-26

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near. For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins...

The meeting is not convened so that people can exercise their gifts, but rather so that saints can edify one another. Exercise of the gifts is one way that this is done, but it is a means, rather than an end in itself.

Verse 13-19

Therefore let one who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. What is the outcome then? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also. Otherwise if you bless in the spirit only, how will the one who fills the place of the ungifted say the "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying? For you are giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not edified. I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all; however, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind so that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue.

This paragraph continues the argument of the previous one. Here, Paul becomes more specific concerning corporate worship. Several things catch our attention.

- This is the first time that we are advised of the possibility that one who speaks/prays in a tongue also may interpret – should the Holy Spirit grant that *charisma*. The reason for a tongues speaker to pray for the ability to interpret is so that he can bless his fellow believers in the corporate meeting. Otherwise, he is out of the loop as far as public ministry is concerned.
- The particular faculties that are in operation when one is praying in a tongue or in one's known language are: (1) the spirit of the one praying or (2) the mind of the one praying. So, when one is praying in tongues he is praying *with* his human spirit. When one is praying in his known language, he is praying *with* his human mind. This is not the same thing as saying that one is praying *in* the Holy Spirit. The difference between these concepts is seen in the following passages:

1. *For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. What is the outcome then? I shall pray with the spirit and I shall pray with the mind also; I shall sing with the spirit and I shall sing with the mind also(vs. 14-16.)*

Paul speaks here of the human spirit and the human mind (i.e., *my spirit, my mind*). He states that when he prays in a tongue, his human spirit is praying. When he prays in a language that his mind understands, his mind is involved in the prayer. He makes the same statement about singing. The key term is, "with." The next verse [16] speaks of blessing "in spirit." Since the definite article is missing, and this is in the context of the previous two verses, it is obvious that Paul is speaking of a prayer of blessing in tongues. NOTE: There is no mention of the Holy Spirit in these three verses.

2. *... "In the last time there shall be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts." These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit. But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith; praying in the Holy Spirit; keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. (Jude 17 -21)*

After reminding the believers that there is a world full of those who are devoid of the Holy Spirit, Jude highlights the blessing of praying *in* the Holy Spirit; he states that this is one of the activities related to our remaining strong and faithful in the faith. This reminder clearly refers to "praying *in* the Holy Spirit." NOTE: In contrast with I Corinthians 14:14-16, the human spirit is not referenced by Jude.

3. *With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,* (Ephesians 6:18)

Paul states that all prayer and petition (all kinds of prayer) are to be prayed *in* the Spirit. This clearly refers to the Holy Spirit, because of the use of the definite article and the preposition, *in* (consistent with the exhortation of Jude). Thus, we conclude that all prayer at all times is to be prayed *in* the Holy Spirit, whether it is with the human spirit (tongues) or with the human mind (known language). It also is possible to pray in tongues or to pray with the human mind and not be, “*in* the Spirit.”

Whether one is praying with his mind or his spirit, all prayer should be in the Holy Spirit. Failure to recognize this has resulted in an inappropriate elevation of tongues. Paul does not present such an hierarchy.

- Paul continues to present tongues as being addressed to God, but in this paragraph he also presents praise, in addition to prayer, as something that can be done in tongues. This is seen in his mention of singing, and blessing. Yet, he restricts his singing in tongues to a private activity, not something to be done in a gathering of the Church – unless interpreted.

Verse 20-25

Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature. In the Law it is written,

"By men of strange tongues and by the lips of strangers I will speak to this people, and even so they will not listen to Me," says the Lord.

So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophecy is for a sign, not to unbelievers but to those who believe.

Therefore if the whole church assembles together and all speak in tongues, and ungifted men or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad? But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you.

This paragraph is one of the most misunderstood sections of Scripture. There seems to be a contradiction between the statement *tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers* and the following warning on the impact on unbelievers who enter a meeting in which uninterpreted tongues are being manifested, *will they not say that you are mad?* How can tongues on one hand be a sign to unbelievers and on the other hand be something that will drive unbelievers away? The question is answered clearly and easily when we take note of the passage that Paul quotes in his argument.

The passage is Isaiah 28:11-12. These verses are in a section of Isaiah in which there are many Messianic promises and glowing words about the future remnant. However, woven among these glorious promises are gloomy scenes of judgment. In Chapter 28:1-13, Yahweh condemns the drunken excesses of the rulers and religious leaders of Judah. They reel and stagger about like men at their wits end. They befoul the tables of Yahweh with their vomit and then wallow in their filth. They make sport of the prophet whom God has sent to rebuke their sin. In the Hebrew their drunken song has an insulting lilt.

Jehovah pled with Judah through prophetic words, but Judah would not listen. Therefore, God declared that he would send different words to them. These new words would be spoken in languages that they did not understand. These tongues would be spoken by the nations that would conquer them. When they heard these tongues, they would know that they were under Jehovah's judgment.

As a part of his argument for the restriction of uninterpreted tongues, Paul employed this judgmental promise to Israel. In essence, he stated that the only time that God would send messages in a language that cannot be understood is when He is judging those among whom He sent these tongues. If God Himself sent a flurry of tongues activity into the Corinthians' midst and withheld interpretation, that would be a sign that He considered the Corinthians to be unbelievers. It would be a sign of judgment. To conclude anything other than this is to ignore the meaning of his quote from Isaiah 28. Intelligible prophecy, on the other hand, is something that God sends to believers (following the figure of Isaiah 28).

Based on Paul's argument in these verses, we must conclude that if uninterpreted tongues are taking place in the meeting, one of two options must be true:

1. God is judging the church
2. The tongues are not motivated by the Holy Spirit

Therefore, there is no contradiction between this declaration and Paul's next argument for banning uninterpreted tongues from the meeting, i.e., the impact uninterpreted tongues will have on strangers who might enter their meeting. Those who are uninformed about manifestations of the Holy Spirit, or unbelievers, will be repulsed by uninterpreted tongues – they will say that you are insane.^{122 123} In contrast, prophecy understood by the hearers might be a word bringing them under conviction.

Verse 26-33

What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation.

Let all things be done for edification.

If anyone speaks in a tongue, it should be by two or at the most three, and each in turn, and one must interpret; but if there is no interpreter, he must keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God.

Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment. But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, the first one must keep silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted; and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets; for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

¹²² The term Paul employs in verse 23, *mainomai* (μᾰίνομαι), is a term used to describe the ecstatic state of various pagan oracles when they delivered their sayings, as well as the ecstatic state of worshippers of various pagan gods. That being true, Paul seems to be urging them to avoid behavior that was the same as worshippers of pagan gods. For comment on this term, see H. Preisker, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 1967)

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¹²³ The position of Paul in this passage definitely stands as a rebuke to some of the behaviour manifested in some contemporary "revivals." Clucking like chickens, writhing like snakes, growling like lions, etc., would impress unbelievers with the insanity of the actors, even more than uninterpreted tongues.

What is the outcome then, indicates that Paul is tying up all that has been said thus far. The emphasis of this paragraph are two:

- Everything should be done in a manner that edifies the church
- A God approved meeting will be one that reflects God's orderly character

There is the implication that some may come to the meeting with a song, a prophecy, etc., already received or prepared, planning to present it in the meeting.

Paul does not instruct them to speak in a tongue and then wait to see if someone can interpret (a common practice among Pentecostals and Charismatics today). His instruction is that if a known interpreter is not present in the meeting, then tongues speakers/prayers should remain silent.

Neither tongues nor prophecy should dominate the meeting. The usual understanding of Paul's guideline is that only two or three of each should be allowed to speak in a meeting, and they should speak only one at a time. However, some hold that Paul is saying that two or three should speak, then some discernment should be pronounced on what has been spoken thus far, then two or more can speak, etc.

Although Paul used the term, *prophets*, in the expression, *let the prophets speak* (verse 29), he probably wasn't referring to the Ephesian 4:11 category of prophet. He probably was referring to those members of the church through whom prophecy was manifested in a given meeting. This seems apparent from the fact that throughout this section he continually uses the term, *all*, referring to the entire church.

There should be a careful weighing of what has been said prophetically. Note that this is not required of interpreted tongues, because tongues are used for prayer and not prophetic messages. The verb used here is the same one used in 12:10, *distinguishing of spirits*. There are scant guidelines as to how this to be done. A view that has become quite popular is that prophets are to be the one's doing this discerning. If that is the case, then the term, *prophets* (verse 29), would refer to Ephesians 4:11 prophets, not to the general membership through whom prophecy was manifested in a given meeting. As stated above, such a conclusion is outside of the flow of Paul's earlier statements, which refer to the general congregation and the manifestation of gifts through the general membership.

