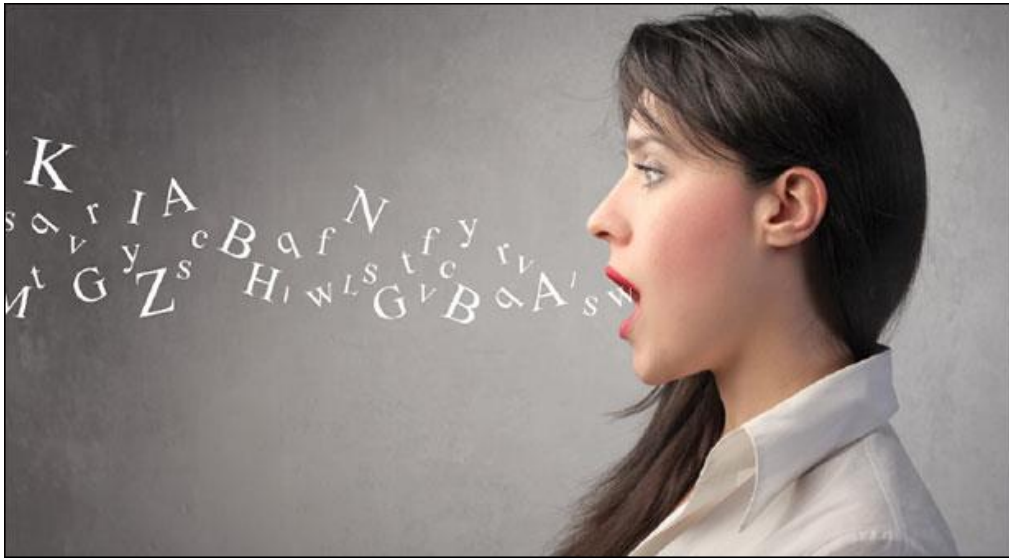


The Baptism of the Holy Spirit and Speaking in Tongues



**A Comprehensive Study of the
Meaning of Spirit Baptism and
Speaking in Tongues**

By Pastor Kelly Sensenig

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One day a man called the church and began asking me a lot of questions about the Holy Spirit. I wanted to give him Biblical answers regarding the ministry and manifestation of the Holy Spirit. However, I'm not sure that he was interested in knowing the true and right answers regarding the Holy Spirit's work and role in the believer's life. Finally, he asked me a personal question: "Do you got it?" I asked him, "God what?" He answered, "You know, do you got the Holy Ghost baptism and speaking in tongues." My reply was simple, "No, I have not spoken in tongues nor have I received what you term as the Baptism of the Holy Spirit." Immediately he classified me as a second-rate Christian, since I did not have a similar experience. The longer I talked with him I realized that his entire Christian life seemed to revolve around having some kind of emotional experience or high that was accompanied with speaking in a so-called ecstatic language. This experience made him feel more spiritually connected to God and superior to other Christians who have not had this similar experience.

Many Christians are seeking experiences today that are not based upon the teaching of God's Word. One such experience is seeking what has been termed the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We must remember that the source of the truth (the Bible) is stronger and more reliable than any personal experience. However, many have been taught that a Christian should seek a post-conversion experience (an experience after one's salvation) of receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. The claim is made that this was the experience the disciples had on the Day of Pentecost and that other Christians experienced throughout the Book of Acts. However, this conclusion is a misunderstanding of what was occurring in the Book of Acts and is a misrepresentation of how the Holy Spirit works in connection with the lives of believer's today. This erroneous teaching has lead Christians, especially those attached with the Charismatic/Pentecostal movements, to strive to receive a counterfeit gift not promised to Christians today. It also opens the door for theological confusion regarding the work and the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer today.

Confusion exists on the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues.

Two areas of teaching must be examined to clear up the confusion.

I. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit must be examined

I want to make two foundational statements that will set the stage for the rest of our study.

A. The experience of some during Bible times should not be claimed as an experience for all.

In other words, just because some people had a certain experience during the days when the Bible was written does not mean that everyone will have the same experience after the Bible is written. In 1 Kings 17:8-16 we read about God restocking the widow's cupboard with food because she fed Elijah the man of God. However, I have fed traveling evangelists and Bible teachers, but I do not expect God to restock my food supply as He did for the widow of Zarephath in 1 Kings 17:8-16. Yes, God could miraculously stock all of our homes with food, but this is not normal for today. One of the dangers of the tongues movement is that it becomes a substitute for *the normal Christian life*. There is always a tendency to substitute the spectacular for the normal. It is much easier to rely on an experience such as tongue speaking than to walk quietly day-by-day with God (James 4:8).

In 2 Kings 5:1-14 we discover how Naaman dipped in the Jordan River seven times in order to be healed from leprosy. However, today leprosy patients or those who are sick do not dip seven times in a river to be cured. This is not God's NORMAL way of doing things today. In addition, we do we throw sticks on the ground and expect them to turn into serpents as Moses did in Exodus 4:2-3. The fact that God used Elijah, Elisha, Peter, and Paul to restore physical life to people (1 Kings 17:17-23; 2 Kings 4:17-37; Acts 9:36-43) does not mean God intends for believers today to raise others from the dead! Jesus' command to the twelve to raise the dead does not mean He gave the command to every Christian today (Matthew 10:8).

The same is true regarding the events associated with Pentecost and the early days of apostolic Christianity, such as waiting for the Holy Spirit, receiving the Holy Spirit after one is saved, speaking in tongues, or experiencing visions, as the apostles did, when they were receiving direct

revelation from God prior to the canonization of the Bible (1 Cor. 13:10-13). The fact that God allowed some Christians to experience these things does NOT mean that every Christian MUST experience them.

The disciples on the Day of Pentecost spoke in tongues when they were initially baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Church (the body of Christ – 1 Cor. 12:13), but this does not mean that everyone will pass through this same experience, since this was a unique occasion or event that signaled the initial arrival of the Holy Spirit. As we will see later in this study, this was an event designed to authenticate the Spirit's arrival and prove to the Jews that God was now beginning a new work with the Gentile people called the Church. We must understand that not everything we read about during Bible times and the Book of Acts is necessarily the NORMAL occurrence for our Christian lives today. This is why we need to ask, "What is normal for our Christian living today?"

Robert McQuilkin has correctly observed:

"That an event was reported to have truly happened does not necessarily make it a revelation of God's universal will."

We must look to the Scriptures themselves to determine what is NORMAL for today and what God would have us to follow and practice within our Christian lives. We should seek to live the normal Christian life today. Sometimes Christians apply an experience, such as speaking in tongues and apostolic healing, to the day in which they live, only to discover that God does not always heal them (2 Cor. 12:8-9) and that speaking in tongues is not a gift that can be repeated by Christians today (1 Cor. 13:8).

As we approach our study and understanding of the Book of Acts, we must consider what is normative for the day in which we live and compare the happenings and experiences found in the book of Acts with the rest of God's New Testament epistles, especially the later epistles, which give to us the final word on doctrine and practices among the local churches. The only teachings and experiences in Acts that are NORMAL for the church age are those that are doctrinally confirmed elsewhere in the New Testament letters to the churches. Charismatics and Pentecostals take a different approach.

They build their theology on the sign gifts and transitional verses from Judaism to Christianity in Acts 2, 8, 10, 19 and on a misunderstanding of I

Corinthians 12, 13, 14, a church which had a unique and temporary ministry to the Jewish people, who needed this conforming sign prior to their AD 70 judgment (1 Cor. 14:22), but an operative sign that would quickly fade away (1 Cor. 13:8-10). In fact, tongues are not mentioned in any other epistles and both the writer of Hebrews and Peter (epistles written later) looked back upon the performing of the sign gifts as something that had already occurred in the past during an era or time which had already run its intended course.

Here's the point; dedicated and sincere Christians should desire an experience of victory, depth, growth and reality in their Christian life (2 Pet. 3:18). Therefore, we must beware of the flat tire of dead, cold formalism. On the other hand, we must also be careful of the unscriptural wildfire of Charismatic fanaticism, such as a baptism by the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. The so called "Charismatic revival" must be appraised in the light of the Word of God.

There have been many strange and bizarre experiences promoted today among the Charismatic Church when people are said to receive the alleged baptism of the Holy Spirit. People have climbed tent poles, laughed uncontrollably, and went into trancelike experiences while speaking in an unknown gibberish. All of this and much more have been wrongly attributed to the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

B. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is a saving transaction - NOT an emotional reaction with speaking in tongues.

1 Corinthians 12:13

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

There is an easy way to review the teaching of this verse.

a. The universal nature of this baptism

You will notice that Paul repeats twice that every Christian ("all") receives the baptism of the Holy Spirit at the time of one's salvation. No Christian is left out when it comes to receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. If someone comes to you as a Christian and says that you have not received

the baptism of the Holy Spirit, they are misinformed regarding what the Bible teaches on this subject. No Christian is left out when it comes to this baptism. Every Christian receives the baptism of the Holy Spirit – not just a few elite Charismatic Christians.

In this baptism, believers, regardless of nationality (whether Jews or Greeks) or station of life (slave or free) are spiritually united or joined to Christ's body (the Church). The teaching of the epistles is very clear; every Christian is automatically baptized into the Church (the body of Christ) by the Holy Spirit at the moment of their salvation. In fact, it is the baptism of the Holy Spirit which brings salvation's blessing into their lives (regeneration, redemption, eternal life). We cannot limit this baptism to only those in the Pentecostal/Charismatic Church but to "all" those who believe within the true Church (the living organism connected to Christ).

b. The understanding of this baptism

Every Christian is said to be spiritually baptized, immersed, or submerged into Christ's body which is the New Testament Church ("baptized into one body"). Elsewhere the body is termed as the Church.

Colossians 1:18

"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."

Ephesians 5:23

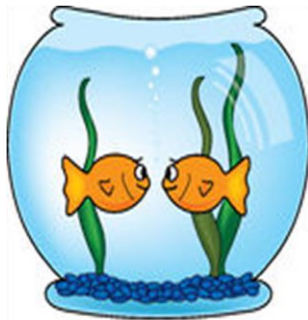
"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body."

This is Pauline Theology. The work of the Holy Spirit in saving the believing sinner is to transfer him into the body of Christ (the Church). The Baptism of the Holy Spirit in Acts and throughout the Scriptures deals with a dispensational and theological truth – the formation and building of Christ's Church (Matt. 16:18). The baptism of the Holy Spirit is what initially formed and continues to build the New Testament Church, which consists of all those who place faith in Christ.

This Body (the Church) is said to have a spiritually connection or unity with Jesus Christ Himself where we share His life. The analogy is that we are joined to Jesus Christ in a life-giving and life-sustaining way, so much so,

that we share His life as the Head of the body (Col. 1:18). Christ is pictured as our Head and we are part of His Body (the Church) connected to Christ, who is our Leader and Lifegiver.

The word baptism (“baptized” – 1 Cor. 12:13) is very significant in relationship to our salvation. The work of the Spirit is termed a baptism because of the specific work He does in connection with each member of the body (the Church) in merging them together into spiritual union with Christ.



Our spiritual union with Christ is comparable to a water baptism. Each member of the Church is submerged into a living and dynamic union with Jesus Christ (our Head) where we share His life and ministry. A goldfish inside a bowl would be one way to illustrate the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit which places us “in Christ” (Rom. 6:1-3). *The fish are inside the bowl and they are totally submerged in the water.* It’s the baptizing ministry of the Holy Spirit that saves us by placing us into a vital, living union with Christ, submerging us into Christ, His safety and salvation. This is why the union is termed as being “in Christ” (Gal. 3:27), which is a saving union with Christ, when we are joined to Christ and allow Him to become our Savior from hell and Sanctifier from sin. When we are baptized into Christ we are surrounded and submerged in the safety of Christ and His saving merits.

There is only “one baptism” (Eph. 4:5) that saves us and it is the baptism of the Holy Spirit which is a baptism that we all share in Christ. If you have not received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, then you are not saved! However, when we place our faith in Christ we are immediately saved from hell. This is because we are baptized (immersed) into Jesus Christ, or brought into a spiritual union with Jesus Christ, which results in every believer becoming spiritually identified with Christ’s saving work.

When we are baptized by the Spirit, we are said to be “added” (Acts 2:41, 47) to God’s living organism, the New Testament church, by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. When we are added to the Church we receive a spiritual union with Christ and enjoy all of His saving benefits and life. In other words, when we are brought into this saving union with Christ by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, Christ immediately and forever transfers all of

His saving work to our lives and also His daily power to live our new Christian life (Gal. 2:20).

1 Corinthians 1:30 explains the transaction like this:

“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.”

A spiritual transaction occurs at the moment of salvation. Every Gospel believer is immediately and forever joined to the living Christ and they now share Christ’s life and spiritual blessings that He gives to them (salvation, sanctification, supply). Once again, this saving transaction is the baptism of the Holy Spirit, when the believing sinner enters Christ’s body (the Church) and is spiritually baptized or immersed into Christ, which means they become identified with Christ in a saving way.

You will notice that in the epistles and all the references to the baptism of the Holy Spirit there was no reference to an experience of speaking in tongues, or receiving some kind of emotional experience, which occurs simultaneously with the Spirit’s baptism. This is because the baptism of the Holy Spirit was never intended to be an emotional experience but a saving experience and transaction that brings a person into a right relationship with Jesus Christ. Since there is no mention of tongues with Spirit baptism in the epistles, we should dismiss the whole idea of the necessity to speak in tongues when we are saved and baptized by the Holy Spirit. Anything that occurs in Acts must be confirmed by the epistles in order to be foundational doctrine. This is something we must remember when studying the Bible since the epistles give the lasting conclusions and comments regarding life and ministry in the Church.