The phrase, *for you can all prophesy one by one*, in the context of the rest of the chapter and the points made in Chapter 12, could not mean that all will or do prophesy. It refers to Paul's focus on the church as a whole, not just on a group of prophets, and that an orderly conduct of the meeting will allow members to move in the manifestation of the gift, in their proper turn. The sense is that all who have a prophetic word, if they conduct themselves in an orderly fashion, will have opportunity to deliver their word. There is no need for many to be speaking at once.

Three other points stand out in this paragraph:

- Those who receive a manifestation are not possessed by it and unable to restrain themselves, i.e., they are not in an ecstatic state, they have their wits about them.
- Just because a prophecy is received, doesn't mean that it has to be delivered.
- God is a God of order and a meeting of the Church should reflect that order. Corinthian disorder was an aberration, since order characterized the meetings of all other churches.

Verses 34-35

The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says. If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church.

Because of the controversy surrounding these verses, and because we have given them extensive treatment in an earlier conclave paper,¹²⁴ we will not comment on these verses here. To do so would draw us away from the focus of our present study. However, these verses cannot mean that women cannot prophesy. Otherwise, Paul's comments on female attire when prophesying would be meaningless (I Corinthians 11:5).

Verses 36-40

Was it from you that the word of God first went forth? Or has it come to you only? If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized. Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues. But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner.

Paul's long response to their letter concerning spiritual things now draws to a close. The basic issue was the view held by some Corinthians that to be *spiritual* was to speak in tongues. For this reason, they had great zeal for this gift. They insisted that it be practiced in the assembly. Paul informed them that he was a frequent tongues speaker, so he was not opposed to tongues because there were benefits attached to the exercise of this gift. He was opposed to prayer and praise in tongues in a congregational setting, unless accompanied by interpretation.

In Chapter 12 he had urged them to realize that being spiritual recognized a great variety of gifts and ministries in the church. In Chapter 14 he pointed out that the purpose of having church gatherings is for the edification of the congregation. Doing this is an expression of love.

In the verses before us (36-40), Paul used some very strong language. First, he hit them with a verbal put-down, a bit of sarcasm, *Was it from you that the word of God first went forth? Or has it come to you only?* In other words, "Who are you to tell the rest of us how it should be done? Is Corinth an exception to the rules that govern all of the other churches?"

Then, he declared that the instructions that he gave are not his, but that they are God's command, given through Paul. This is followed by a prophetic sentence of judgment, *But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized* (the thought is very close to his statement in 8:2-3). Paul is not going to try to convince them, or waste time arguing the point. He is going to ignore them. If they don't recognize his commandment as being from God, they will deal with God, not Paul.

The closing exhortation is to conduct an orderly service, and to not forbid spiritual manifestations. These two verses (39-40) hit both the groups that want no spiritual manifestations in their midst and those who want nothing but these manifestations without guidelines.

So, we return to our two unaddressed questions:

¹²⁴ James Garrett, *An Analysis of the Arguments for Female Leadership in the New Testament Church* available at doulospress.org

1. Is I Corinthians 14 a description of a normal church service in the First Century, or was this just a “Corinthian” service and not the norm for all First Century churches?

This question cannot be answered with any degree of certainty. The only scriptural description that we have of such a service is in the Corinthian letter, and the Corinthian Church certainly was not a model church.

A very telling item is the fact that the rather complete description of a church service given by Justin Martyr (c140 AD) makes no mention of such manifestations. For that matter, there is no mention of anything that could be understood as *charismata* until Irenaeus’ *Against Heresies*, composed in 185 AD (See Addenda B)

Yet, even though there is no biblical record of *charismata* in any other New Testament Church, or in the very earliest of the post-biblical writings (prior to 185 AD), this proves nothing. If the Corinthian Church had been handling things properly, we would not have Paul’s extensive discussion of the *charismata* in I Corinthians. Paul clearly stated that all of the other churches practiced order in their services. With the exception of Justin Martyr’s detailed description (which presents itself as a very detailed record of all that went on in a church meeting), it could be argued that the reason there is no mention of *charismata* in the earliest post-biblical writing is because there was no need to bring any correction in this area.

We are led to ask, “Why did the Holy Spirit and the early Church choose to preserve Paul’s comments on the *charismata*?” The most obvious answer is because the churches of that age needed and the Church in all ages will need these guidelines.

2. If the manifestations are for every age, should church leaders seek to do what they can to promote the type of meeting described in I Corinthians 14, or are Paul’s instructions more in the vein of, “if you do have these things, here is how to manage them in a God-honoring manner”?

Frequently, we hear leaders in Charismatic churches stating something to the effect that we need to, “stir up the gifts.” There is no exhortation anywhere in the New Testament to that effect. Timothy was urged to *kindle afresh* (KJV – *stir up*) the gift that was in him (II Timothy 1:6) and to *not neglect* the spiritual gift that was in him (I Timothy 4:14). However, the context of these exhortations makes it clear that Paul is referring to the gifts (and calling) that were given to Timothy for the special ministry to which he had been called, especially that of preaching and teaching. Paul’s exhortation to Timothy is closer to the functional gifts referred to in Romans 12, where Paul urges diligence in the fulfilling of these spiritual enablements. This is not the same thing as stirring up the *charismata* in a corporate gathering of the Church.

Two extremes are possible, neither of which fits Paul’s guidelines:

- a meeting that is so ordered and controlled that there is no opportunity for the *charismata* to function, should the Holy Spirit desire to manifest Himself. This certainly is far from the picture that Paul paints of a meeting in which the Holy Spirit is present and active.
 - a meeting in which there is little of substantive value, but a weekly parade of folks popping up and speaking whatever comes to their mind, and calling it prophecy, or “a word.” This cheapens the entire concept of prophecy, etc.
-

Ten conclusions drawn from these three chapters

Conclusion #1

The Holy Spirit will manifest Himself throughout the Church Age. He may manifest Himself in one way here, and in another manner there, but manifestations always will be present in the Church. When God rings down the curtain on the present age, these things no longer will be taking place, because the need for them will be gone.

Conclusion #2

Individual Christians on the one hand and the corporate meeting on the other, are unlike anything else in the world. The living presence of God dwells within. Prior to His departure, Jesus did not dictate a host of rules and religious ceremonies which His followers had to obey in their own strength and discipline. Instead, He promised an ongoing living relationship, to be experienced through the presence of the Holy Spirit within each believer and manifested through the *charismata* in the corporate meeting. A church meeting is not just a group of people with a common faith and purpose. It is a time in which believers encourage and edify one another, but it is even more than that. A church meeting is a time when Our Lord, through the Holy Spirit, ministers to His people.

Conclusion #3

The Holy Spirit imparts various abilities to various individuals, enabling them to be instruments of edification to the church. These abilities are freely given gifts, which the Holy Spirit dispenses according to reasons within himself. Not everyone will manifest every gift. Some may manifest more than one. We do not have in the Bible a single exhaustive list of the ways in which the Holy Spirit will manifest Himself.

Conclusion #4

It is appropriate for believers to have a passion for blessing the corporate gathering. One way that this is done is through prophecy. Therefore, if the motivation is to be a blessing to the body, a desire for the gift of prophecy is appropriate.

Conclusion #5

Church leaders should not control a service to the point that there is no liberty for the Holy Spirit to manifest Himself through various members of the congregation. A service constructed in a manner that forces everyone to be a spectator is not the New Testament model. This does not mean that the meeting cannot be planned or organized, but flexibility is important.

Elders should realize that they are responsible for overseeing the service, but that the service does not belong to them. It belongs to Our Lord. Statements such as, "Holy Spirit, we invite your presence here," and "Jesus we invite you to move among us," imply that the meeting is ours and we are inviting Him to attend. He clearly said that when we meet in His name, He will be in our midst (Matthew 18:20). A better perspective is that this is God's meeting, and we thank Him for allowing us to come into His presence.

Conclusion #6

Regardless of what the elements of a service might be, all things should be done in an orderly manner. God is a God of order; disorder neither represents Him nor glorifies Him. A meeting that is a disordered cacophony is exactly what Paul proscribes in I Corinthians 14.

Conclusion #7

Prayer in tongues is praying in a legitimate language, spoken somewhere on the globe, either in the past or in the present, or a language spoken by angels. Tongues truly are, "prayer language."