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is taught in eleven passages throughout the New Testament. There are five prophetic passages (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5); one historical passage (Acts 11:16); and five doctrinal passages (Romans 6:1-7; I Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 4:5; Colossians 2:12) revealing the nature of Spirit Baptism. Those verses in a prophetic, historical, and theological (doctrinal) reveal to us that Spirit Baptism is when a believing sinner is placed into the body of Christ (New Testament church — Ephesians 1:22-23) through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit joins us to Christ in a lasting union (John 14:16-20).

c. The illustration of this baptism

Two illustrations are given.

1. The baptism of the Spirit is compared to water baptism

This is an implied illustration because of what we know about water baptism. In this passage the baptism is the result of the Holy Spirit's work ("by one Spirit") – not the work of water. This baptism is by the Spirit. In other words, it is not referring to water baptism by some external rite but the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing us into a spiritual union with Christ. It's NOT water baptism but it's comparable to it. Water baptism is actually the picture of Spirit baptism (Acts 2:41 – note "baptized" in water with "added" to the Church – Body of Christ). When one is baptized in water the proper way (Acts 8:38-39) they are immersed or submerged under the water so it totally surrounds them. In a similar way, when we are baptized with the Holy Spirit and brought into a spiritual and saving union with Christ, we are totally immersed (spiritually baptized) into Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:27).

We are joined to Christ in such a way that His entire life becomes our life, His righteousness becomes our righteousness, His redemptive work is applied to our life, His power becomes our power, and His victory over death, hell, and the grave becomes our victory. When we are baptized (immersed) into this living union with Jesus Christ His saving and sanctifying work is freely given to us and we become a new creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). This means we are saved from hell and we are on the new road to sanctification, serving the Lord, and singing His praises. Once again, the way we receive this union relationship with Christ is by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit brings us into this spiritual union with Christ and we become "complete in him" (Col. 2:10).

2. The baptism of the Spirit is compared to a refreshing drink

This is a supplied illustration from the context. Receiving the baptism (spiritual immersion) of the Holy Spirit, which places us into a saving and sanctifying union with Christ, is further illustrated as drinking of the Spirit's blessings ("have been all made to drink into one Spirit" – 1 Cor. 12:13). This baptism results in each believing sinner receiving a "drink" of the spiritual and saving blessings that the Holy Spirit gives to the Church ("drink into one Spirit"). In other words, the blessing of the Spirit's baptism

is comparable to drinking a refreshing glass of water. Drinking a refreshing glass of water is one way to illustrate the saving blessings of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit pours out His blessing upon our lives.

In John 7:38-39, Jesus said in view of the Spirit's baptizing work: He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

John 4:14 reflects this same truth:

“But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

Cool, clear, water! There is nothing more refreshing and better than drinking water and quenching one's thirst. In a similar way, there is nothing better than receiving the saving benefits of the Holy Spirit when He baptizes us “into Jesus Christ” (Gal. 3:27) by placing us into a saving union with Jesus Christ. This is the time Christ shares with us His redemptive salvation and all the benefits that come from salvation such as His sanctifying power and daily supply for living the Christian life.

Once again, the baptism of the Spirit and His entrance into our lives is experienced by all who believe, at the moment of salvation.

1 Corinthians 12:13

“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body (the Church), whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit (received the saving benefits of the Spirit's work).”

The Bible makes it abundantly clear that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a universal work that He performs for every Christian at the moment of salvation. No Christian is left out of this ministry. They are baptized by the Spirit (submerged into a life-giving union with Christ) and the Holy Spirit enters their lives forever. In fact, every Christian is *born* of the Spirit (John 3:5), *baptized* by the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13), *indwelt* by the Spirit (1 John 3:24), and *sealed* (Eph. 4:30) by the Holy Spirit at the moment they believe. These blessings occur simultaneously with conversion.

Romans 8:9

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

1 Corinthians 6:19

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?”

Galatians 4:6

“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”

Ephesians 4:30

“And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”

These verses deal with God’s NORMAL way of receiving the Holy Spirit today. We receive Him into our life when we become a Christian and are continually indwelt by Him (John 14:16). We are forever sealed by the Holy Spirit of God our entire saved life and experience His abiding presence.

Pauline Theology clearly reveals that every Christian who has believed on the Son of God for his salvation receives the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit, which places them into a saving union with Christ. They also immediately receive the presence of the Holy Spirit. This is made crystal clear in Biblical revelation. If you don’t have the Spirit then you are not God’s child! Receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not a post-conversion experience or some kind of experience that occurs after salvation. Never! The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the initial conversion experience that we pass through which saves us when we are placed into this living and saving union with Christ. The epistles verify that every believer is the recipient of the Holy Spirit but they are not given the audible or visible sign of speaking in tongues.

When we were young children we used to play in our grandmother’s creek. We would block up the flow of the creek and create swimming holes. In doing this we would muddy-up the water. The water would lose its clarity. In a similar way, we must be careful that we do not muddy-up the teaching on the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Bible is very clear on what the baptism

of the Holy Spirit means. Let us not muddy-up the Biblical teaching on this subject by claiming that it is some kind of post-conversion experience that people receive which is accompanied with the speaking in tongues. The epistles do not teach this and neither should we. Many are lead astray and into pseudo experiences because of this errant teaching.

My prayer is that the Lord would help us to deal with those who might disagree with us and express great love and affection to them, admonishing them as brothers, as Paul taught (2 Thess. 3:15). However, we must ask God to help us to hold fast to what we know is true (Rev. 2:25; 3:11) and help us to seek, above all else, to keep the church pure and focused around the truth of the Word of God.

We do not doubt the sincerity of many Charismatic Christians but we must remember one can be sincerely wrong in what they are teaching and experiencing. Not long ago an elderly lady fell in the parking lot close to our home which was connected to some apartments. Two other elderly ladies were with her and they were going out to eat. I saw the one lady fall and immediately went over to help. The ladies could not pick her up. When I got there and helped her up the ladies said, "You need to pray for her." What floored me is that they did not know who I was. They had no idea that I was a Christian or not. Well, I began praying and the first words out of their mouths consisted of a lot of "Amen's" and "Hallelujah's" and "Thank You Lord." These ladies were Pentecostal but I never once doubted their sincerity. They were latched on to every word I was praying that day. This study is not designed to doubt the sincerity of many Pentecostal brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Nevertheless, sincere, misdirected, and sometimes willingly ignorant Christians have failed to see the uniqueness of the book of Acts and what was actually occurring during this period of transition. As a result, they attribute the baptism of the Holy Spirit to something which occurs after salvation and conclude that it's an experience that is always accompanied with the speaking in tongues. The teaching of the church epistles banishes this ridiculous notion forever!

When we study God's full revelation we will discover that the unique experiences and occurrences in the Book of Acts were never a "set pattern" regarding the baptism of the Holy Spirit or the saving work of the Holy Spirit for New Testament saints. One will be hopelessly confused and chasing

after the wind if they follow the pattern of Holy Spirit baptism from the Book of Acts instead of the epistles which clarify the baptism doctrine of the Holy Spirit. We must remember that the experience of a “few” during the infant days of the Church was never intended to be the experience of “all” future generations of Church believers. This is why Paul in the epistles clarifies what the baptism of the Holy Spirit does for the believing sinner and what it does not do for the believer.

Review:

- In 1 Corinthians 12:13 and the epistles every Christian is baptized by the Spirit into Christ.
- The “one baptism” (Eph. 4:5) of the Holy Spirit is what saves the sinner by merging them into a saving union with Christ.
- In 1 Corinthians 12:13 and the epistles there is no mention of the Spirit’s baptism occurring after one is saved; it is what saves the sinner.
- In 1 Corinthians 12:13 and the doctrinal section of the epistles there is no mention of tongues accompanying the Spirit’s baptism indicating that this would not be the pattern for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
- In 1 Corinthians 12:13 and the epistles there is no mention of a second work of grace that accompanies the Spirit’s baptism, whereby a person is subdued by the Holy Spirit and acts in ways unbeknown to himself (emotional outcries, talking in gibberish, and other esoteric phenomenon).

Paul is very clear on his teaching of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It was designed to be a *saving* experience – not an *emotional* experience of speaking in some kind of ecstatic gibberish or chatter and other emotional phenomenon. I will never forget when Pat Robertson was interviewing a man who claimed to have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. As he was speaking everyone was saying “Amen” and “Amen.” The man described his experience. He said that he had a vision. In the vision the roof of the church opened and a chicken came down through the air and stood on his head. He said when the chicken landed on his head he felt a warm sensation and he immediately began speaking in tongues. He claimed that this was the time when he got the Spirit and was baptized in the Spirit.



How should we view and judge this kind of experience? We must judge it by the Word of God. Beloved, the Bible is very clear that this is not the baptism of the Holy Spirit. God is not in the chicken business! If you want chicken, go to Chick-Fil-A. We do not formulate truth on the basis of people's experiences but on the basis of what the Bible says.

Furthermore, you do not judge the truth by your experience; you judge your experience by the truth. Your experience must be Biblical and if it's clearly proven that it's not, then you must cease from practicing and promoting it. Everybody is fearful of judging someone's experience today. We should not be ashamed of questioning someone's experience since we are called upon to "prove all things" (1 Thess. 5:21). We must test experiences and measure them up to the divine standard of God's Word to determine whether or not they are true or false (counterfeit). We begin with truth and move to experience. We do not begin with experience and move to truth. If we lose this order, we will be subject to every new thing that comes down the pike.

This remainder of this study will reveal the errors of the Charismatic/Pentecostal teaching concerning the baptism of the Holy Spirit and unveil the true meaning of what was occurring in the Book of Acts. Beloved, we must appeal to Scripture and interpret Biblical texts in light of the whole counsel of God's Word (Acts 20:27) in order to arrive at Biblical conclusions regarding our experiences.

II. The Biblical teaching on tongues Examined

We must ask these questions before beginning our study of Acts chapter two and the gift of tongues.

- Is my experience validated by a correct understanding of Scripture?
- If the doctrinal teaching of the later epistles, which were given to the Church, do not link the baptism of the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues, then why do the Pentecostals insist that we speak in tongues?
- If John the Baptist, who was said to be the greatest prophet, and Jesus, who is God, never spoke in tongues, then why should we need to speak in tongues?

- If the church for nearly 19 centuries has not spoken in tongues, then why must I seek this experience for my own spiritual enrichment and personal life?
- Can I honestly conclude that this gift of tongues has resurfaced in the Pentecostal/Charismatic Movement after being conspicuously absent and dormant for some 1900 years? Red flags should immediately go up when one insists we must speak in tongues today! We must view what is happening today in light of Scripture and history and come to a Biblical and common sense conclusion.
- The burden of proof rests on the Charismatic/Pentecostal Church to prove the sign gifts, such as speaking in tongues, have restarted in the later Church Age.

A. Pentecost and tongues (Acts 2)

1. The promise of the Holy Spirit

Over the years an unbiblical teaching and unscriptural experience was developed from the disciple's experience on the Day of Pentecost and what occurred throughout the Book of Acts concerning the reception of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. Based upon the teachings of the Book of Acts it began to be taught, and is still taught today among Pentecostal and Charismatic groups, that a person could receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues as a crisis experience, which occurred after one's conversion. At best, one may receive the Holy Spirit nominally, but at one point the Spirit takes full control in one's life by receiving the baptizing work of the Spirit and speaking in tongues. This is called the "full Gospel" which is a misnomer because the full Gospel and only Gospel are explained in 1 Corinthians 15:1-3 and no baptism of the Holy Spirit is mentioned as being part of the true Gospel.

The Pentecostal reasoning and teaching goes something like this. Since the apostles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4) at the same time they received the gift of tongues (Acts 2), then every Christian should receive the gift of tongues along with the Holy Spirit's presence and baptism at one point in their Christian experience. In short, it's taught that when a Christian receives the gift of speaking in tongues, it becomes a sign that they have received the Holy Spirit's presence and have now experienced the fullness of His power, as the disciple did on the Day of Pentecost.

a. Waiting for the promise

Acts 1:4 conveys how the disciples were waiting for the baptism of the Holy Spirit to occur in answer to the Father's promise which was revealed by Christ.

Acts 1:4-5

"And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."

Acts 1:8 declares:

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Jesus spoke of the same promise of the Holy Spirit's entrance into the lives of God's children on the Day of Pentecost.

Luke 24:49

"And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."

Then entrance of the Spirit into the hearts and lives of God's people in a permanent way and for an empowering ministry would be a wonderful day and this day (Pentecost) would become the birthday of the Church.

Acts 2:33

"Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."

Pentecost was all about receiving and experiencing the promise of the Holy Spirit. It was the day of the Spirit's initial arrival to form the Church by baptizing them into Christ (1 Cor. 12:13) and permanently indwelling the lives of the disciples, as Jesus had previously taught (John 14:18-20). This was a special and unique occasion. Dr. A. J. Gordon said, "The upper room became the Spirit's baptistry." He was right.

This was the time when people were initially “added” to the Lord or Church (Acts 2:41, 47; Acts 5:14; 11:24), which means they were joined to the Body of Jesus Christ (New Testament Church), so they could become spiritually linked to their Head and leader (Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:18). This “addition” to the Church is not membership in the local church but membership in the corporate Church (“the general assembly” of all believers in Christ - Heb. 12:23). Once again, to be baptized by the Spirit means that we now belong to Christ’s body (1 Cor. 12:13). It means that we are joined to Jesus Christ (“added to the Lord”) and now share His very own life as Jesus taught (John 14:16-20).

Let’s answer some key questions at this point. One question we need to answer is why supernatural signs occurred (rushing wind, figures of tongues resting on the heads of the disciples, and speaking in different languages – Acts 2:2-4) at the initial advent of the Holy Spirit and His first ministry of baptizing the disciples (Acts 1:4). Second, we must answer the question if these same signs must occur whenever the Holy Spirit baptizes someone today and brings them into the Body of Christ.

Let’s answer the first question. The only reason there were supernatural signs with the initial baptizing work of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was to introduce the inauguration of the new age (Dispensation of the Grace of God – the Age of the Spirit) and authenticate Peter’s preaching regarding the advent of the Holy Spirit which had just occurred on the Day of Pentecost.

Acts 2:33 once again says:

“Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this (the miraculous signs of Pentecost with the speaking in tongues), which ye now see and hear.”

Peter was referring to the tongue speaking which the people saw with their eyes (the disciples speaking in different languages) and heard with their own ears. God gave the people these signs (rushing wind, figures of tongues on the heads of the disciples, speaking in tongues – different languages) to visibly demonstrate that something different was occurring that had never occurred before in the history of mankind. The Holy Spirit had come, baptized the people into the Body of Christ (the Church) and started a new work of God among His people. The signs were a

demonstration of this new work. They verified that what Peter said was true and confirmed the promise that Jesus gave about the coming of the Holy Spirit. The New Testament Church was born and the Church Age had begun. A new day had dawned!

Have you ever witnessed a new day being born as the sun comes up and you see it peer over the horizon, creating a beautiful array of light? The Spirit's initial arrival was comparable to a new dawning day in the history of mankind. The Holy Spirit would come and indwell God's people and create the Church which is the Body of Christ where all people, both Jews and Gentiles would be like a "building fitly framed together" (Eph. 2:21).

Now let's answer the second question. Were these signs meant to be a continuous practice throughout the Church Age? This is clearly not the case as we have already seen in a doctrinal study of the epistles. The baptism of the Holy Spirit (bringing people into the Church – the Body of Christ) was never said to be accompanied with any such signs but was simply the transfer of believers into the Body of Christ (the Church – 1 Corinthians 12:13; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:1-3). The miraculous sign of speaking in tongues was significant in connection with Pentecost and the initial entrance or advent of the Spirit into the world during Pentecost and the early apostolic days. However, these same signs would no longer be necessary after the Spirit initially came and the change from the Mosaic Age to the Church Age became clearly understood by the Jewish people. More on this later.

If tongues are a necessary part of receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit, then why did none of the 5,000 who believed and received the Holy Spirit in Acts 2-4 speak in tongues (Acts 2:47; 4:4)? The answer is obvious; it's because tongues were NEVER intended to be a permanent sign or evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It was an INITIAL sign that was used to INTRODUCE to the Jews the birthday and initial expansion of the Church. God gave this sign (speaking in tongues) to verify that He was building His Church. The sign was witnessed in the lives of key groups of people, the Jewish disciples (Acts 2, 19) and Gentiles (Acts 10), as they were initially being introduced into the Body of Christ (New Testament Church) and crossing over on to New Testament ground. However, speaking in tongues was never intended to be a PERMANENT sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The doctrine of the epistles verify this to us (1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27).

Paul Van Gorder remarks on this baptism/tongue experience:

“This was one of the outward indications that the Holy Spirit had come to dwell in a new building, the Church, called ‘the habitation of God through the Spirit’ (Ephesians 2:22).”

For something to be normal for everybody, it must happen to everyone. But it did NOT happen to everybody. Consider that of all the 16 salvation events described in Acts, only 2 groups are recorded as speaking in tongues.

1. Acts 2.....3,000 at Pentecost..... no tongues
2. Acts 3, 4.....5,000 at the Beautiful gate..... no tongues
3. Acts 5:14.....Multitudes saved..... no tongues
4. Acts 8:17.....Samaritan believers..... no tongues
5. Acts 8:37-39.....Ethiopian eunuch..... no tongues
6. Acts 9.....Saul on Damascus road..... no tongues
7. Acts 10:46.....Cornelius' household..... tongues
8. Acts 11:19-24..... Greeks saved at Antioch..... no tongues
9. Acts 16:14, 15.....Lydia..... no tongues
10. Acts 16:16-19.....Demonized damsel..... no tongues
11. Acts 16:25-34.....Philippian jailer and his household..... no tongues
12. Acts 17:1-4..... Thessalonian believers..... no tongues
13. Acts 17:10-12..... Berean believers..... no tongues
14. Acts 17:15-34.....Athenian believers..... no tongues
15. Acts 18:8..... Crispus and Corinthians at salvation..... no tongues
16. Acts 19:1-12.....12 disciples of John at Ephesus.....tongues
17. Acts 19:18-20.....Ephesian believers..... no tongues
18. Acts 28:23,24..... Roman believers..... no tongues

It's very evident that God never intended to establish a definite outward sign or evidence for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is erroneous to teach this since Scripture cannot support it. Speaking in tongues was never intended to be a confirming sign of spirituality. This can be proven in the experience of the Corinthians; they spoke in tongues and were still carnal (1 Cor. 3:3). In the entire New Testament we are never told that the baptism of the Holy Spirit MUST take place in conjunction with speaking in tongues.

The Charismatics/Pentecostals take this unique occasion with the speaking in tongues and conclude that every Christian should have this same experience when they are baptized by the Spirit. Since the disciples were already saved and were waiting for the baptism of the Holy Spirit and since the Spirit's arrival to baptize them resulted in them speaking in tongues, it's therefore concluded that every Christian should wait for the entrance of the Holy Spirit to come into his life, after he is saved, and speak in tongues with other accompanying signs of emotional ecstasy.

According to Pentecostalism and their study of the Acts record, the baptism of the Spirit is promoted as a post-conversion experience which is something that occurs after one is saved and when a person is ready to enter into true spiritual living. It's also assumed that the primary reception of the Holy Spirit's presence will be evidenced by speaking in tongues and that one reaches a higher level of spirituality when receiving this gift and the Holy Spirit's presence. The powerful display of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues is sometimes viewed as "a second work of grace" or some kind of mountain top experience in connection with one's spiritual living.

Most Charismatics do teach that a believer receives the Spirit in some small measure, but the Baptism of the Spirit is an explosion of the Spirit's power in fullness that comes later in one's life. We should not accuse Charismatics of denying that a Christian has the Holy Spirit. They would say that you have the Holy Spirit in a limited or nominal way, but you don't have the fullness of the Spirit and the power of the Spirit until you receive the gift of tongues. Many times they go back to John 20:21-22, where Jesus looks at His disciples and blows upon them. The Scripture states, "And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John 20:22).

According to standard Charismatic interpretation of this text, they say, "Jesus then, was giving them the Holy Spirit, in a limited way. They had to wait for a higher level of explosion of the Baptism of the Spirit which gave them their real power." Is this really correct? When Jesus said John 20:22, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit," was this the actual bestowment of the Holy Spirit? If you look very carefully at that text, the Charismatic view doesn't really hold up under scrutiny. The passage doesn't say the disciples actually received the Holy Spirit. It simply states that Jesus blew on them, which was a graphic illustration of the Spirit's arrival on the Day of

Pentecost (the wind and the Spirit's arrival), and then Jesus said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." The blowing was likely an illustrative precursor to the Spirit's arrival on the Day of Pentecost. Jesus was in essence, preparing them for what was going to occur in the near future and giving them a lesson on how it would take place. The blowing on the disciples was only a demonstration or reenactment of what was about to occur on the Day of Pentecost, with the arrival of the Spirit, when He came as "a rushing mighty wind" (Acts 2:2).

We might conclude that this breathing of the Holy Spirit, a symbolic demonstration, was only a *pledge* or a *promise* that wasn't fulfilled until the day of Pentecost. In fact, all you have to do is look at the disciples to know that they hadn't received the Holy Spirit until Pentecost. In John 20, we discover that eight days later they were found hiding. They were full of fear and they were in a locked room. This is more than a week after He breathed on them, and more than a week after He promised them, and they hadn't gone anywhere or done anything that would manifest the Spirit's presence.

Even if the Lord Jesus did give the disciples a temporary infusion of the Spirit in John 20:22, it can only be viewed as a transitioning time in the apostles lives until Pentecost came, where they received the permanent residency of the Spirit. The later gospel records and the Book of Acts was a time of transition and many experiences could only occur in the time of transition from the Old Testament way of living (temporary residency of the Holy Spirit) to the New Testament living (Pentecost and permanent residency). In other words, if the disciples did receive the Spirit, it was similar to the way Old Testament saints received the Spirit prior to Pentecost. The receiving of the Spirit would only be a temporary indwelling until Pentecost similar to the indwelling of the Spirit in Old Testament times, as with Saul and David, an indwelling that could be removed (Ps. 51:10-11, Luke 11:13). At Pentecost, when the Church began, the Spirit's indwelling became permanent as Jesus predicted and promised (John 14:16).

Here is the point; one should not base theology on obscure experiences that are not reiterated in the later epistles. Furthermore, to think the Holy Spirit is received in such a manner as Christ presented (blowing on people) is an absurdity. Does a Charismatic figure take the place of Jesus today and blow on us so we might receive the Holy Spirit? We find nothing of the sort in the doctrinal teachings of the epistles. The Bible speaks for

itself. One again, we must base our theology on unchanging truth; not transitional experiences that occur in the later gospels and Book of Acts. This is because the epistles clearly reveal that every Christian does possess the Holy Spirit's presence and baptizing saving work at the very moment of his conversion (Rom. 8:9; Gal. 3:27; 4:6; 1 Cor. 6:19; 12:13). Nor do we "wait" for the Holy Spirit as the original disciples did (Acts 1:4) or experience the miraculous signs that accompanied the initial arrival of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:2-4).

These were miraculous signs to authenticate Peter's message and demonstrate what had occurred for the very first time in history (Acts 2:33). The Pentecostal signs (Acts 2:2-4) which included speaking in tongues were NEVER revealed to be LASTING signs that would occur in conjunction with the saving and baptizing ministry of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13). These signs in relationship to the baptism of the Holy Spirit are conspicuously absent in the doctrinal section of the epistles. Therefore, to conclude that every Christian must experience these same miraculous signs, in connection with the baptism of the Holy Spirit, becomes a gross misunderstanding of what was occurring on the Day of Pentecost. All Christians are commanded to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18) and walk in the Spirit (Rom. 8:4; Gal. 5:25) but NEVER do we find in the Word of God that every Christian is told to speak in tongues.

We read that all the Corinthians had been baptized by the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13) but not all of them spoke in tongues (1 Cor. 12:30). Since this is true, how could tongues be a permanent sign of the baptism of the Spirit? This question is unanswerable by those of the charismatic persuasion. Therefore, it would be unscriptural to conclude that God intended the baptism of the Holy Spirit to always include the speaking in tongues.

All Christians are commanded to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18) and walk in the Spirit (Rom. 8:4; Gal. 5:25) but NEVER do we find in the Word of God that every Christian is commanded to speak in tongues. One must be careful to distinguish between the *temporary* sign of tongue speaking on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) and throughout the Book of Acts (Acts 10:44-48, 19:1-7) which took place in conjunction with the Spirit's initial baptism to form the Church and the *permanent* signs of the filling and fruit of the Spirit which should to be sought and maintained in the life of every Christian today (Eph. 5:18-25; Gal. 5:22-23).

Let's think Biblically and logically on the matter of "waiting" for the arrival of the Holy Spirit. The "waiting" that the disciples experienced was understandable. There was a reason why they were waiting for the Holy Spirit. It's because the Holy Spirit had not yet arrived as Jesus predicted would occur on the Day of Pentecost.

John 14:16-17

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

b. Recreating the promise

Jesus said the Holy Spirit would eventually and initially come and this would occur on the Day of Pentecost as clearly outlines in Acts chapter 2. This was His promise and this is what occurred on this momentous day.

Acts 2:1

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place."

Charismatics and Pentecostals claim that we should have our own personal Pentecost where we receive the Holy Spirit baptism and begin to speak in tongues just as the disciples did on the Day of Pentecost. However, the Day of Pentecost cannot be recreated today, any more than the creation account can be recreated, or Christ's death and resurrection could reoccur.

The waiting for the Spirit's arrival (Acts 1:4) was part of a unique and dramatic event that would occur only once in history. In short, what was happening on the Day of Pentecost was transitional. What occurred on Pentecost with the Spirit's initial arrival was a once and done deal! You cannot repeat the happening of Pentecost. This was a unique occurrence designed to only occur once in the reckoning of church history. If you want to repeat Pentecost, then you are 1900 years too late and probably 10,000 miles away from Jerusalem!

Richard De Haan in referencing Pentecost states:

“It was on God’s calendar. In fulfillment of Old Testament typology, it marked the birthday of the Church, and inaugurated the age of the Spirit.”

Pentecost was the birthday of the Church. It was the day when the Church came into existence with the initial advent of the Holy Spirit. Connecting the dots is very easy. Jesus promised that the Church would begin in the future (Matt. 16:18). The promise was further connected with Pentecost (Luke 24:49 - 50 days after Christ’s resurrection) and the arrival of the Holy Spirit (“when he, the Spirit of truth, is come” - John 16:13; Acts 1:4). The initial entrance of the Holy Spirit into the believer’s hearts would bring about the formation of the Body (the Church – Col. 1:18) as a result of the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13) and the creation of a unique union of Christians with Christ (Eph. 2:22) in “the dispensation of the grace of God” (Eph. 3:2) which was a new outpouring of His grace in forming “the church the manifold witness of God” (Eph. 3:10). On the Day of Pentecost Peter confirmed this was the birthday of the Church (Acts 2:33) with the gift of the Spirit’s arrival and baptizing work to form the body of Christ and reconfirmed it later (Acts 11:17-18).