Conclusion #8

Tongues are given for the purpose of communicating with God. Tongues are not for communicating with the church. One should not pray out loud in tongues in the corporate gathering unless a known interpreter is present. Only one person at a time should pray in tongues and then be interpreted, so that the congregation can “amen” the prayer.

Conclusion #9

Praying *in the Spirit*, and *praying with the spirit* do not mean the same thing. Praying in the Spirit means praying at the impulse and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Praying with the spirit is praying in tongues. All prayer at all times is to be prayed *in* the Holy Spirit, whether it is with the human spirit (tongues) or with the human mind (known language).

Conclusion #10

Tongues, and perhaps all *charismata*, may function apart from the Holy Spirit. This is seen from the following:

- *Charismata* should be ministered in a manner that edifies the body, as an expression of love.
- Paul’s corrective statements make it obvious that some of the Corinthians were seeking to elevate themselves through the public display of tongues, which was neither edifying to the body, nor an expression of love
- The Holy Spirit would not motivate anyone to exercise a *charisma* in order to build someone’s fleshly pride or to display an attitude of competition.
- If the Holy Spirit did motivate a plethora of tongues speakers to display uninterpreted tongues in the corporate meeting, this would be a sign of judgment on the church.
- Since God was not pronouncing judgment on the Corinthian Church, and the Holy Spirit was not motivating those who were displaying the gift of tongues in a divisive manner, then those who were speaking/praying in uninterpreted tongues were functioning apart from the Holy Spirit.

II Corinthians

Some of the leaders in the Corinthian Church began to declare themselves, apostles.¹²⁵ These probably were itinerant teachers who settled in Corinth and took advantage of the need for leadership. They declared that Paul was not a genuine apostle and that they were superior to him. Many of Paul's statements in this epistle are aimed at establishing his apostleship, as well as his right to have a say in the management of the church because he had been its founder.

II Corinthians 1:21-22

Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.

The initial phrase is aimed at those who deny that Paul was an apostle. The second phrase, asserting the guarantee of heaven to those who possess the Holy Spirit was considered in comments on Romans 8:9 (see page 90ff)

II Corinthians 3:1-3

Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some, letters of commendation to you or from you? You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men; being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

In asserting his apostolic credentials, Paul declared that he did not need a letter of recommendation from anyone. The fact that the Corinthian Church existed plus the fact that the church consisted of former sinners who now lived holy lives, provided sufficient credentials for Paul's apostolic ministry. The statements in these three verses reflect the truths that we noted in Chapters One, Two, and Three.

II Corinthians 3:5-6

Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Paul again asserts that God, through the Holy Spirit, is the one who worked through him. He did not achieve goals through his own personal talents and gifts. This truth Paul repeats over and over again in his writings. Covenants of law rely on an individual's ability to keep laws, which end up making apparent one's inability to keep the Law. The New Covenant is not based on one's ability to keep law, but on the indwelling life of the Holy Spirit. It is this covenant that Paul ministered.

II Corinthians 3:7-11

But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was, how will the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory? For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory. For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory because of the glory that surpasses it. For if that which fades away was with glory, much more that which remains is in glory.

¹²⁵ II Corinthians 11:5-13

Paul compares the glory of the Old Covenant with the glory of the New Covenant. He references the episode recorded in Exodus 34:29ff, in which Moses returned from the mount with the tablets of stone. The skin of Moses' face shone with the glory of God. The Israelites were afraid of Moses because of his shining face. So, he put a veil over his face, and removed the veil when he went before Jehovah. Paul implies that the light emanating from Moses' face faded after a time.

Paul asserts that the glory of the New Covenant is greater than the glory of the old, because

- the Old Covenant resulted in condemnation, whereas the new results in righteousness;
- the Old Covenant has faded away, whereas the New Covenant remains.

II Corinthians 3:14-18

But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart; but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

In comparing adherents to the Old Covenant with adherents to the New Covenant, Paul uses the analogy of the veil. Those who live under the Old Covenant keep a veil on their faces and thus cannot behold the glory of God. Those under the Old Covenant, out of fear, hide from the glory. Those living in the liberty of the Covenant of the Spirit seek to behold that glory. Those who live in the Spirit can only see the glory of God as if looking at that glory in a mirror (the same figure that Paul uses in I Corinthians 13:12), but by beholding that glory, they are transformed more and more into the spiritual image of God – all of this by the Holy Spirit.

The most important truth that stands out in these verses is that the Holy Spirit is the source of all that transpires in our relationship with God. Participants in the New Covenant are drawn by the Holy Spirit to behold the glory of God.

II Corinthians 5:5

Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge. This is the same truth that we have seen earlier. For comment see Romans 8:9 (page 90ff).

II Corinthians 6:4-10

but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger, in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love, in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left, by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; regarded as deceivers and yet true; as unknown yet well-known, as dying yet behold, we live; as punished yet not put to death, as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things.

This section is a part of Paul's defense of his apostleship. At the very heart of his presentation is the declaration that in everything he was *in the Holy Spirit*. Once again, Paul not only states that the Holy Spirit is responsible for all that he achieved, he also states that in every circumstance he was in submission to the Spirit.

II Corinthians 13:14

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

In this lovely benediction, Paul prays that the Corinthians might continue to experience the *fellowship of the Holy Spirit*. All who possess the Spirit share the same Spirit (this is much the same truth that Paul wrote about in I Corinthians 12:12-13)

Galatians

Paul first mentions the Holy Spirit in his Galatian Epistle as a part of his argument that faith, not law, is the basis of our salvation. We touched upon this section (Galatians 3:1-5) in conjunction with the discussion of Romans 8:9 (page 90-91). Therefore, we will pass over that portion of the epistle.

Galatians 3:13-14

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us-- for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"--in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

This is an outcropping of the earlier argument, that salvation is by faith and not works. Paul continues to declare that the reception of the Holy Spirit is by faith, and not works.

Galatians 4:6

Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

Extensive discussion of this verse is included in the section on Romans 8:14-18 (see page 94).

Galatians 4:29

But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also.

Paul refers to the conflict between Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael was born naturally. Isaac's birth was miraculous – the Holy Spirit enlivened the womb of the aged Sarah. Ishmael begrudged Isaac his privileges and priorities. Paul states that the Judaizing teachers are doing the same thing to believers who are born of the Spirit and live by the Spirit.

Galatians 5:5

For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness.

Once again, the truth elucidated in Romans 8:9 (page 90ff).

Galatians 5:16-18, 22-25

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh;

for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law....

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

Paul addresses the character of life that is displayed by one who is led by the Spirit. One who is led by the Spirit does not think in terms of obeying law, nor seeking righteousness through law, but the decisions of life and the attitudes displayed in life display the character of the Spirit that leads. One who lives by the Spirit, in fellowship with the Spirit, indwelt by the Spirit, will see the *fruit of the Spirit* increasingly evident in his life. Note that the term, *fruit*, is singular. There are not fruits, but fruit. As the fruit of the Red Delicious Apple Tree is red skinned, white beneath the skin, has seeds, and a stem – all characteristics of that fruit – so the fruit of the Holy Spirit has nine characteristics, as listed in these verses.

Galatians 6:7-10

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.

For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.

So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

The lesson here is obvious. If one lives a self-centered, hedonistic life, concerned only with fleshly pleasure, all of those pursuits will end at death, and the flesh that he sought to gratify will decay in the grave. On the other hand, if one devotes himself to doing good to all people, demonstrating the fruit described in 5:22-23, which is the result of his fellowship with the Spirit, heavenly reward awaits him. This is reminiscent of Jesus' statement,

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; (Matthew 6:19-20)

Ephesians

Most statements made in Ephesians relating to the Holy Spirit have been considered earlier in conjunction with other passages.

Ephesians 1:13

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,

This verse was considered in conjunction with Romans 8:9 (page 90ff)

Ephesians 2:18

for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.

This verse is a part of the section that was reviewed in the discussion of the Temples of the Holy Spirit (page 107). The point being made is that both Jew and Gentile have access to the Father through the same Holy Spirit (Romans 8) and that Jesus is the one who poured out the Holy Spirit upon both Jew and Gentile (Acts 2 and Acts 10).

Ephesians 2:22

in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

This verse was discussed in the section on the World Wide Temple of the Holy Spirit (page 107)

Ephesians 3:4

By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit;

As noted earlier, Paul declared that the *μυστήριον* the *mystery*, was his source of knowledge – that which could only be known by revelation and was known because God had revealed it (see page 103)

Ephesians 3:16-19

that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

Paul again acknowledges that Christian growth occurs from within. The indwelling Holy Spirit is the source of growth, strength, and increased understanding of spiritual truth.