My grandson Silas was born on January 8th. Of course, he was born only once! You can’t repeat his birth and no mother would want to repeat a birth! Here is the point; you cannot repeat a birthday! The church can only be born once or have one day of birth. Therefore, the unique event that occurred on this birthday (waiting for the Spirit’s arrival) and the

supernatural signs that accompanied it (speaking in tongues) would only happen in connection with the birthday of the Church and the early expansion of the Church during the apostolic days, as God’s people were being transferred from the Mosaic Age into the Church Age. God chose to use some confirming signs to authenticate what was occurring during the infant stage of the Church. After the Church was started there would be no more need for “waiting” for the Holy Spirit and not more need for any confirming signs that the Age of the Spirit had begun.

Think of it this way. What happened at the birthday of the church is not a repeatable event. You can never repeat a birthday! The Holy Spirit only came ONCE to form the Church. Therefore, to “wait” for the Holy Spirit

today (Acts 1:4), after one is saved, goes against what the Bible teaches in the epistles, which are given to clarify doctrine and practice.

As Jesus predicted, the Holy Spirit would one day arrive and begin a new work, the formation of His Church (the new people of God). The Holy Spirit would baptize these Pentecost saints into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13) and begin His new work of indwelling and empowering every Christian. The only reason that the disciples were waiting for the Spirit's arrival (Acts 1:4) is because the Holy Spirit had not yet historically come to enter into the lives of God's people permanently and form this new head/body relationship (Col. 1:18; 2:19) between Christ and the believer by the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit.

John 14:20

“At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.”

On the Day of Pentecost (“At that day”), 50 days after Christ's resurrection, the Holy Spirit would initially arrive to begin His new work by placing the Old Testament saints into a new relationship with Christ and making them New Testament saints. The expression “ye in me, and I in you” is speaking of the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit that would place these believers into a living, spiritual, saving union with Christ's life.

1 Corinthians 12:13

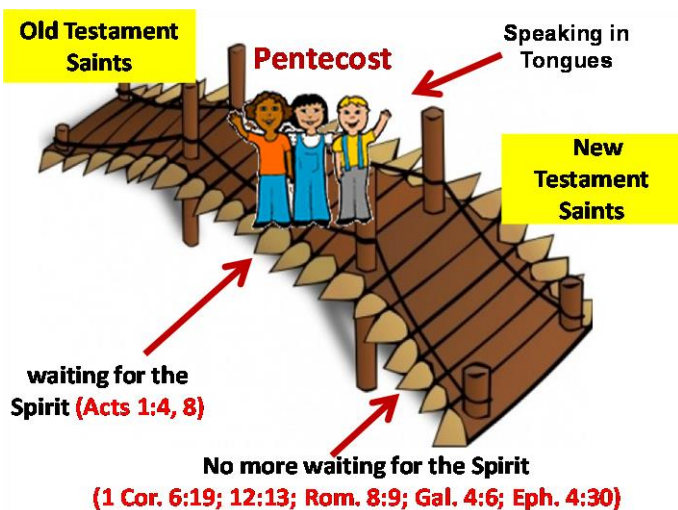
“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”

In short, on the Day of Pentecost the body of Christ was formed (the Church), which became on this day linked to Christ in a saving union and relationship. The disciples and all those described in the Book of Acts were crossing through an intersection in the road that led them from Old Testament ground (living under the Law) to New Testament ground (living under grace). Therefore, they had to wait for the initial arrival and baptizing work of the Holy Spirit on this unique Day of Pentecost in answer to what Jesus taught and said would occur. They also experienced certain miraculous signs, such as speaking in tongues, to authenticate the Spirit's initial arrival.

Of course, this occurrence would not be the NORMAL experience for Gospel believers living throughout the future church centuries. After the initial arrival of the Holy Spirit and the baptizing of all Old Testament saints into the body of Christ (the Church), throughout the transition period of the Book of Acts, there would be no more waiting for the Holy Spirit to enter the lives of believers. The Holy Spirit would enter the lives of believers immediately and forever as the epistles reveal (1 Cor. 6:19). Furthermore, there would be no more need for any miraculous or confirming signs concerning the start of the Church Age, once every Old Testament saint was transferred from the era of the Law into the new age of grace (the age of the Spirit). This occurred during the days of the infant church and the initial expansion of Christianity.

2. The picture of transition

The waiting for the Spirit (Acts 1:4, 8) was transitory in nature. The post-conversion experience from becoming an Old Testament saint to a New Testament saint in order to become part of the body of Christ (the Church) was also transitory. In addition, all of the sights, sounds, and speech (tongue speaking) on this special Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) were also part of this transitory period of time which was designed to prove to the Jewish people that Jesus was the Messiah and the Holy Spirit had initially come to form His Church. These special events that occurred on this day would become confirming signs to authenticate Peter's message to the Jews on the Day of Pentecost God concerning Christ, His ascension, and sending of the Holy Spirit to form the Church – the body of Christ (Eph. 5:23).



A bridge picture may help us to understand this unique time of transition from the Mosaic Dispensation into the Grace Dispensation (Acts 2:33). You cannot repeat Pentecost nor have your own personal Pentecost, where you wait for the Holy Spirit to enter your life after salvation and when you receive the alleged gift of speaking in tongues.

Why? It's because you are 1,900 years too late! However, we can experience the promised power of the Spirit (Acts 1:8) for witnessing and the filling of the Spirit for living (Eph. 5:18). We can experience the lasting fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) operating in our lives in light of the Spirit's initial coming on the Day of Pentecost and His abiding presence in our lives today.

Today we are on the other side of the bridge living on New Testament ground. What took place in Acts chapter 2 and other Acts passages, such as the Spirit's initial arrival and the Spirit's baptism with the special gift of speaking in tongues were all experiences that would only occur in the middle of the bridge, as Old Testament saints crossed over the bridge and became New Testament saints.

The special sights, sounds, and speech (tongue speaking) of the disciples would only occur in connection with the Spirit's initial arrival. These disciples were crossing over the bridge from being Old Testament and becoming New Testament saints. They were going to be transferred from the Old Testament economy into the New Testament economy with all of its new spiritual blessings, such as being permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30) and baptized into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13) which would be called the Church (Col. 1:18; Eph. 5:23). God's people were being transferred from the Mosaic Age into the Church Age. Something special had to occur to prove what was happening.

At Pentecost and during the infant days of the apostolic Church, Old Testament saints were becoming New Testament saints. This occurred during a short, transitional, period of time as they passed over the bridge from the Old Covenant (Law) into the New Covenant (grace). Therefore, they needed to receive the benefits of New Testament salvation, the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2; 10:34-48; 19:1-6), even though they were previously saved (Luke 10:20) during the Old Testament economy. Once the transition from Law to Grace, Old Testament Saints to New Testament saints had historically occurred, there was no more need for confirming signs (speaking in tongues) to authenticate the new work that God was doing.

It's very clear that the apostles did not receive the baptism of the Spirit or the permanent indwelling of the Spirit until years after their salvation for the simple reason that there was no "Baptism of the Spirit" until the Day of

Pentecost (Acts 2:1). These men and other brethren during the infant days of the Church were saved years before Pentecost (Luke 10:20) during the time of the Law (Galatians 4:4). However, several years after their salvation, Spirit Baptism and the formation of God's Church began. The apostle's experience and those living during the early Church was unique because they straddled two different ages or dispensations. They were walking across the bridge from the Old Testament into the New Testament.

Nowhere does the Bible say we are to tarry, pray, seek, or ask for the Holy Spirit to come upon our lives after we are saved! The Bible clearly reveals to us that every Christian today who is saved has the Holy Spirit already. Even within the passages of the Acts of the Apostles there is no record of people asking for or seeking the Holy Spirit. There is no recorded instance of people praying for the Holy Spirit to come upon their lives. No one sought for the Holy Spirit in Chapters 2, 8, 10, or 19. In fact, in chapter 19:2 the people had not even heard about the arrival of the Holy Spirit. To build a doctrine of seeking, waiting, or praying for the Holy Spirit to come upon your life is foreign even to the book of Acts and the Church epistles.

In summary, if you want to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues AFTER you are saved, then you would need to be:

- An Old Testament saint that is becoming a New Testament saint
- Crossing over the bridge from the Old Testament economy into the New Testament economy
- Passing from the Mosaic Age into the Church Age and living during the time of unique transition
- Be living on the Day of Pentecost or shortly after (1900 years ago) to be part of this unique occurrence.

The Spirit's arrival in the Book of Acts (Acts 1:4, 8) is transitional in nature and was NEVER intended to be a lasting pattern on how to receive the Holy Spirit. Nor were the signs (wind, tongue figures, speaking in different languages) connected with the initial reception of the Holy Spirit designed to be lasting signs given for the Church to experience throughout the future generations. They were all transitional signs – not permanent signs. The only reason there were signs associated with the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts was because of Pentecost, the initial arrival of the Holy Spirit, and the transition period from the Mosaic Dispensation to the Grace Dispensation of the Spirit (Acts 2:33).

3. The personal experience of Pentecost

We now want to look at the experience of the apostles on the Day of Pentecost. Once again, this was the experience of Christ's disciples but this does not mean that it will be our experience today!

Larry Pettegrew once said:

"We must not make the tragic spiritual and doctrinal mistake of teaching the experience of the apostles instead of experiencing the teaching of the apostles."

At this point, we must always remember something about experiences. We are called upon to "prove all things" (1 Thess. 5:21). We must test experiences and measure them up to the divine standard of God's Word to determine whether or not they are true or false (counterfeit). We begin with truth and move to experience. We do not begin with experience and move to truth. If we lose this order we will be subject to every new thing that comes down the pike.

We can break down the Pentecostal experience in seven ways.

a. It happened on Sunday (Acts 2:1)

Leviticus 23:15-16

"And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete (49 days complete): Even unto the morrow (morning) after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days (Sunday); and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord."

Leviticus 23:15-16

And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths (Saturdays) shall be complete: Even unto the morrow (Sunday) after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord.

The disciples began to speak in tongues on the Day of Pentecost which occurred on Sunday, 50 days after Christ's resurrection. The teaching of the two loaves on Feast Day or Pentecost (Leviticus 23:16) which followed Passover (the death of Christ) became a picture of how the Jews and Gentiles would eventually be brought together into

one loaf (1 Cor. 10:17), or one Church body, on the Day of Pentecost (Eph. 2:16; 3:6). This would result in the formation of the New Testament Church. Thus, Pentecost became the type of the formation of the future Church and the Day of Pentecost was the exact day when the Church came into existence.

The Bible says, “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come” (Acts 2:1). In one sense, this means that the particular day of Pentecost (Sunday) had never been typically fulfilled. However, in answer to God’s picture book of the Old Testament, the Church was now fulfilling the message portrayed by Pentecost. The true Pentecost and its pictorial or typical fulfillment had finally arrived. The birth of the Church was the fulfillment of God’s prophetic calendar of feast days as He revealed in Leviticus 23. The Church would be born on the Day of Pentecost (Sunday) bringing both Jews and Gentiles together into one body.

Pentecost means “fifty” because it came fifty days after the Feast of Firstfruits (Lev. 23:15-22) which typically corresponds to fifty days after the resurrection of Christ. Christ is the firstfruits (1 Cor. 15:23). This marks the timing of the Church’s beginning. It began on Sunday, the first day of the week, fifty days after Christ’s resurrection. This period of fifty days would include His forty day post-resurrection ministry (Acts 1:3). After the forty days the disciples were awaiting the promise of the Holy Spirit’s arrival to begin the Church which focused on the baptizing ministry of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4). Following Christ’s ascension (Acts 1:8) this promise became true (Acts 2:1).

b. It had certain sounds (Acts 2:2)

The first physical evidence that the Holy Spirit was initially arriving to baptize these people into the body of Christ and form the Church was the sound of wind. The sound on Pentecost, which was like the blowing of a violent wind from heaven, points to the coming presence and power of the Holy Spirit. It must have been something to be there on this momentous day when the Spirit initially arrived.

We have all heard a violent thunderstorm approaching in the distance during the spring or summertime. We can hear the arrival of the wind and eventually experience the wind as it arrives. This is what occurred on the Day of Pentecost. The people heard the blowing of a mighty wind.

If you want to recreate Pentecost, then you must also recreate this sound! Of course, the Holy Spirit is compared to wind (John 3:8) and we need His ministry in our hearts and lives today. We do need the wind of the Holy Spirit blowing upon us today. Although we cannot recreate all the sounds, sights, and speech of Pentecost we do desperately need the work of the Spirit in our hearts and lives. The old hymn sums it up well:

“Lord, send the old-time power, the Pentecostal power!
Thy floodgates of blessing, on us throw open wide!
Lord, send the old-time power, the Pentecostal power!
That sinners be converted and Thy Name glorified!”

c. It included various sights (Acts 2:3)



The second physical evidence that pointed to the Spirit’s arrival was the figures of fire-like tongues, which sat upon the heads of each disciple. The word “cloven” means divided and the understanding of this seems to be that fiery-like and tongue-like shapes equally divided themselves or distributed themselves upon the disciples. The tongue-like flames separated and rested upon each of the disciples. The tongues of fire portray the presence of God. Various times in the Old Testament God displayed Himself in the form of flames (Gen. 15:17; Ex. 3:2-6; 13:21-22; 19:18; 40:38).

Of course, the tongues of fire resting upon their heads was an indicator that God was going to give them the miraculous ability of speaking in another language. But again, if you want to recreate Pentecost, you must also recreate this tongue-like phenomenon above your head. Good luck!

The baptism that fell upon the Pentecostal disciples is often confused with a Holy Ghost baptism by fire. Many Pentecostals claim that there is a Holy Ghost baptism by fire where people receive a second work of grace, which involves the outpouring of the Holy Spirit with the speaking in tongues. They base this upon what John the Baptist said.