Ephesians 4:3

being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling...;

Once again, Paul focuses on the single source of spiritual life, which is accessed by all who share in the New Covenant. Unity is assumed, but it can be shattered. Paul's exhortation is not, "be united," but "don't destroy the existing unity."

Ephesians 4:30

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

This is another passage considered in conjunction with Romans 8:9 (page 90ff), but there is an element that we need to consider here. This is in the middle of a paragraph in which Paul is urging Christians to behave in a Christ-like manner and not destroy the unity of which he wrote in 4:3. The Holy Spirit is grieved when believers do not treat one another with Christian love.

Ephesians 5:18-19

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;

This verse received extensive comment on pages 50-51.

Ephesians 6:17-18

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,

This is the conclusion of Paul's exhortation to take up the armor of God in order to be able to stand, then, through prayer to go on the attack. The sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, was Jesus' weapon against Satan in His wilderness temptation (Matthew 4; Mark 1; Luke 4). Our Lord modeled how to parry Satan's thrusts with skillful use of the Word. The matter of prayer *in the Spirit* is discussed on Page 127.

Philippians

Philippians is Paul's tenderest letter. The relationship that he had with this church was very special. Although the Holy Spirit is mentioned only three times in the epistle, the atmosphere of the Holy Spirit permeates the document.

Philippians 1:19

for I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

Writing from prison, Paul combined hope with reality. He stated that whether he lived or died is not important, as long as Christ was exalted in his body. Deliverance for him either would be release from prison and further ministry among the Philippians, or the deliverance of death whereby he would enter into the very presence of Christ. Their prayers and the Holy Spirit would sustain him while he is waiting for the path to go one way or the other. Paul's fellowship with the Holy Spirit was real and it was deep.

Philippians 2:1

Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.

Paul appeals to their mutual relationship in the Holy Spirit as one of the reasons that they should make his joy complete, by maintaining their unity.

Philippians 3:3

for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh,

Again the fellowship in the Holy Spirit is recognized as an element in worship. Christians do not have to worship in a consecrated building nor is their acceptability to God conditioned by such things as circumcision. Christians enter into true worship of God by the fact that they possess the Holy Spirit and worship at the motivation of and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Colossians

There is only one reference to the Holy Spirit in Paul's Epistle to the Colossians.

Colossians 1:7-8

just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf, and he also informed us of your love in the Spirit.

Paul had not been to Colossae. Epaphras, who visited Paul in Prison, told him about the Colossian Church and its excellent qualities. Paul acknowledged that the Holy Spirit was the source of the great love that existed among the brethren in the Colossian Church.

I Thessalonians

Paul began the First Thessalonian Epistle by emphasizing the theme that he presented in the first three chapters of I Corinthians.

1 Thessalonians 1:5

for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit,

Paul reminded them of the Holy Spirit's role in bringing them to Christ and the Holy Spirit's role in sustaining them in the midst of persecution.

1 Thessalonians 4:8

So, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.

This reference to the Holy Spirit is a part of Paul's exhortation to sexual purity. He states that anyone who rejects the injunction to avoid sexual immorality has rejected God, because God is the one who set that standard. Once again, Paul assumes that all of them have the assurance of salvation through the Holy Spirit, given to them by the God who set the moral standard.

1 Thessalonians 5:19-20

Do not quench the Spirit; do not despise prophetic utterances. But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good;

The term translated, *quench*, is σβέννυμι (*sbennumi*) which in its literal use refers to putting out a fire. Although this single verse (19) often is considered in isolation, the chain of injunctions of which it is a part, implies ways in which the fire of the Spirit might be quenched:

- Not praying without ceasing
- Not giving thanks in everything
- Despising prophetic utterances
- Not abstaining from the smallest manifestation of evil

II Thessalonians

There is only one mention of the Holy Spirit in II Thessalonians, and this is an acknowledgement that the Holy Spirit is the one who sanctifies.

2 Thessalonians 2:13

But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth

I Timothy

The first occurrence of the Spirit in I Timothy is an uncertain one.

1 Timothy 3:16

By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.

The phrase, *vindicated in the Spirit*, is open to question. Does the phrase refer to the Holy Spirit's vindication of Christ, or does the phrase refer to the spirit of Christ that was vindicated? The Greek text does not contain the definite article before *Spirit* (*Spirit*, rather than *the Spirit*). This construction argues against the idea that the reference is to the Holy Spirit. Normally, when Scripture refers to the Holy Spirit, the definite article precedes *Spirit*. Thus it would be clearer to render this verse, *He who was revealed in flesh, Was vindicated in Spirit, Seen by angels, ...*

I Timothy 4:1

But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,

The Holy Spirit revealed to Paul that toward the end of the age, many would fall away from their faith in Christ. These apostates would become enamored with *deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons*. This is an accurate description of the present era. To be "spiritual" no longer means devoted to the historical Christ. Many churches have introduced New Age concepts into their teaching and practices. Some devotees of the "Christian Feminist" movement have turned to worship of Ghia, the Mother Earth Goddess, in their liturgy. On and on the list could go, but the Holy Spirit's predictive prophecy is an accurate description of the present century.¹²⁶

This warning is reflected in Paul's Second Letter to Timothy,

But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come.² For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy,³ unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good,⁴ treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,⁵ holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.¹²⁷

II Timothy

2 Timothy 1:14

Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.

The first issue to be addressed in this verse is the identity of the treasure which had been entrusted to Timothy. The context indicates that the treasure was the Gospel. This is seen from the flow of thought that precedes this verse.

For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline. Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, ...

¹²⁶ For an interesting list of articles related to this subject, see *kairosjournal.org*, and search, *paganism*.

¹²⁷ II Timothy 3:1-5

for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher....

Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.¹²⁸

The terms rendered, *standard of sound words*, are quite instructive.

- The term rendered, *standard*, is ὑποτύπωσις (*upotuposis*), which conveys the idea of a model or a prototype.
- The term rendered *sound* is ὑγιαίνω (*hugiaino*), which means “to be in good health.”

Paul exhorted Timothy to follow Paul’s model of using healthy words in presenting the Gospel. In other words, not only was the doctrine to be correct, but even the manner of presenting the Gospel should follow Paul’s model.

Through the laying on of Paul’s hands, and the hands of the elders of Timothy’s home church of Lystra,¹²⁹ the endowments had been bestowed on Timothy that enabled him to be a minister of the Gospel. The treasure of the Gospel had been entrusted to Timothy. Thus, two responsibilities were his:

- He was not to tolerate even slightest deviation of Gospel truth, even though it might mean imprisonment and suffering;
- He was to present the Good News in a worthy manner.

Timothy had a responsibility for guarding this treasure, but he was not to do so in his own strength. Reliance on the Holy Spirit in defending and proclaiming the Gospel always was and is the *modus operandi* of true ministers of the Gospel.

Titus

The Holy Spirit is mentioned only one time in Titus.

Titus 3:4-7

But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

This beautiful passage emphasizes that our hope of eternal life is possible because God, in his love and grace, has regenerated and renewed us. This regenerating and renewing is the work of the Holy Spirit, who has been poured out upon us, richly.

Lengthy polemical articles have been written debating the significance of the term, *washing of regeneration*. The debate is over the role of immersion in salvation. The term here is not *immerse* (βάπτισμα [*baptisma*]), but *wash* (λουτρόν [*loutron*]), yet historically this has been considered to refer to immersion and the encountering of the Holy Spirit in that event.

For our purposes, we will avoid that debate and note that, as has already been seen in so many Scriptures, the Holy Spirit is the one who renews and sanctifies the believer.

¹²⁸ II Timothy 1:6-8, 11, 13-14

¹²⁹ Acts 16:1-4; I Timothy 4:14

Hebrews

The Epistle to the Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians who had been converted many years before. Many were falling away from the faith. Several things contributed to this. One was the fact that as believers in Christ they were barred from participation in various Jewish religious events. Also, it was difficult for them to turn away, completely, from the sacrifices and rituals that had given them security under the Old Covenant. Some had been persecuted. The epistle was written counteract all of these things. The main theme that runs through the epistle is the superiority of the New Covenant to the Old. The contrast between the two demonstrates the superiority of the Covenant of Grace.

Hebrews 2:2-4; 6:4-8; 10:26-29

Each of these three passages are at the heart of the message of Hebrews – the danger of falling away.

2:2-4 *For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.*

All Jews were aware of the consequences of disobedience to the strict commands of the Levitical law and messages delivered by angels.¹³⁰ If the consequences were severe for disobeying words spoken by angels were severe, how much more severe would be the consequences of disobeying the words of the Messiah, words that not only were communicated by the apostles but confirmed through miraculous activity of the Holy Spirit.

The language concerning the *gifts of the Holy Spirit* is instructive. As noted in the section *The Gift of the Spirit* (pages 8-9), the term for *gifts* in this passage is μερισμός (*merismos*), meaning, *distributions*. Thus, literally the phrase reads, *distributions of the Holy Spirit according to His will*. This is in keeping with statements that Paul made in I Corinthians 12:11. The sovereignty of God prevails in these matters.

6:4-8 *For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame. For ground that drinks the rain which often falls on it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God; but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.*

Some who argue, “once saved, always saved,” deny that this passage declares that it is possible for a saved individual ever to be lost. All sorts of mental gyrations are spun in an effort to explain away the fact that this passage clearly describes a person who is saved, then falls away. The strongest argument for the saved condition of those described here is *partakers of the Holy Spirit*. As we have seen in passage after passage, those who have the Holy Spirit are saved – heaven is their possession. If one wants to quibble over *partaker* rather than *possessor*, then let him explain how *partaker* does not fit the description of a saved person in I Corinthians 12:13, one who *drinks of one spirit*. Drinking is partaking.

¹³⁰ Examples: Exodus 4:24-26; Leviticus 9-10; Numbers 20:6-12; II Samuel 6:6-7; I Kings 13:7ff

10:26-29 *For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?*

This trilogy of passages serves as a dire warning to those who would be cavalier about insulting the Spirit of grace.

Hebrews 3:7; 10:15

3:7 *Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, ...*

This phrase is followed by a quote from Psalm 95:7-11. The writer of Hebrews considered the Holy Spirit to be the author of the Psalm, even though it had been penned by a worshipper.

10:15 *And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying...,*

This phrase is followed by a quote from Jeremiah 31:34. Again, the writer of Hebrews considered the Holy Spirit to be the author of Jeremiah's writing, even Jeremiah is the one who held the pen.

These two statements from Hebrews are in keeping with Paul's statement to Timothy, *All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;*¹³¹

Hebrews 9:8, 14

The Holy Spirit is twice referenced in this passage that compares the ceremonies involved with the tabernacle of the Old Covenant with the superiority of the elements of the New Covenant.

9:8 *The Holy Spirit is signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed while the outer tabernacle is still standing,*

Although the author does not use the term, this is a *mysterion* – something known by revelation. In the previous verses he has described the tabernacle and its various rooms. The Holy Spirit revealed to the writer of Hebrews that the fact that the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies only once a year, signified that the Old Covenant was passing. He concludes,

*But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation;*¹³²

The Holy Spirit has led the writer of Hebrews to see symbolism in the tabernacle that enables him to present one more element that demonstrates that the New Covenant is superior to the Old.

9:14 *how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

The comparison is made between the blood of bulls and goats, which were the sacrifices of the Old Covenant, with the blood of Christ, offered for our sins. Our interest in this verse is in the phrase, *who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God.*

Here we face the incomprehensible subject of the Divinity and humanity of Jesus. His own Spirit was/is eternal. However, He was subject to the Holy Spirit while upon the earth. Thus, we

¹³¹ II Timothy 3:16

¹³² Hebrews 9:11

must conclude that Jesus' own Spirit, and the Holy Spirit were joined in the act of redemption on Calvary.

James

There is only one verse in James that refers to the Spirit.

James 4:4-5

You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"?

Understanding this verse is very difficult. All sorts of interpretations have been proposed. One challenge is impossibility of identifying the Scripture that James quotes. No passage fits this quote. Even so, it seems to me that the key to understanding this verse is found in I Corinthians 6:18-20,

Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

God has caused the Holy Spirit to dwell in us. Our bodies are Temples of the Holy Spirit. Because God the Father is jealous when it comes to the Holy Spirit, He passionately objects to the believer's frolicking with harlotry. Whether or not the details of the verse fit the details of this explanation, the explanation does express the point being made by the passage.

I Peter

1 Peter 1:1-2

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.

Peter reiterates what has been expressed often in passages already considered. The Holy Spirit is the one who sanctifies those who have come to Christ by faith.

1 Peter 1:11-12

seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven-- things into which angels long to look.

Two important statements are made about the role of the Holy Spirit:

- The Holy Spirit within the Old Testament prophets caused them to predict the Messiah, his atoning work, and the following glory.
- The same Holy Spirit was/is the source of the Gospel message.

Consistent with the account in Acts 2, the Holy Spirit is described as being sent from heaven.

1 Peter 4:14

If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

The Holy Spirit, here called the *Spirit of glory and of God*, rests upon believers when they are reviled for the name of Christ. This is another way of referring to the *fellowship in the Holy Spirit*. Such a blessing may be the cause of persecution, but it also is a positive blessing that exceeds the negative aspects of persecution.

II Peter

The single reference to the Holy Spirit in II Peter repeats what earlier references have stated, i.e., that the Holy Spirit is the source of prophecy and Scripture.

2 Peter 1:21 *for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*

I John

1 John 3:24; 4:13

3:24 *The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.*

4:13 *By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.*

Both of these verses are another affirmation of Romans 8:9

1 John 4:1

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.

John here addresses the Gnostic heresy. One form that heresy declared that Jesus was an illusion – that He had not come in the flesh because He was holy and all flesh is evil. The writings of John, for the most part, were penned as a refutation of various forms of Gnosticism. Any message, prophecy, or teaching that has its origin in the Holy Spirit will affirm the incarnation.

1 John 5:6-8

This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.

In these verses, John addresses the Cerinthian form of Gnosticism. Cerinthus distinguished between the man, Jesus, and the Christ. According to Cerinthus, the Christ came upon Jesus at His immersion, and departed from Jesus at the crucifixion. Thus, according to this doctrine, the Christ did not go through the blood – the crucifixion. John argues that Jesus Christ was/is an integrated being who went through the water (immersion) and the blood (the cross) and that is

testimony as to his identity. However, there is a third testimony, and that is the Holy Spirit. The indwelling Holy Spirit makes the understanding of the water and the blood real to those whom God has chosen.

Jude

Jude 19

These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit.

In preceding verses, Jude described those who were disrupting the church as grumblers, those who find fault, those who follow after their own lusts, those who speak arrogantly, those who flatter people for the sake of gain, and those who turn liberty into license. These people are devoid of the Holy Spirit, otherwise they would not think and behave in this manner. Evidence of the Holy Spirit is the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

Jude 20-21

But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.

Comment on these verses was made earlier, see page 127

COALESCENT SUMMARY

Having examined the biblical references to the Holy Spirit, we now attempt to coalesce the material and present conclusions. However, before distilling this material, we must pay heed to an important caveat: The Holy Spirit defies formulatization. Jesus' statement to Nicodemus always should be kept in mind when one is discussing the Holy Spirit,

The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit. (John 3:8).

By using this figure, Our Lord made the point that the reality of the new birth could not be denied, but how the Spirit accomplished the birth was beyond human explanation. Like the blowing wind, we experience it, but that is all that can be said – we neither try to explain its origin nor its destination. Such is the nature of every question concerning the Holy Spirit. Our human minds cannot be wrapped around the work of the Spirit. Many are prone to look for a pattern in Scripture and declare that the Holy Spirit cannot operate outside of the template that they have created. Only when propositional statements are made, or the incidents so numerous and consistent is this a valid exercise.

However, there is an opposite error. There are scriptural principles that do help us to discern whether or not what we are experiencing is the Holy Spirit. It is a mistake to deny or overlook these. In the 1970's when the wave of Holy Spirit activity was gaining momentum, the new breed of Charismatics frequently answered the gainsayers with the declaration, "A man with an experience is never at the mercy of a man with an argument." That statement is only half-true. Many had "spiritual" experiences that did not originate in the Holy Spirit. When those who knew the Scriptures and had discernment tried to address aberrations, they usually were rebuked. Our Lord predicted such deception and His prediction has come to pass.

In the following summary, there are some things that are solid facts, things that are beyond debate. These are rigid and abide throughout the church age, some even for eternity. Others involve narrative events which may or may not represent abiding patterns. May Our Lord enable us to recognize the difference.