Matthew 3:11-12 states:

“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

Although the baptism of the Spirit and the baptism of fire are spoken of together (Matt. 3:11, 12; Luke 3:16, 17), they are two separate and distinct events. The first is a baptism that results in blessing; the second is a baptism that results in judgment. The first (baptism of the Holy Spirit) will only affect believers, the second (baptism by fire) will only affect unbelievers. By the first, believers would be indwelt and empowered, and the Church would be formed. By the second (baptism by fire), unbelievers will be destroyed and judged at Christ’s Second Coming. Many read Matthew 3:11 about the Holy Spirit’s baptism for the disciples but fail to read the context of Matthew 3:12 concerning the “fire” which is one of judgment for the unsaved.

To equate the Holy Spirit’s baptism upon God’s people with fire, as some kind of emotional experience with speaking in tongues, is a gross violation of what Jesus taught. If we are baptized by fire we will be judged by Christ!

You will note that when John the Baptist was addressing a mixed group (repentant and unrepentant people, see Matt. 3:6, 7) he said Christ would baptize them with the Holy Spirit and fire (Matt. 3:11). However, when he was speaking only to those who were truly repentant (Mark 1:5), he said Christ would baptize them with the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:8).

d. It recorded definite speech (Acts 2:4-8)

The tongues spoken at Pentecost were actual languages. They were not some kind of unintelligible jargon that nobody could understand but actual languages. The word “tongues” (vv. 3 and 11) is the Greek word “glossa” and refers to the tongue, a member of the body, an organ of speech. It was the normal word that was always used for actual language or dialect. New Testament glossolalia always means human languages. The Greek term “glossa” (tongue or language) and “lalia” (speech) literally means tongue speech or speaking in languages.

It can be clearly proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that these tongues were actual languages.

Acts 2:6

“Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.”

The word “language” is the Greek word “dialektos” from which we get our word dialect. A dialect is the tongue or language peculiar to a certain group of people. The obvious point is this; the disciples were also speaking in the particular dialects of the people, which contained various pronunciations of words, distinguishing speech reflections and other marks particular to certain speech patterns in a given area.

Acts 2:4

“And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

The phrase “as the Spirit gave them utterance” suggests that this phenomenon was the result of the Spirit’s power and blessing upon their lives. This was a supernatural phenomenon produced by the coming of the Holy Spirit upon their lives. Also, the word “other” (heteros) means “another of a different kind” and clearly reveals they were speaking in languages different from their own natural tongue. Of course, some believe that the “other” is a reference to some unknown heavenly language (gibberish) that is absolutely different from any known languages of the world. However, this is foreign to the context and facts presented since the people heard the disciples speak in their own language (Acts 2:6, 8). These verses demonstrate conclusively that tongues were actual languages.

Observe:

1. The miracle that occurred

The miracle of Pentecost was in the speaking (Acts 2:4 – “began to speak”) and not the hearing of the individuals. Some over the years have taught that the miracle was in what the people heard instead of the actual speaking of the disciples. In other words, there was a supernatural decoding of the message that occurred in the hearing of the people. The

disciples may have spoken in their native language but the miracle that occurred was in the hearing of the people – the disciple’s language being decoded in their ears. Some even suggest that the disciples spoke in some kind of heavenly language (imperceptible to men) but that the Spirit miraculously enabled the listeners to hear and understand it in their native tongues. In other words, some suggest there was a definite interpretive miracle in the hearing of the tongues.

I remember watching the old science fiction (black and white) monster movies (Godzilla vs. King Kong and Ultra man) in black and white. These were the days when you could enjoy a movie and not be bombarded by sexual content and innuendoes. Many of them were Japanese films and therefore needed to be translated into English. So when someone spoke in Japanese their mouths were not synchronized with the English and there was almost a pause before their words could be transliterated into English. The producer’s job was to take Japanese (their native tongue) and make us hear it in English.

Well, some have taught that the disciples on Pentecost were speaking in their own native tongue and the people were miraculously hearing them in their own language. This is not the miracle of Pentecost. The miracle was in the speaking of languages – not the hearing of the languages. The Bible emphatically declares that the people heard their own language coming out of the mouths of the disciples (“heard them speak” - Acts 2:6). The miracle was in the speaking – not the hearing.

The interpretation or miraculous decoding of the disciples own language seems rather strange since elsewhere in the Book of Acts or 1 Corinthians, there is never any mention of a miraculous decoding in the ears of the audience who were listening to those speaking in different languages. The miracle that “amazed” (vv. 7, 12) the audience and listeners on Pentecost was that they actually heard the disciples speaking in their very own dialects. Remember that the people could also “see” (Acts 2:33) the mouths of the disciples moving and they knew the disciples were not speaking in a language which the disciples knew themselves but were speaking in the languages which they knew back in their little towns (“own tongue” – vs. 8).

The miracle was in the speaking and not in the hearing (“are not all these which speak Galileans?” – vs.7). These disciples were known to be

unlearned men such as Galilean fisherman and such like and yet the people of Pentecost heard the disciples miraculously speaking their own languages down to the very dialects. This was truly a miracle of speaking taking place.

So, the disciples spoke in different languages as the Bible clearly states and the people would naturally understand them “speak in his own language” (Acts 2:6) since the disciples were speaking in their very own language. They would “hear” (Acts 2:8) the disciples in their own languages and dialects.

This supernatural phenomenon brought utter amazement to their hearts (vs. 7). I would be surprised if my assistant pastor would start rattling off perfect German or Spanish, since I know that he can only speak English! This would be amazing to me. You see, the miracle was in the speaking. This is further substantiated by the word “other” (Acts 2:4) and means that the languages which were spoken were not the disciples own native tongues or original languages. The miracle was the enabling the disciples to speak other languages that they had not previously known prior to the day of Pentecost.

2. The message that they brought

Acts 2:11

“Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.”

The understanding of “the wonderful works of God” means the great things of God or magnificent things about God. The disciples, in front of all the people, and as the initial leaders in the apostolic Church, began to praise God in different languages. The tongues and different languages and dialects that were spoken were not used to preach the Gospel as so many seem to suggest. The tongues or different languages that were used promoted praise to God – not preaching. In fact, there is not one Bible reference that proves tongues were used to preach the Gospel.

The Scripture does say they were used to proclaim the wonderful works of God – not preach the wonderful Gospel of God or the wonderful Word of God. In other words, tongues (speaking in different languages) were not used for preaching the actual Gospel and the Word of God but extensively

praised God for what was occurring on the Day of Pentecost and in the lives of the people on this day. They shared by way of praise and thanksgiving what Jesus said would take place and gave honor to God for the movement of the Holy Spirit to give birth to the Church – the Body of Christ.

Tongues were always used for praise and not for sharing the Gospel message with others. Whenever tongues appear in the Bible they are linked to a form of praise – not preaching (Acts 10:46; 1 Cor. 14:13-17). The preaching was always done in a common language that the people could understand (Acts 2:14). Peter spoke in a common language that everyone could understand which was probably the universal Greek language spoken throughout the Roman Empire.

John Walvoord said:

“Even though Paul claims to have spoken in tongues, there is no instance where he used this as a method of preaching the gospel.”

This is an important observation from Scripture. Tongues were used for praising God and not preaching or proclaiming the Word of God. The important lesson for us today is that we continue to praise God with the tongue he had given to us!

I heard about a congregation where the preacher and the song leader weren't getting along. As time went by, this began to spill over into the worship service. One week, the preacher preached on commitment and how we all should dedicate ourselves to the service of God. The song leader led the song, "I Shall not be Moved." The next week, the preacher preached on giving and how we all should gladly contribute to the work of the Lord. The song leader led the song, "Jesus Paid it All." The third week, the preacher preached on gossiping and how we should all watch our tongues. The song leader led the song, "I Love to Tell the Story."

With all this going on, the preacher became very disgusted over the situation and the following Sunday told the congregation that he was considering resigning. The song leader led the song, "Why Not Now?" As it came to pass, the preacher did indeed resign. The next week he informed the church that it was Jesus who led him there and it was Jesus that was taking him away. The song leader led the song, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus."

Now this kind of game was not true worship! What we need today is worship that is pure and Spirit-directed – not manufactured.

John 4:24 teaches us this:

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit (the location of our worship) and in truth” (the way we worship - a Biblical way and sincere).

e. It involved specific speakers

There is a question whether only the Twelve spoke in tongues or all 120 who were waiting for the Spirit’s arrival. The evidence supports only the 12 apostles speaking in tongues. (1) "They" in Acts 2:1 refers back to the "apostles" in 1:26. The nearest antecedent of “they” in 2:1 is the “apostles” in 1:26. (2) The "them" and "they" in Acts 2:3,4 on whom tongues fell would then refer to the apostles. (3) The apostles only are addressed in Acts 1:1-13. Before Pentecost, only the apostles were promised that "ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." (4) They are referred to as Galileans (Acts 2:7) which would not be said about 120 people. (5) Peter stood up with “the Eleven” as though they were the ones doing the tongue speaking (Acts 2:14). (4) When the men of Judea accused "these men" (2:13) of drunkenness, the group that responded were, "Peter.....with the eleven." (2:14), that is, the apostles.

It’s true that the number of languages listed in Acts 2:9-11 is more than 12 but it’s very likely that one apostle spoke more than one language, in sequence as suggested by verse 4 – “as the Spirit gave them utterance.” This seems to be the best solution and understanding of the many different languages and dialects spoken on this day.

The fact that women were forbidden to speak in tongues within the Church and be representative leaders within the Church would also suggest that the disciples were the only ones who spoke in tongues. The pattern would be set for Church authority at the Pentecostal birthday of the Church.

1 Corinthians 14:34 gives this command:

“Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.”

It is often said that what Paul is forbidding in this verse is for the women to stop chattering or gossiping while the service is going on and interrupting the service. However, such an interpretation is incorrect and untenable. The word in 1 Corinthians 14:34 which is translated speak (laleō) did not mean to chatter or gossip. This same word is used eighteen times and relates to speaking with tongues or prophesying (vv. 3, 29). It means the woman were not to speak authoritatively and take on a leading role and position in assembly life. This command was not against making noisy interruptions but against taking part in oral ministry.

If this command alone would be followed it would stop much of what is being promoted in the modern Charismatic Church, where women are said to regularly speak in tongues, and even preach and take on leading roles in assembly life.

God's law regarding the submission of women cannot be overturned without losing His true and rich blessing upon our personal marriages and churches. This "law" has reference to the woman being submissive to the man. This is clearly taught in Genesis 2 and 1 Corinthians 11:3, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God."

Please note that this command for women being silent in the local church service was set in the overall context of prophesying, speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, and the evaluation of prophetic messages (vv. 23-33) during the early apostolic assemblies. The women could not take on any of these leading roles when the assembly came together in one service (1 Cor. 14:23, 26). Since speaking in tongues involved authoritative speaking and praying before the congregation (1 cor. 14:13-14), the gift was not to be exercised by women in the local church setting.

1 Timothy 2:12 adds this regarding the women's role in the church:
"But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."

When it comes to preaching to the corporate gathering of the church and taking on leading roles and ministries in the church, women were taught by apostolic command to be silent. The Bible clearly forbids women to take on any authoritative role within assembly life – teaching, tongue speaking, or taking the position of an elder.

1 Timothy 3:1:

“This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.”

The word for “man” is referring to a male individual since this person (a man) was to meet the qualification “the husband of one wife” (1 Tim. 3:2). This was not apostolic suggestion but a command written down and inspired by God. Every woman who seeks to overthrow this command and usurp authority over the man in the church setting and life is being disobedient and will not receive the true blessing of God when she stands before the Lord someday.

Many women preachers in the denominational and charismatic churches will try and overrule what Paul says by claiming he was adhering to custom and not to the true commandment of the Lord. This is undermining and demeaning God’s Word and is an attempt to create one’s own biased opinion of the clearly stated apostolic command. It is demeaning to God’s Word and truth to try and change what God has clearly written.

It’s stated very clearly the women were forbidden to take a lead role in the early apostolic church in preaching (1 Tim. 2:12) and even the speaking in tongues (a different language), since this was a gift that was used to extensively communicate the praises of God in an articulate way to the community of believers.

Many feminists are attacking the apostolic instruction. Today some people are even taking the “him” out of the hymnals. They say if humans were “in the image and likeness of God,” then God must be both masculine and feminine. Under the Rev. Mr. Young’s guidance, a group of male and female Duke students are rewriting not only hymns and prayers but passages of Scripture. Ultimately, an entire “non-sexist” Bible may develop. “In the main,” he said, the Duke group has been substituting “God” for the pronoun “him” whenever possible and, in some instances, praying, “Oh God, our Father-Mother.”

The whole feminist movement is disgusting and sickening but it has made inroads into the church at alarming rates. We must agree with Scripture and follow its directives if we want God’s true blessing both today and in the future.

f. It evidenced spirituality

Acts 2:4

“And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

The Scripture teaches that on Pentecost the disciples were filled with the Spirit when they spoke with tongues. The word “filled” (pletho) means they were controlled by the Spirit. The filling of the Spirit was accompanied by the outbreak of speaking in different languages. The speaking of tongues (languages) was a sign that the disciples were filled with the Spirit.

Many Charismatic brothers and sisters confuse the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the filling of the Spirit. The two are totally different. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit relates to salvation (1 Cor. 12:13) while the filling of the Spirit relates to Christian living (Eph. 5:18). The baptism of the Spirit and the filling of the Spirit are two different ministries of the Spirit. They are not synonymous.

To be baptized by the Spirit means that we *belong to Christ's Body* – the Church (1 Cor. 12:13); however, to be filled with the Spirit means that *our bodies* belong to Christ (Eph. 5:18). *There is one baptism but many fillings.* Scripture mentions no specific signs for those who have been baptized by the Holy Spirit but does mention various permanent signs associated with the filling of the Spirit (Eph. 5:18-25).