1. The Holy Spirit is a Divine Being, a member of the Godhead – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is an "He," not an "it."
2. The Holy Spirit is not like a "ghost," who is confined to a single location at any given time. He always is present everywhere – He is omnipresent.
3. The Holy Spirit is the implementing member of the Godhead. It is He who actively implements the Will of God in creation.
4. Prior to Pentecost, the Holy Spirit rested upon certain individuals, empowering them to fulfill roles for which they had been chosen.
5. During His earthly sojourn, Jesus the Messiah subjected Himself to human existence. In that state, he was led about by and empowered by the Holy Spirit.
6. Both John the Immerser and Jesus declared that Jesus would immerse His followers in the Holy Spirit. On the Day of Pentecost, ten days after his Ascension, Jesus received from the Father the authority to "pour out" the Holy Spirit upon His disciples – all of whom were Jews. This was the fulfillment of those promises.

7. About seven years after the immersion in the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, a group of Gentiles gathered in the home of Cornelius, in Caesarea, received the immersion in the Holy Spirit. Only these two events, Pentecost (for Jews) and Caesarea (for Gentiles), are labeled, *immersion in the Holy Spirit*.
8. On Pentecost, Peter promised that everyone who believed/repented and was immersed in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. He declared that this promise was for everyone, of every geographical area, throughout all of the coming generations.
9. Those who receive the Holy Spirit in this manner, from that moment onward live in union with the Holy Spirit. Contemporary Christians have labeled this, “the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.”
10. Anyone who exists in this indwelling union is a citizen of the Kingdom of God and guaranteed a place in heaven. If a disciple is asked, “How do you know that you are saved,” his answer should be, “I have the Holy Spirit.”
11. Anyone who does not have an indwelling union with the Holy Spirit is not a citizen of the Kingdom of God and has no hope of heaven.
12. Those who have an indwelling union with the Holy Spirit will be transformed from within. The Holy Spirit will produce “fruit of the Spirit,” character and personality traits that mirror the character and personality of God.
13. The Holy Spirit intercedes for those with whom He has an indwelling union. This intercession is with groanings that cannot be uttered. The believer may or may not be aware that this intercession is occurring.
14. Scripture records two events in which foundational apostles laid hands on converts and the Holy Spirit moved upon them in such a way that outward manifestations occurred. In both of these instances, the outward manifestations were evidence that was needed in those situations. There is no other scriptural record of the laying on of hands, followed by the Holy Spirit’s producing outward manifestations (as noted earlier, the record is sparse and there may have been unreported incidents). Neither of these two episodes are labeled, *immersion in the Holy Spirit*.
15. Every citizen of God’s Kingdom is fashioned by God for particular functions in that Kingdom. It would seem that this happens at conversion, when the new convert receives the Holy Spirit, but Scripture is silent on this detail. If a disciple does not function in the role for which God fashioned him, the Church is deprived of that which God has provided, and the nonfunctioning disciple is missing his purpose in life.
16. The Holy Spirit calls certain disciples of Jesus Christ to specified leadership, trans-local, or evangelistic ministries. Usually, such a call is executed by the Spirit’s speaking to those who are in authority in the local church and declared by them (apostles, elders, etc.).
17. When the Holy Spirit calls someone to a specified ministry role, it is appropriate for these ministers to be ordained. This is done by the laying on of hands of spiritual authorities. It is expected that the Holy Spirit will endow the one ordained with the spiritual gifts needed to fulfill that calling.

18. When disciples are gathered for worship, the Holy Spirit may choose to give to a member of the congregation a prophecy, an exhortation, or some other message for the gathered church. Church leaders should allow those receiving such things from the Spirit to communicate them to the assembly. However, order must prevail and appropriate guidelines be followed. When such proclamations do take place, they should be evaluated to make certain that falsehood is not put upon the church.
19. Some citizens of the Kingdom will be enabled to pray in tongues. Some will not. Praying in tongues is not superior to praying in a language understood by the disciple.
20. No melee of tongues speaking should take place in the local assembly. No “tongue” should be allowed unless one with the gift of interpretation is present. The biblical picture of tongues in a church service is someone’s praying in tongues while the congregation listens, then someone interprets, and the entire church says, “amen.”
21. The *charismatic* gifts of the Holy Spirit will be present in every age of the Church. They did not end with the death of the apostles and those on whom they laid hands.
22. In addition to these incidental manifestations of the Holy Spirit, Our Lord gives to the Church apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor/teachers, who are to lead the local church in developing the saints so that they can effectively do the work of the ministry.

ADDENDA A

Where was the “house”?

Various possibilities have been suggested as the location of this event. Four of the most frequently suggested are:

1. A meeting room in the Temple- opening onto the outer court
2. The home of Mary, the mother of John Mark (which later became a meeting place for church gatherings – Acts 12:12)
3. The upper room, where the Last Supper had taken place
4. The upper room where the Twelve had been staying along with Jesus’ biological family and the women who had been a part of the resurrection day experience (Acts 1:13-14)

Honest exegetes must admit that no definite decision can be made on this issue. However, clearly the two major choices are between a meeting room in the Temple, or a house near the Temple. Subsequent events require that the location either be in the Temple or nearby.

If the location were in a meeting room in the Temple, the subsequent scenario is much easier to reconstruct. McGarvey effectively argues for this location.

“The house in which the apostles were sitting when the Spirit came upon them was not the upper chamber in which they were abiding, but some apartment [i.e. meeting room] of the temple; for, as we learn from Luke’s former treatise, the apostles during these days of waiting were ‘continually in the temple praising God;’¹³³ that is, continually there through the hours in which the temple was open. The upper chamber was their place of lodging. ...In opposition to this conclusion, Alford says: ‘Certainly Luke would not have used this word (*all the house*) of a chamber in the temple, or of the temple itself, without further explanation.’ But explanation sufficient had already been given by the statement that the apostles were ‘continually in the temple;’ and, although Alford says that this statement can not apply here, he gives no good reason for the assertion, and we insist that it can and does. An upper room in a private house could not possibly have afforded space for the assembly which witnessed the phenomena; while one of the many apartments in the temple court, with one side open to the whole area of the court, would have been perfectly suited to the occasion.”¹³⁴

The only sensible objection to McGarvey’s argument is Luke’s use of the term οἶκος (*oikos* – “house”). Luke wrote that they were sitting in a *house*. Because of this, R. J. Knowling curtly dismisses the idea that a Temple meeting room was the site by declaring, “If the Temple were meant, as Holtzmann and Zockler think, it would have been specified, 3:2, 11; 5:21”¹³⁵

Williams, although not taking as definite a stand on the issue as does McGarvey, presents a favorable argument for a Temple setting.

“We are not told where the disciples were meeting. The number of people involved, especially if they now exceeded a hundred and twenty, makes it less likely that they met in a private house than in some open or public place, though does not exclude the

¹³³ Luke 24:53

¹³⁴ McGarvey, pages 21-22 and FN page 22

¹³⁵ R.J. Knowling, *The Expositors Greek New Testament*, Volume II, *Apostles*, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans Publishing Co.) 1976, page 72

possibility...On the other hand, the fact that the crowd was quickly aware of what was happening (cf. v. 6) may suggest that they were somewhere where they could be seen, such as the outer court of the temple... The use of the word ‘house’ in verse 2 does not rule this out (cf LXX Isa. 6:1,4; Luke 2:49), though we might have expected the temple to have been named if it indeed were their place of meeting.”¹³⁶

Williams’ citation of the Septuagint’s rendering (the Greek version of the Old Testament) of Isaiah 61:1, 4, is significant. In both of these verses, the Greek Old Testament, uses the word, οἶκος (*oikos* - house) to render the Hebrew הֵיכָל (hekal- palace or temple), rather than the Greek term, ἱερόν (*hieron* - temple). The same language is used twice in Isaiah 56:7, i.e., *My house of prayer* (quoted by Jesus when He cleansed the Temple (Matthew 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46).

Another interesting factor is the lack of a simple Greek word for *room*, in Biblical Greek. Words specifying a particular room or area do present themselves (Upper room- ἀνάγαιον; upper story- ὑπερῶον; a hall- ἐξέδρα) as well as the general term, a dwelling place- μονή, but there is no word in Biblical Greek that could have stated simply that they were in a “room in the Temple.” The best that could have been done was to state that the sound filled the “place (τόπος) in the Temple where they were sitting.” Otherwise, Luke would have found it necessary to signify a particular room (upper room, room on the upper floor, a hall, etc.). This is not conclusive of anything, but it does factor into the decision that Luke made in describing the Pentecostal event.