Lehman Strauss wisely observes:

“All believers are commanded to “be filled with (controlled by) the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18), but nowhere in Scripture are all believers commanded to speak in tongues. A Christian can be under the influence and control of the Holy Spirit and not speak in tongues. There are numerous instances when the disciples were filled with the Spirit but did not speak in tongues. See Acts 4:31 and 13:9-11. To be Spirit-filled is to be Spirit-controlled. Are we to believe that the thousands of mightily used men and women of God who were among the world's best missionaries of Christ's Gospel and Bible teachers were never filled with the Holy Spirit because they never spoke in tongues? Perish the thought!”

Of course, Pentecostals will take a verse like Acts 2:4 and run with it. They will inform you that everyone who is truly filled with the Spirit MUST speak

in tongues since this is the sign of the Spirit's filling. This is totally misleading and is not what the New Testament epistles teach.

There are two reasons why tongues cannot be used today for a sign of the Spirit's filling.

1. This Spirit's filling in Acts 2 was a unique occurrence.

First, what was happening on the Day of Pentecost was a unique occurrence. The fact that they spoke in tongues was a sign of the Spirit's filling ministry upon their lives, in order to officially introduced the new dispensation of the Spirit's ministry (Acts 2:33). It was a unique occurrence of how the Holy Spirit had filled the disciples. Speaking in tongues was not designed to be the normal way for the Holy Spirit to evidence Himself within the believer's life.

The filling of the Spirit, with the accompanying sign of speaking in tongues or languages, was actually a unique part of the Spirit's filling ministry that would only occur in the transitional and infant stage of the church as people were passing from O.T. ground into N.T ground.

2. The Spirit's filling does not always include tongues.

Even during the infant days of the early church, when tongues were being used, speaking in different languages was not always a sign of the Spirit's filling ministry. One can note that at other times in the disciple's ministry within the Acts, they were filled with the Spirit without speaking in tongues (Acts 4:31; 9:3-18; 13:9-11). Also, the 3,000 souls saved on Pentecost were not said to speak in tongues!

We can be controlled by the Spirit without possessing or displaying the spectacular evidence of speaking in tongues. Are we to believe that the thousands of mighty men which God has used down through the church were not Spirit-filled because they did not speak in tongues? Were not the reformers (Luther, Calvin) Spirit-filled? Were not Billy Sunday, D. L. Moody, Adoniram Judson, or William Carey filled with the Spirit? Some of the world's greatest missionaries and Bible students have never spoken in tongues. Were they not Spirit-filled? Jesus saw no need to speak in tongues and He received the Spirit without measure or limitation (John 3:34).

It is simply an erroneous error to always equate spirituality and Spirit-filled living with speaking in tongues. In fact, how could this be a definite sign of spirituality that we should all seek since not everybody was gifted to speak in tongues in the early church (1 Cor. 12:30).

It must be understood that the speaking in tongues, which occurred in connection with the Spirit's filling on Pentecost and during the early days of the church was NEVER designed to be a lasting sign of the Spirit's filling or control over a person's life.

The later epistles do NOT record that speaking in tongues was the expected normal display for the filling of the Spirit (see Eph. 5:18-25). The lasting evidences of the Spirit's filling for the Church are clearly spelled out as: power for witnessing (Acts 1:8), joyfulness and submission (Eph. 5:19), Christlikeness (Gal. 5:22–26), and a growing understanding of the Word (John 16:12–15).

Is tongue speaking always a sign of genuine spirituality and the Spirit's filling? No. One must remember that the Corinthians spoke in tongues and they were carnal (1 Cor. 3:3). The Corinthians were not living a Spirit-directed life even although many of them were speaking in tongues. Therefore, to assume that speaking in tongues is always a sign of the Spirit's filling and spirituality is erroneous. Just the opposite was true, even during the days when God was still giving the gift.

Myron Houghton was correct when observing:

“The purpose of spiritual gifts is not to make the individual user godly but rather to enable the user to serve the church. Support for this conclusion is seen in all three chapters. In chapter 12 Paul wrote, “But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good” (v. 7). In chapter 13 Paul stated that love contrasts not with the gifts but with the selfish way in which the Corinthian believers had been using the gifts (vv. 1–7). And in chapter 14 the apostle noted that prophecy is superior to tongues (unless interpretation also occurred) because “one who prophesies edifies the church” (14:4). Thus *gifts and godliness are not the same*. Using one's spiritual gifts is not a substitute for yieldedness to the Spirit of God and a daily meditation on His Word” (BSac, Volume 153, 1996, July-September).

We might add that it is also a mistake to assume that speaking in tongues is an evidence of one's faith. To the contrary, the person who seeks miraculous signs and sign-gifts actually demonstrate a lack of faith and maturity (Matt. 12:39; 16:4). As we will point out later in this study, "tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not" (1 Corinthians 14: 22). Speaking in tongues was never given to the early Christians as some kind of outward evidence of their faith. Speaking in tongues was given to benefit unbelief and more specifically unbelieving Jews. So you see, the Christians at Corinth were showing that they were actually weak in faith, when they wanted to promote, glorify, and make tongues one of the best gifts. This is because they were babes in Christ (1 Cor. 3:1).

People have asked me if I have ever spoken in other tongues. I usually say, "No, I have done quite well speaking English for many years! I speak to God in English and He hears and understands me. He speaks to me in English through His Word, and I understand Him. One man came up to me and insisted that I was missing out on the greatest blessing in life that I could ever experience because I had never spoken in tongues. I asked him what was more important, speaking in tongues or the fruit of the Spirit. He mocked about the fruit of the Spirit as though it was secondary in nature to the so-called baptism of the Spirit and speaking in tongues.

Dr. Earl Radmacher, president of Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, once told of receiving a pamphlet in the mail that gave the steps necessary to get the Holy Spirit. The pamphlet concluded that one must say two phrases, "Praise the Lord" and "Hallelujah." In fact, a person was to repeat these sayings over and over again for a period of ten minutes. If you did this process long enough you would lapse into a trancelike state and begin speaking in a strange language which would be the evidence that one has received the Holy Spirit.

Many people believe these types of ridiculous and even blasphemous conclusion today wanting to receive something that God never promised to give them. The gifts of the Spirit are distributed according to God's own will which means that no one can claim to create a certain gift by following certain rules (1 Cor. 12:4, 11). Gifts are not created through our human efforts. In Pentecostal colleges there are classes on "How to Speak in Tongues." This is mindboggling and erroneous since the Spirit has never promised to give everyone the same gift (1 Cor. 13:30). Many today are

falling for this type of hype and Pentecostal delusion. This is why we are presently studying about Pentecost.

g. It was a prelude to the spectacular last days

Acts 2:14-21

“But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

There has been much confusion over what was taking place on Pentecost and what Peter meant by these words. We need to study them and understand what was being fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost.

1. Direct Preaching (14)

“But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words.”

Peter was going to give it to the Jewish people with both barrels during this sermon (verse 22) that would lead to the salvation of 3,000 souls (vs. 41). Direct preaching brings results! The Gospel is what saves souls! There is no need to walk around the truth and try and sneak in the back door. We must declare the Gospel boldly and people will be saved.

2. Drunken fools (15)

The speaking in different languages lead some of the people to conclude that the disciples were drunk but his could not be since the day was early. Some have used this verse and others (Eph. 5:18) to teach that we should become drunk in the Holy Spirit and wobble around on the floor and laugh uncontrollably. Again, this is reading something into a text that is not present. The disciples manifested the work of God in their lives and they did it in a controllable fashion (Acts 2:4 – “as the Spirit gave them utterance”) and they did not act like a bunch of drunken fools who were out of control.

This drunken state was the conclusion of the people (Acts 2:15); it is not what actually happened to the disciples. This means that the Spirit’s work in their hearts and lives should not be compared to being drunk in the Holy Spirit. Whenever we are filled with the Spirit we are under His control; we are not out-of-control and doing things that are incompatible with the Spirit’s true work in the hearts and lives of people.

Ephesians 5:18

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.” The Bible never says we are to be “drunk” in the Holy Spirit. It says we are to be filled with the Spirit.

In Ephesians 5:18 Paul may be contrasting the effects of alcohol (out of control living) with the effects of Spirit-filled living (in control living). In other words, a person who is drunk has no control over his life but by CONTRAST a Christian who is filled with the Spirit does have control over his life. The drunken individual lives out-of-control while the Christian is to live by the Spirit’s control and possess victory within his heart and life.

Paul may also be comparing the effects of alcohol, which produces a different way of living (ungodliness) with Spirit-filled living which also produces a different way of living (godliness). While under the influence of alcohol a drunken person acts differently. He does not follow his normal pattern of living (his speech is slurred, reactions are slower, his demeanor changes). By way of COMPARISON, a person who filled with the Holy Spirit also acts differently. He does not act like a drunken fool but a godly Christian that is bringing forth fruit and manifesting Christian character.

Some Pentecostals have concluded we must be drunk in the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues and experiencing what they call “the slaying of the

Spirit.” Where do we read about anything like this ever occurring to God’s New Testament saints? Where is the authority of Scripture for these silly and fruitless practices? This is an anti-Scriptural teaching and experience which has no profit for the Christian life.

In Ephesians 5:18 Paul is not concluding that Spirit-filled people act like drunken fools! His conclusion would be just the opposite. They are to act like Christians! They are to be fruitful and live a new way of life under the power of the Holy Spirit.

2 Peter 3:18 says:

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.”

We are called upon to “**grow in grace**” (the expression of God’s favor and kindness - the *method or way* transformation and growth occurs in our lives today) “**and in the knowledge**” (intimate awareness and communion) **of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ**” (the explanation of how grace transforms and sanctifies our lives).

Grow up! You need to grow in grace and not go on speaking some kind of gibberish, or passing through other esoteric experiences in order to find fulfillment and enrichment in life. Grace is the method God uses and administers to us today, which enables us to grow and go on in our Christian life. We do not grow by speaking in some kind of babble talk or by passing through other carnal experiences (being slain in the Spirit, laughing in the Holy Spirit, dancing in the Spirit) which many are allegedly experiencing today. If you want to grow up, you must grow in grace!

What does it mean to grow in grace? New Testament grace is explained in various ways. Peter defines grace as Christ’s life being communicated to us on a daily basis – His power (vs. 3), godliness (vs.3), promises (vs. 4), nature (vs. 4), virtues or character (vv. 6-8) and adds that “if these things be in you,” not tongues, if Christ’s virtues or character traits are operative in your heart and life (2 Pet. 1:8), then we will never be “barren” (unproductive and defeated). Do you want to really live and have complete fulfillment and spiritual vitality – then experience your relationship with Christ and allow Him to change you.

Grace changes us which is explained as Christ's inner life changing us. This means our entire life must revolve around a person (Jesus Christ – His life and virtues being communicated to us on a daily basis) and not some kind of emotional experience. When we are in touch and tune with Christ we are growing and being sanctified in our Christian life by His power and personal presence. Growth comes by Christ – not by esoteric-type experiences!

I once witnessed a Charismatic preacher hooking up people to some type of fancy battery cables. At the other end of the cables was a large battery. The man proceeded to say that the charge coming through the cables was in some mystical sense turned into the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Gullible people were feeling the charge and then falling backward and actually believing they were receiving something from God! Friend, don't live like this; live by grace!!

Peter tells how to grow and mature in our Christian life. We grow by grace. Grace is the method God uses to change us – not carnal and unscriptural experiences. Four times in the epistle Peter explains “grace” as possessing a personal awareness of Christ's life and experiencing inner and outer transformation through Christ's life. Peter talks about “Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord” (2 Pet. 1:2). 2 Peter 1:3 once again says, “through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.” 2 Peter 1:8, “For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Finally, 2 Peter 3:18 declares:

“But grow in grace (the expression of God's favor and kindness - the method or way of transformation and growth), and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (the explanation of how grace transforms and sanctifies our lives).

Grace is a wonderful thing! Grace, at its very core meaning, speaks of God's benevolence and kindness which is freely given to us through Christ. God gives to us His Son, Jesus Christ, to transform our lives (Phil. 3:10), fulfill our lives (John 10:10), and be with our in lives forever (Matt. 28:20). In order to grow in grace, you must experience the complete and full blessings that you already have through Christ (Col. 2:10), since this is the way grace is experienced or administered to us today. We don't need these

pseudo Pentecostal and Charismatic experiences which are not rooted in grace and the manner in which Christians grow. We need to experience Christ; His life of sustaining power and fulfillment (Gal. 2:20), instead of following immature experiences and other kinds of rabbit trails that lead to confusion and immaturity.

We should not remain babies all of our Christians lives by seeking experiences that are never promised to the child of God. Carnal and self-induced experiences are a diversion to our spiritual growth in grace. We must know and understand what the Bible says about our completeness in Christ and allow Christ's transform us. It's only through Christ (His power, enrichment, character, fulfillment) that will we grow (1 Pet. 2:2).

1 Corinthians 3:1

"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ."

The Corinthians abused the gift of tongues and were said to be spiritual babies in relationship to their Christian life. Baby Christians! These saints needed to grow up. This reminds us that self-induced and pseudo experiences do not make us spiritual and fulfilled in life, our life with Christ does! Grace does!! What we need today for spiritual growth and fulfillment is Christ – not tongues!

3. Days of supernatural wonder (16-21)

Let's break down this section of Scripture.

a. Understanding the last days

Acts 2:17

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams."

Did you ever get your days mixed up? If you had a hard day and long week and are tired in the evening, you might ask yourself, "Now what day is this anyway?" You know it's time for bed when you forget what day it is! When it comes to this text of Scripture, the Pentecostals have gotten their days mixed up! When Charismatics read this verse they immediately conclude

that the speaking in tongues, prophesying, and dreams are to be part of the last days of the Church, before the Rapture occurs and the Church is taken out of the world. They also equate the "latter rain" of Joel 2:23 as a symbol of the Spirit's work during the last days of the Church Age in which we live today. However, this "last day" conclusion has many problems.

The "latter day" explanations of a revival of supernatural gifts and speaking in tongues are simply inadequate. Some of the Pentecostals will admit that the sign gifts did cease and that they are now reoccurring in the "latter days" of the Church age as prophesied by Joel and Peter in Acts 2. However, this must be demonstrated from Scripture. The truth is this; the facts of Scripture teach otherwise.

Acts chapter two is NOT teaching that the church will speak in tongues and experience all the supernatural gifts in the last days prior to the Rapture.

There are several reasons that disprove there will be a "last days" outbreak of tongues which many feel is promised for the Church today. First, the Old Testament prophet Joel could NOT be referencing the Church since the Church and prophetic days of the Church are not mentioned in the Old Testament. It was seen to be a mystery hidden in ages past (Eph. 3:5). Therefore, Joel's prophecy could not be a literal prophecy of about the Church. Second, Peter could NOT be talking about the *last days* of the Church age, since he was speaking of the *beginning* of the Church Age, when the Church was initially born on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2).

Third, the "latter rain" arguments are incorrectly based on verses that actually are referring to seasonal rainfall in Israel. What is rain? Rain! The verses of Hosea 6:3 and Joel 2:23, for example, refer not to some unusual outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the last days of the church age. They refer instead to spring rains, in contrast to early rains in the fall. They have nothing to do with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit but the physical blessings during the earthly Millennial Kingdom. This is something conjured up by Charismatic minds but not God's mind.

The clear explanation is this. Acts chapter two does not give us any Biblical evidence that there will be a reoccurrence of the sign gifts in the Church or that believers will speak in tongues and work miracles near the end of the Church Age. Nevertheless, some Christians equate the "last days" mentioned in Acts 2:17 with the last days prior to Christ's return in the

Rapture for the Church but this is faulty exegesis of Bible texts. The last days of Acts 2 and Joel 2 are dealing with the last days used in connection with *God's plan for Israel* when He will once again be blessing them during the Millennial Kingdom. They do not have anything to do with the "last days" related to the Church prior to the Rapture (2 Tim. 3:1-12).

In 2 Timothy 3:1-12, the epistle that addresses the last days, mentions none of these miraculous happenings occurring before Christ returns in the Rapture. Read Paul's letter to Timothy. You will find none of these signs mentioned! However, we do read about the "last days" which are connected with Israel's kingdom blessings (Isa. 2:2; Micah 4:1).

The "last days" is not an expression that only applies to the Church Age. Scripture will bear this out. The last days can also point to Israel's last days of blessing that she will experience during the Millennial Kingdom (Isa. 2:2-4; Micah 4:1). There are "last days" related to the Church Age (2 Tim. 3:1) and last days related to the Millennium. Don't mix up your days! After hundreds of years of persecution and Gentile dominance over Israel ("the time of the Gentiles" – Luke 21:24), Israel will enter her last or final days of blessing on earth. The "last days" for Israel envision a time when Jesus Christ will rule on the throne of David in Jerusalem (Luke 1:32-33) with Israel being abundantly blessed and the center of all the earth.

Isaiah 2:2-3 predicts:

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house (the rebuilt Millennial Temple) shall be established in the top of the mountains (in Jerusalem), and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

The mountain of the house of the Lord (the Lord's temple) refers to the mount in Jerusalem where the millennial temple will be built for the last days of Israel's blessing as promised by the prophets (Ezek. 40-43). In the future day of the Millennial Kingdom Jerusalem will be established as the religious and political capital of the world. The Gentile nations will make pilgrimages to Zion for worship and for divine instruction.

Isaiah 2:4 reveals:

“And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

Of course this has never happened before but it will happen in the future in connection with Messiah’s reign as the King during the blessing of Israel’s last days on earth. Jesus Christ will bring 1,000 years of peace on planet earth (Rev. 20:1-3). Isaiah 2:4, minus the opening words about God, is inscribed on the United Nations Building in New York City. Although this has never happened historically on earth, it will be literally fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom.

Micah 4:1

“But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.”

This verse is not historical; it is prophetic and looks forward to the time when Jerusalem will once again be established as the center and naval of the earth, when Messiah rules on the throne in Jerusalem. The prophets clearly foretold and envisioned a time when Israel will once again be blessed in the land in answer to the Covenants that were given to her (Amos 9:11-15; Micah 4:4-7; 7:20; Zeph. 3:14-20; Zech. 8:4-8; Matt. 24:31; Rom. 11:25-26).

Israel during the Millennial Kingdom will experience great blessings that are said to occur during the “last days.” The last days is a period of time that follows centuries of persecution and hostility against Israel which previously occurred during the “times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24). Israel has not yet entered her “last days” of blessing on earth. Joel 2:28-29, which Peter referenced on Pentecost (Acts 2), anticipates the glorious future day of the Millennial Kingdom when Israel will be blessed in the land of Palestine and when Jerusalem will be the center of the earth.

Acts 2:17

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.”

What happened on the Day of Pentecost was a foretaste and foreshadowing of what would happen to Israel in the future Millennial Kingdom. Pentecost was similar to what would occur in the future time period of the Millennial Kingdom. This is what Peter was implying when he said in Acts 2:16, “But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.” Of course, this could not possibly be a literal fulfillment of what would occur during the Millennium but Peter was comparing the similarities of the two events.

Joel’s prophecy actually envisions Israel’s salvation and blessings in relationship to Christ’s Second Coming to earth and the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom. Here is a simple outline to follow.

- The promise of the Spirit (Joel 2:28-29) – Blessings of the Holy Spirit for the Millennial Kingdom (“those days” – the days of Israel’s blessings in Millennium – not the days of Church blessing)
- The prophetic setting (Joel 2:30-31) – After the Tribulation Period when astronomical signs indicate Christ’s Second Coming is near.
- The personal salvation (Joel 2:32) – Israel will express faith in Christ (the Messiah) for her salvation and then call upon Messiah to return and deliver her from all her enemies.

When Israel calls on her Messiah, at some point after the seven years has expired, Christ will return and rescue His people and deliver them from the enemies that have surrounded her (Zech. 12:9). The “last days” related to Israel envision the time period immediately preceding the Second Coming and into the Millennial Kingdom. God has not forgotten His beloved people.

In Joel 2:30 we are given the prophetic signs that will occur after the seven-year Tribulation Period has expired and just before Israel’s blessings in the Millennial Kingdom. They will be astronomical signs that occur in the days prior to Christ’s Second Advent. It will be during these “last days” (after the Tribulation has ended), when many within the nation of Israel will begin to speak in tongues and experience supernatural gifts of the Spirit, as they come to faith in the Messiah. It will be a time when Israel will believe on the Messiah (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21) and enter the Millennial Kingdom. It’s during these “last days” (Israel’s future blessing with the salvation and return of the Messiah and her entrance into the Millennium) when the Jews will experience the special gifts of the Spirit.

The expressions “the last days” (Acts 2:17) and “those days” (Acts 2:18) refers to the time immediately after the Tribulation Period (“before that great and notable day of the Lord come” - vs. 20). The “day of the Lord” refers to the time when Israel is saved and then enters the Millennium. These are the promised “last days” of blessing that Israel will experience as she comes to faith in the Messiah and enters the Millennium. Until this future time, when God is once again dealing with Israel, tongues would no longer be necessary. The purpose for tongues would no longer be needed. This is because God would not be sending any new revelation to the Jews that would need miraculous confirmation.

The point is this; the “last days” in Acts 2 cannot be interpreted as the “last days” for the Church Age since Joel is referring to the “last days” of Israel’s blessings after the Tribulation Period and into the Millennial Kingdom. It would be a serious error to associate the “last days” related to Israel and apply them to the last days of the Church. These are different days or times.



Last Days related to the Church Age
***Today (2 Timothy 3:1-2)**
***Rapture (Ending)**

Last Days related to Israel
***Tribulation Period (future seven years)**
***Second Coming**
***Kingdom Blessing (Joel 2:28-31; Acts 2:17-31)**



a. Understanding the interpretation

My favorite dish is pot pie. Lancaster County Pot Pie is made with noodles, chicken, potatoes, and saffron. When you leave Lancaster County they interpret Pot Pie to mean a pie shell filled with potatoes and frozen vegetables. They don’t know what true pot pie is! We need a correct interpretation of pot pie if we are going to get the real thing when it is served! In a similar way, we need to understand what Peter was saying when he quotes Joel’s prophecy on the Day of Pentecost.

The Incorrect interpretation of Pot Pie



The Correct Interpretation of Pot Pie



Many wonder if Peter actually knew that the Church Age was beginning at Pentecost based upon the disciples question in Acts 1:6: “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” It may be that Peter actually thought the Millennial Kingdom or messianic age was going to be inaugurated, but looking back upon the events, he came to realize it was actually the Church Age that began (Acts 11:15-18; 15:14). In retrospect, both Peter and we can see that the prophecy that he gave likens the Spirit’s blessings on Israel, just prior and during the Millennial Kingdom, to the blessings of the Holy Spirit that came upon the Church at its beginning at Pentecost. The Holy Spirit lead Peter to record Israel’s future blessing to teach a *similar* blessing that would occur on the Day of Pentecost. What is the correct interpretation of this part of his sermon?

Peter says in Acts 2:16:

“But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel”

In retrospect, Peter was teaching that the speaking in tongues on Pentecost (the beginning of the Church Dispensation) was similar to what will occur at the beginning of the Kingdom Dispensation but his prophecy does not conclude that it was the actual fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy. This would be an impossibility.

Peter mentions the same signs as Joel did (Acts 2:19-20) and connects one of these signs, speaking in tongues, to what occurred on Pentecost. What will happen to Israel after the Tribulation Period and when Israel enters the Millennial Kingdom (speaking in tongues) is similar to what happened to the disciples, as they entered the Dispensation of the Church (Age of the Spirit). What will happen in the future to Israel (“those days” – Acts 2:18) is similar to what took place on Pentecost. Tongue speaking will break out.

The manifestations of the Spirit’s ministry and blessing upon the lives of the Jewish people following the Tribulation Period and during the Millennial Kingdom will be evident in that many Jews will once again prophesy, dream dreams, and have visions. This is the time Peter envisions will take place in the future and then compares one specific event (tongue speaking) to what occurred on Pentecost.

I remember taking my children and grandchildren to an ice-cream shop below Orlando Florida. We each got a small dip and it cost us \$17.00

dollars. The proprietors said the ice-cream was homemade! Well there were many flavors to choose from. The variety was very nice. God is a God of variety! He wants to do new things! This is why He is not remaking Israel of old but creating a new entity called the Church.

God has a plan for Israel and for the Church. Peter is not mixing the two people together or the two distinct programs for the Church and Israel (Covenant Theology). What he is concluding is that which occurs in the future, when Israel enters the Millennial Kingdom, is similar to what has just occurred at Pentecost (when the Church was born).

Moses and the law

(Exodus 3:1-8; 7; Acts 7:36)

Beginning of the Church age

(Acts 2 and infant days of Church)

Kingdom age - Millennial Kingdom

(Joel 2:28-29)

Preparatory Signs for the New Age

The signs at Pentecost and other miraculous signs in the past have always accompanied new dispensations and workings of God. Examples would be in the days of Moses and the law (Exodus 3:1-8; 7; Acts 7:36; Heb. 12:18-19), the beginning of the Church age (Acts), and the same will be true for Kingdom age (Joel 2:28-29). These miraculous signs are actually *preparatory signs* that

indicate God is doing something different with a new people. They were signs *inaugurating* a new dispensation. Miraculous signs (speaking in tongues) were also witnessed when the Dispensation of the Church and the new baptizing work of the Holy Spirit began (Acts 1:5; 2:33).

Many times when God begins a different dispensation, with a different work, and with a different people, He allows them to manifest certain miraculous signs to authenticate the change in God's working program. They are normally signs that last for a short period of time and then cease. This is exactly what was occurring on Pentecost as the Church began to breathe life for the first time. It's what occurred during the infant days of the Church era, to authenticate new truth and God's new work with the Church which was composed of both Jews and Gentiles (Acts 2:1-13; 5:12-16; 8:12-16; 10:10, 44-46; 19:6). Tongues were a unique sign indicating the birth of a new Dispensation. They lasted about thirty years and their purpose was fulfilled. Therefore, they ceased to exist and passed out of Church life and ministry.

Peter says in Acts 2:16:

“But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel”

In retrospect, when Peter says “this is that” he was only making a comparison or similarity to what Joel taught, but it does not conclude that Joel’s prophecy was literally fulfilled in the last days of the Church life and ministry.

I remember going to MacDonald’s in my younger teenage days. The younger church guys would hang out in the parking lot area. It was the “in” things to do in those days. As young guys, we were looking at our cars and comparing them. Trying to determine which one was faster and better. Those were the good-old days! Peter is doing some comparing in this section of Scripture. He undoubtedly is comparing the Spirit’s blessings on Israel during the Millennial Kingdom to the blessings of the Holy Spirit that came upon the Church during its beginning or inception at Pentecost. He was teaching that what occurred on Pentecost is something similar (the tongue speaking) to what Israel will experience when she enters her kingdom blessing.