In the light of the above discussion, and being aware of the events that followed, it seems to me that the most probable location for the Pentecostal event was a meeting room in the Temple, as described by McGarvey.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ D.J. Williams, pages 39-40

¹³⁷ McGarvey was one of the foremost authorities on the geography and architecture of the Holy Land. His, *Lands of the Bible*, was the authoritative textbook in many seminaries and colleges a generation ago. Therefore, his knowledge of the temple, including rooms which he describes, means that his position is not based upon fantasy.

ADDENDA B

The Cessationist argument from Church History

Cessationists argue that the absence of the mention of the *charismata* in all of the immediate post-biblical literature is evidence that such phenomena ceased after the apostolic era. In many ways, the argument from Church History is the Cessationist's strongest argument. Mention of the *charismata*, as well as the miraculous, is very scanty in the earliest records of the Second Century Church. The fact that Clement, Polycarp, Ignatius of Antioch, Barnabas, Hermas, the writers to Diognetus, and the Didache, make no mention of the phenomena, is considerable evidence in favor of the Cessationist view. The strongest evidence for the Cessationist argument is the writing of Justin Martyr (c.140 AD). Justin penned a detailed description of a Second Century Church service and he made no mention of *charismata* in the meeting.

Several responses can be made to the Cessationist argument. First is the evidence of the longer ending of Mark 16 (verse 9 and following). If this ending were written by Mark as a part of his Gospel, then clearly the early believers did experience the phenomena described. However, convincing evidence indicates that these verses were not in the original autograph; they were added a century later. Obviously those who added them considered tongues and other manifestations to be a part of the missionary activity of the Church. Irenaeus alludes to these verses in *Adversus Haeresus*, Book 3, Chapter 10, section 6, which was penned around 185 AD.

Although there is no reference to *charismata* in the earliest post-biblical writings, beginning in the latter quarter of the Second Century, there is documentary evidence for the existence of functioning *charismata*.

Irenaeus is the earliest writer that mentions *charismata* as a normal part of the life of the Church. In Book 2, of *Adversus Haeresus*. Irenaeus contrasted the magicians that were rampant in his day, with those who by the power of God performed true miracles.

“...For they can neither confer sight on the blind, nor hearing on the deaf, nor chase away all sorts of demons — [none, indeed,] except those that are sent into others by themselves, if they can even do so much as this. Nor can they cure the weak, or the lame, or the paralytic, or those who are distressed in any other part of the body, as has often been done in regard to bodily infirmity. Nor can they furnish effective remedies for those external accidents which may occur. And so far are they from being able to raise the dead, as the Lord raised them, and the apostles did by means of prayer, and as has been frequently done in the brotherhood on account of some necessity — the entire Church in that particular locality entreating [the boon] with much fasting and prayer, the spirit of the dead man has returned, and he has been bestowed in answer to the prayers of the saints...and inasmuch as those who are cured very frequently [i.e. cured by the miraculous ministry of the Church] do not possess the things which they require, they receive them from us.”¹³⁸

“...Wherefore, also, those who are in truth His disciples, receiving grace from Him, do in His name perform [miracles], so as to promote the welfare of other men, according to the gift which each one has received from Him. For some do certainly and truly drive

¹³⁸ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book 2, Chapter 31, excerpts from sections 2 & 3 (*The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Volume 1, The Master Christian Library, Albany, OR, AGES Software, 1997)

out devils, so that those who have thus been cleansed from evil spirits frequently both believe [in Christ], and join themselves to the Church. Others have foreknowledge of things to come: they see visions, and utter prophetic expressions. Others still, heal the sick by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole. Yea, moreover, as I have said, the dead even have been raised up, and remained among us for many years. And what shall I more say? It is not possible to name the number of the gifts which the Church, [scattered] throughout the whole world, has received from God, in the name of Jesus Christ... directing her prayers to the Lord, who made all things, in a pure, sincere, and straightforward spirit, and calling upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, she has been accustomed to work miracles for the advantage of mankind...the name of our Lord Jesus Christ even now confers benefits [upon men], and cures thoroughly and effectively all who anywhere believe on Him.”¹³⁹

As can be seen in the above quote, without any ambiguity, Irenaeus stated that in 185 AD, miraculous activity continued to the degree that the Church *has been accustomed to work miracles for the advantage of mankind*. In addition to raising the dead and casting out demons, *gifts of miracles, gifts of healings, and prophecy* are mentioned. The term, *accustomed*, gets our attention, implying that this was a longstanding practice. Noticeably absent from this record is any mention of *tongues*.

In Book 5, Chapter 6, section 1, of *Adversus Haereses*, Irenaeus does mention tongues as phenomena experienced in his day:

“For this reason does the apostle declare, ‘We speak wisdom among them that are perfect,’ terming those persons ‘perfect’ who have received the Spirit of God, and who through the Spirit of God do speak in all languages, as he used Himself also to speak. In like manner we do also hear many brethren in the Church, who possess prophetic gifts, and who through the Spirit speak all kinds of languages, and bring to light for the general benefit the hidden things of men, and declare...”

Tertullian (c. 200 AD) describes prophetic activity in the local church of which he was a member.

For, seeing that we acknowledge spiritual *charismata*, or gifts, we too have merited the attainment of the prophetic gift, although coming after John (the Baptist). We have now amongst us a sister whose lot it has been to be favored with sundry gifts of revelation, which she experiences in the Spirit by ecstatic vision amidst the sacred rites of the Lord’s day in the church: she converses with angels, and sometimes even with the Lord; she both sees and hears mysterious communications; some men’s hearts she understands, and to them who are in need she distributes remedies. Whether it be in the reading of Scriptures, or in the chanting of psalms, or in the preaching of sermons, or in the offering up of prayers, in all these religious services matter and opportunity are

¹³⁹ Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, Book 2 Chapter 32, excerpts from sections 4 & 5. Irenaeus also commented on the phenomena in Book 5, Chapter 6, section 1: *For this reason does the apostle declare, “We speak wisdom among them that are perfect,” terming those persons “perfect” who have received the Spirit of God, and who through the Spirit of God do speak in all languages, as he used Himself also to speak. In like manner we do also hear many brethren in the Church, who possess prophetic gifts, and who through the Spirit speak all kinds of languages, and bring to light for the general benefit the hidden things of men, and declare...*

afforded to her of seeing visions. It may possibly have happened to us, whilst this sister of ours was rapt in the Spirit, that we had discoursed in some ineffable way about the soul. After the people are dismissed at the conclusion of the sacred services, she is in the regular habit of reporting to us whatever things she may have seen in vision (for all her communications are examined with the most scrupulous care, in order that their truth may be probed). “Amongst other things,” says she, “there has been shown to me a soul in bodily shape, and a spirit has been in the habit of appearing to me; not, however, a void and empty illusion, but such as would offer itself to be even grasped by the hand, soft and transparent and of an ethereal color, and in form resembling that of a human being in every respect.” This was her vision, and for her witness there was God; and the apostle most assuredly foretold that there were to be “spiritual gifts” in the church.¹⁴⁰

Cessationists point out that Tertullian that when he wrote this he was a member of an heretical group, the Montanists. Therefore, they conclude that his description cannot be understood as indicating that the church at large experienced any phenomena.

In reply to the statement that Tertullian’s evidence is not valid because he was a Montanist, we cite the following quote and its origin. Prior to his becoming a follower of Montanus, when he was a staunch defender of Orthodoxy, Tertullian used the contemporary existence of tongues as evidence in his argument against the heretic, Marcion.

“Let Marcion then exhibit, as gifts of his God, some prophets, such as have not spoken by human sense, but with the Spirit of God, such as have both predicted things to come, and have made manifest the secrets of the heart; let him produce a psalm, a vision, a prayer — only let it be by the Spirit, in an ecstasy, that is, in a rapture, whenever an interpretation of tongues has occurred to him; let him show to me also, that any woman of boastful tongue in his community has ever prophesied from amongst those specially holy sisters of his. Now all these signs (of spiritual gifts) are forthcoming from my side without any difficulty...”¹⁴¹

To quote Christopher Forbes,

“Clearly ‘all these signs’ which Tertullian claims he can produce with ease from the assemblies of ‘his side’ include the ‘interpretation of tongues’; it is hard to see how this could be the case if glossolalia itself were not also present.”¹⁴²

Forbes also notes the geographical distribution of the evidence just noted.

- The longer ending of Mark is testimony from the region of Jerusalem;
- the statements of Irenaeus are evidence from western Europe (Lyons);
- Tertullian’s work is evidence from North Africa.¹⁴³

Moving forward into the Third Century, Novatian, a Roman elder, wrote a treatise on the Trinity (257 AD). In Book 29, he described the Holy Spirit and the charismata.

¹⁴⁰ *Antenicean Fathers* Volume III Latin Christianity – It’s Founder Tertullian “A treatise on the Soul” Chapter 9 Page 336-337 (The Master Christian Library, Albany, OR, AGES Software, 1997)

¹⁴¹ Tertullian, *Contra Marcionem*, Book 5, Chapter 8

¹⁴² Christopher Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech in Early Christianity and its Hellenistic Environment* (Peabody, Mass., Hendrickson Publishers, 1997) page 80

¹⁴³ Forbes, page 80

“And because the Lord was about to depart to the heavens, He gave the Paraclete out of necessity to the disciples; so as not to leave them in any degree orphans, which was little desirable, and forsake them without an advocate and some kind of protector. For this is He who strengthened their hearts and minds, who marked out the Gospel sacraments, who was in them the enlightener of divine things; and they being strengthened, feared, for the sake of the Lord’s name, neither dungeons nor chains, nay, even trod under foot the very powers of the world and its tortures, since they were henceforth armed and strengthened by the same Spirit, having in themselves the gifts which this same Spirit distributes, and appropriates to the Church, the spouse of Christ, as her ornaments. This is He who places prophets in the Church, instructs teachers, directs tongues, gives powers and healings, does wonderful works, often discrimination of spirits, affords powers of government, suggests counsels, and orders and arranges whatever other gifts...”¹⁴⁴

Several other early writers refer to the experience of Pentecost and the cloven tongues of fire, but describe the phenomena as something that occurred on Pentecost (Acts 2), rather than something that they were experiencing in their own era. In an allegorical and poetic description of the creation, Augustine, writing near 400 AD, implied that tongues did exist in his day (born c354, died 430). Yet his statements are so veiled that not much can be made of it.¹⁴⁵ Elsewhere, Augustine declared in unmistakable terms that Pentecostal phenomena did not exist in his day.

“In the earliest times, ‘the Holy Ghost fell upon them that believed: and they spoke with tongues,’ which they had not learned, ‘as the Spirit gave them utterance.’ These were signs adapted to the time. For there behooved to be that betokening of the Holy Spirit in all tongues, to show that the Gospel of God was to run through all tongues over the whole earth. That thing was done for a betokening, and it passed away.”¹⁴⁶

Since, therefore, the Holy Ghost is even now received by men, some one may say, Why is it that no man speaks in the tongues of all nations? Because the Church itself now speaks in the tongues of all nations. Before, the Church was in one nation, where it spoke in the tongues of all. By speaking then in the tongues of all, it signified what was

¹⁴⁴ Novatian, *de Trinitate*, Chapter 29 (*The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Volume 5, The Master Christian Library, Albany, OR, AGES Software, 1997)

¹⁴⁵“For indeed, to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, as if the greater light, on account of those who are delighted with the light of manifest truth, as in the beginning of the day; but to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit, as if the lesser light; to another faith; to another the gift of healing; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another the discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues. And all these as stars. For all these worketh the one and self-same Spirit, dividing to every man his own as He willeth; and making stars appear manifestly, to profit withal. But the word of knowledge, wherein are contained all sacraments, which are varied in their periods like the moon and the other conceptions of gifts, which are successively reckoned up as stars, in as much as they come short of that splendor of wisdom in which the fore-mentioned day rejoices, are only for the beginning of the night.” Augustine, *The Thirteen Books of Confession of St. Augustine*, Book 13, Chapter 18, section 23 (The Master Christian Library, Albany, Oregon, AGES Software, 1997)

¹⁴⁶Augustine, *Ten Homilies on I John*, Homily 6, Part 10, (*The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series One, as contained in Master Christian Library, Albany, OR, AGES Software, 1997)

to come to pass; that by growing among the nations, it would speak in the tongues of all.”¹⁴⁷

Augustine was a bishop in the Western Church. He knew the condition of the church world-wide, both in its Western and Eastern branches. We must accept as authoritative his statements that in his lifetime Pentecostal manifestations were unknown

Chrysostom, one of the greatest expositors in all of Church History, was a contemporary of Augustine (born 347, died 407). He was a prelate in the Eastern Church. He wrote a series of homilies on I Corinthians. In his introduction to I Corinthians 12, he wrote,

“This whole place (I Corinthians 12) is very obscure: but the obscurity is produced by our ignorance of the facts referred to and by their cessation, being such as then used to occur but now no longer take place. And why do they not happen now? Why look now, the cause too of the obscurity hath produced us again another question: namely, why did they then happen, and now do so no more? This however let us defer to another time, but for the present let us state what things were occurring then.”¹⁴⁸

Augustine and Chrysostom, representing both the Western and Eastern Churches, make clear statements that the *charismata* no longer were functioning in the Church. It would be a great help to us if Chrysostom had pursued the answer to the question he raised, i.e., as to why the *charismata* were absent. Augustine argued the tongues of apostolic times were a sign that the Gospel would be preached in every language. He declared that since the Church in his day existed in many nations, and that in each of those nations a different language was spoken, that the Gift of Tongues no longer was needed as a sign that the Gospel would reach all nations. It already had done so.

There are many reports of the *charisma* in the Middle Ages, even though one might debate the reliability of the data. Several were canonized as saints, on the basis of their speaking in tongues. However, the Roman Catholic Church during this era generally regarded speaking in tongues and interpretation as a mark of demon possession. The difference between demonization and sainthood-qualifying *charismata* seemed to turn on the reputation of the individual involved.¹⁴⁹

There are general reports of tongues among the medieval mendicants, the Waldensians, and Albigensians, but when one seeks to identify the specific individuals among these groups about whom these claims are made, no information can be found. As Stanley Burgess has written concerning his pursuit of this information, “...we are frustrated time and again by teasing generalities, inadequate information, and unanswered questions.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ Augustine, *Tractates on St. John*, Tractate 32, Part 7 (*The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Master Christian Library)

¹⁴⁸ Chrysostom, *First Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians* Homily 29, I Corinthians 12:1,2 (*The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series One, Master Christian Library)

¹⁴⁹ Stanley M. Burgess, *Medieval Examples of Charismatic Piety in the Roman Catholic Church*, in *Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism* (born 347, died 407)ism Russell P. Spittler, Editor (Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1976) pages 14-26

¹⁵⁰ Stanley M. Burgess, *Medieval Examples of Charismatic Piety*, Part One, Chapter One, *Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism*, ed. Russell P. Spittler, (Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1976) page 17

A popular report repeated in some Charismatic writings states that Luther spoke in tongues. However, a study of the primary Luther documents proves this to be untrue. As a matter of record, Luther seemed to be confused by the Pentecostal phenomena.¹⁵¹ In his Commentary on Galatians, he made clear that he considered all physical manifestations of the Holy Spirit to be obsolete.

“In the early Church the Holy Spirit was sent forth in visible form. He descended upon Christ in the form of a dove (Matt. 3:16) and in the likeness of fire upon the apostles and other believers (Acts 2:3). This visible outpouring of the Holy Spirit was necessary to the establishment of the early Church, as were miracles that accompanied the gift of the Holy Ghost. Paul explained the purpose of these miraculous gifts of the Spirit in I Corinthians 14:22, ‘Tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not.’ Once the Church had been established and properly advertised by these miracles, the visible appearance of the Holy Ghost ceased.”¹⁵²

How do the declarations of Augustine, Chrysostom, and Luther relate to our question concerning the permanence or non-permanence of the *charismata*? All that they tell us is that in 400 AD (Augustine and Chrysostom) and in the Fifteenth Century (Luther) the Church did not experience this manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Prior to the 20th Century, most American Church leaders would have said the same thing and would have found virtually no one to disagree with them.¹⁵³ If such a statement were made today, however, the disagreement would be huge. Since we do not know why the *charismata* were absent from the Fifth Century Church and the Fifteenth Century Church, we cannot draw any conclusion other than that they were absent.

¹⁵¹ Martin Luther, *Works*, ed. Jaroslav J. Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehman (St. Louis: Concordia 1955) XL, 142

¹⁵² Martin Luther, *Commentary on Galatians*, comments on Chapter 4, Verse 6, translated by Theodore Graebner (Concordance of Great Books; <http://www.concordance.com/cgi-bin/1wdr.pl>)

¹⁵³ There would have been some who would have disagreed. See Stanley Howard Frodsham, *With Signs Following* (Springfield, Mo., Gospel Publishing House, 1946 [a revision of earlier versions published in 1926 and 1928]), for substantiated reports of tongues in the last half of the 19th Century.