The expression “This is that” (Acts 2:16) must be understood in a COMPARATIVE way. It does NOT indicate a literal fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy. How could it be a literal fulfillment? Paul taught that the mystery about the Church was a new revelation and that it was totally unknown and hidden during the Old Testament (Eph. 3:3-9). Therefore, Peter could not be teaching that Pentecost (the beginning of the Church) was a fulfillment of a direct prophecy in the Old Testament. Joel’s prophecy was not a prophecy about the beginning of the Church but Peter used it as an illustration of what took place on Pentecost.

Acts 2:18-21 declares:

“And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days (at the ending of the Tribulation Period and just prior to the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom) of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Again, many wonder how much Peter knew about Church truth at this point and therefore was likely quoting Joel's prophecy as a literal fulfillment of Pentecost. We don't know how long it took for Peter to fully understand the change from Kingdom truth to Church truth. However, we do know that Joel's passage CANNOT be used as a literal fulfillment of what took place on Pentecost and what would occur during the last days for the Church. This is evident for the simple reason that there were no "signs in the earth beneath, blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke" (Acts 2:19). These refer to the catastrophic seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments that will devastate the earth during the Tribulation Period, especially as it winds down.

The prophecy of Joel was NOT teaching that this sign (speaking in tongues) was to restart in the Church during the last days. This is confusing the two different "last days" (one for Israel and one for the Church) and misapplying what Peter was teaching regarding tongues. If these miraculous signs relate to the Church today (during the last days) then what about the other signs that are mentioned? What about the "wonders in heaven" and "signs in the earth beneath, blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke" (Acts 2:19). The Bible also speaks how "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood" (Acts 2:20). Surely none of these signs are occurring today! These are Tribulation signs that will occur before Christ's Second Coming to earth ("before that great and notable of the Lord come" – Acts 2:20). Let's study our Bibles and read them in context. The old saying is still true, "A text out of context becomes a pretext."

We must remember that NO Tribulation signs accompanied the blessings of the Holy Spirit in the birth of the new dispensation of the Church. There were no astronomical signs in the heavens that occurred (Acts 2:20). These would come at a later time when God promises to bless His national people Israel at His Second Coming and kingdom. It's during this FUTURE time that the prophecy of Joel will be literally fulfilled with its astronomical signs and Israel's salvation and blessings of the Holy Spirit in the kingdom era.

Joel's prophecy tells us WHEN the actual fulfillment of this prophecy will take place. The astronomical or heavenly signs will occur "before that great and notable day of the Lord come" (before Christ's Second Coming – Acts 2:20) marking the beginning of the last days for Israel. The pouring out of the Spirit upon Israel will occur when Israel is saved prior to her entrance into the Millennium and then continue into the Kingdom Age on planet

earth. However, the promise of the Spirit's filling which took place at Pentecost (the birthday of the Church) was an example and similar to what it's going to be like when Israel is saved in connection with the Second Advent and enters the Millennial Kingdom.

Peter was *comparing* or *illustrating* what Joel spoke about to what was taking place on Pentecost. It was a simple matter of comparison and not literal fulfillment. It's interesting that the word "fulfill" is not used in Acts 2. However, the words of similarity ("this is that") are used (Acts 2:16). The prophecy was using the language of comparison – not fulfillment. Paul took the liberty to borrow from certain Old Testament texts to make his points (by way of application) without destroying the original context and literal fulfillment of these texts.

Thomas Ice correctly observes:

"Peter's point is that of similarity between what the Holy Spirit will do in the future with the nation of Israel and what He was doing almost 2,000 years ago."

There is a vast difference between application and literal fulfillment. Peter was making a comparison between Joel's prophecy and what took place on Pentecost. Joel's prophecy was not a prophecy about Pentecost nor a direct fulfillment of it.

A man once asked me if I believe in the "full Gospel." I said to him there is only one Gospel and it's full of one hundred percent grace. It's found in 1 Corinthians 15:1-3 (Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again). In spite of what I said, the man then proceeded to tell me that the full Gospel was when a person receives the experience of being baptized by the Spirit and speaks in tongues.

This man was a liar! There is only one Gospel and there are no tongues in it! It is all about Christ and has nothing to do with any kind of pseudo experience that we might claim to have! The "full gospel" (allegedly receiving the Holy Spirit baptism after salvation and speaking in tongues) is not part of the true Gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-3). It is a false gospel and another gospel (Gal. 1:6). Tongue speaking has nothing to do with the Gospel.

Review: So let's once again confirm in our thinking the clear teaching of Scripture regarding the last days of Acts 2. The occurrence of supernatural

phenomenon (speaking in tongues) is actually a promise given to Israel concerning her “last days” which are connected with the Millennial Kingdom. The last days have nothing to do with the last days of the Church age in which we live today and should NOT be applied to the ending of the Church Age – the time we live today.

These supernatural phenomena (prophecy, dreams, visions) have to do with the prophetic days related to Israel after the Tribulation Period has expired, when she calls out for the Messiah to return, and during the Millennial Kingdom when Israel is once again restored to God’s favor and blessing. They do NOT refer to the last days of the Church Age. In addition, Peter’s prophecy was designed to teach that the speaking in tongues on Pentecost (the beginning of the Church Dispensation) was SIMILAR to what will occur at the beginning of the Kingdom Dispensation.

The arguments that the supernatural gifts will return to the Church based upon the expression of “the last days” in Acts 2:16-21 is simply invalid. If what was happening was related to Pentecost (the *beginning* of the Church Age), then it certainly cannot, at the same time, refer to the *last* days of the Church age. You can’t have it both ways! Peter was simply saying that the ministry of the Spirit’s filling was coming to pass on the Day of Pentecost (birthday of the Church) and this work of the Spirit was much like Joel’s prophecy, which spoke of Israel’s blessing of the Holy Spirit in the Millennial Kingdom.

It’s important to understand that God has never promised that we will possess apostolic miraculous signs of the Holy Spirit outpouring in the last days of the Church Age dispensation. This miraculous outpouring was for the days of the early Church (apostolic foundational days) and the coming Millennial Kingdom (the commencement of two dispensations).

I must beware of trying to climb up an unreachable mountain of pseudo experiences and lack what is needed most in my life – growing in grace! Are you really growing in your relationship to Christ? Or are you attempting to live by artificial means (experiences, unfounded promises, and the appeal of fleshly things)?

Mary was sincere. Friends told her that she should speak in tongues if she wanted to be filled with the Spirit. They laid hands on her and prayed very emotionally that it would happen. They encouraged her to just open her

mouth and let the worlds pour forth. The words did not come. After several frustrating attempts, they accused her of a lack of faith, and that there must be something in her life that was quenching the Spirit. She didn't know of anything, but they began to pray that whatever demon was inside her would now come out so she could be released to speak in tongues.

Again, nothing happened. The people left, believing that she was guilty of something but simply unwilling to confess it. After this horrible experience, she came to see a pastor who knew the Bible. She was hurt, depressed, and feeling guilty for her lack of faith. The pastor shared with her what the Bible teaches about the filling of the Spirit as well as the matter of speaking in tongues. She began to gain confidence through the Word of God and really started to grow in her faith and experience the joy of her Christian life. Mary was fortunate. Others have not been able to escape the feeling of failure and defeat by not being able to speak in tongues.

A Charismatic teacher once insisted that I speak in tongues. He said that if I were willing to do it, it would happen to me. I questioned his beliefs. I told him that I might be willing to do something but that does not mean I can make it happen. I don't want any experience that is forbidden by God, nor do I want to pursue any experience that is not commanded by God for all believers.

Beloved, do not become soft toward charismatic error. It's leading Christians down a wrong path and bringing great confusion into their lives. We need to counter the errors of this movement so people can live a spiritual life based on the truth. It's not easy to "undo" error but I have seen Christians come out of this movement and live by the way of truth instead of false teaching about the Holy Spirit and gift of tongues.

B. Purpose of tongues

There are two purposes for tongues.

1. The purpose of confirming God's new revelation to Jews.

Why did God bestow the gift of tongues upon some people? Tongues (speaking in languages) was a sign that occurred in order to confirm new revelation to the Jewish people, revelatory truth that would eventually be recorded in the New Testament Scriptures.

In order to understand the purpose of tongues, we must consider the sign nature of this gift and to whom tongues were to be spoken. Tongues were to be a visible sign or token that God gave to the Jewish people to communicate to them new truth.

1 Corinthians 1:22

“For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom.”

Historically the Jewish nations always were seeking for miraculous signs to authenticate what was being said or taking place. It was characteristic of the Jews to request a sign. Their attitude was that they would believe if some miracle were shown to them. The Greeks on the other hand searched for wisdom. They were interested in human reasonings, in arguments, in logic.

Matthew 12:38-40

“Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

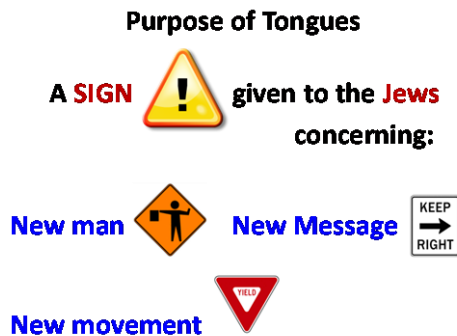
The Jews were the sign seekers! They wanted to see miraculous signs in order to inspire their faith and the message that was being given to them by the prophet.

1 Corinthians 14:21-22

“In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.”

Dr. John Miles used to tell us that “Signs are for Israel – not the Church.” He was right. Paul is stating the purpose for tongues. He cites a portion of Isaiah’s prophecy written against Israel (Isa. 28:11-12) to teach the purpose of tongues. They were given for Israel. In using Isaiah’s context, written to

the Jewish people, Paul clearly teaches that tongues were to be a miraculous sign to unbelieving Jews (“them that believe not”).



This verse will give us more specifics about a secondary purpose for tongues but for now we want to verify from this important text that tongues (speaking in languages) were always to be used in connection with the Jewish people (“them that believe not”). The Scriptures are very clear on this matter. The Jews required a miraculous sign and God gave it to the Jews in the form of speaking in different languages.

Speaking in foreign languages was one sign that was given to the Jews to confirm the *man*, *message*, and the new *movement* that God was presenting to them.

The purpose of tongues was to overcome Jewish unbelief (“them that believe not” – 1 Cor. 14:21-22). Tongues were given as a sign to the Jewish people enabling them to overcome their unbelief. We will wait to discuss the remaining portion of this verse for another point. But for now let me instill within your thinking the sign character related to speaking in tongues.

In every instance tongues (speaking in different languages) would become a sign to unbelieving Jews, who had to witness the supernatural evidence of speaking in different languages, so that they might believe God’s new revelation of truth being given by a new man. During the early or infant days of Christianity the Jews needed to be presented with the clear truth about the Gospel and the Messiah and the new work that God was doing, building the Church, which was composed of both Jews and Gentiles (Acts 2, 10, 19; 1 Cor. 12-14). After presenting these truths the apostles would perform miraculous signs, one of them speaking in tongues, to confirm WHO they were and WHAT they were saying was true.

Israel was God’s sign nation. The Jews were always looking for a sign because of their lack of faith in the Lord and God’s program and Word. The Lord would be gracious to the Jews and give them a sign that would prove that what He was revealing through his prophets and spokesman was

absolutely true. The sign that He would give them during the infant stages of the church was the supernatural ability for some people to speak in a different language that was previously unknown to them. This miraculous sign (tongues) and all the other miraculous gifts of the early church (gifts of miracles, interpretation of tongues, prophecy, etc.) would confirm to the Jewish people what was being said was true and could be believed.

John Phillips said this about the sign gifts:

“Those sign gifts were especially relevant when the church was still in its infancy, when its testimony was primarily to the Jews and when it needed such special accrediting from on high.”

Tongues would become a sign to the Jews of the genuineness and message of a person who was speaking new revelation.

Tongues (speaking in languages) are mentioned in Acts 2; 10:46; 19:6; and in 1 Corinthians 12-14. These are the only places that tongues are referred to in the entire Bible. This alone should cause us to understand that tongues are not the most important matter dealing with the Christian life. In fact, they have nothing to do with living the Christian life! In 22 books of the New Testament that follow Acts, only 1 Corinthians mentions tongues and in only three chapters. Furthermore, in every place they refer to languages that were spoken to somehow confirm a message to Jewish people.

Mark 16:17-18

“And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.”

Jesus had been addressing His apostles (vs. 14) and gave them the Great Commission (vs. 15-16). Afterward, he verifies how miraculous signs (speaking in tongues, healing, etc.) would “follow them that believe.” Please notice what this verse is NOT saying. It’s not saying that the miraculous signs would be *performed* by every person that is saved. It says that these signs would “follow (accompany) them that believe.” There is a difference! In this context we see that the apostles (“they” – vv. 16, 17, 20) were the miracle workers whose miracles would “follow after” (attend, accompany -

vs. 17) the belief or faith of people living during the apostolic days of the Church.

The correct understanding of Mark 16:17-18 is that during the early original expansion and history of the church the apostles (“they” – vv. 17, 18, 20) would perform miraculous signs which were designed to “follow them that believe” (attend, accompany - vs. 17) their Gospel presentations to prospective converts, causing people to believe in Christ and be saved. The signs would prove that the messengers were sent from God, substantiating their authority from God, and authenticating the apostolic Gospel message they were preaching (“confirming the word with signs following” – vs. 20). The miraculous signs would cause people to see that their Gospel message was true and that they were sent from God to authenticate the Gospel message, which they had just spoken, and also substantiate their own authority from God (“confirming the word with signs following” – vs. 20). They would cast out demons, speak in different languages, or lay hands on the sick and restore them to health in order to verify they were true messengers of God and that their message regarding the Gospel was truly from God.

Once again, the authenticating signs (sign credentials) would “follow” (accompany, attend) their presentations of the Gospel and as a result they would illicit faith or belief in their message. This would result in Jewish people coming to Christ (1 Cor. 1:22). The implication is that the miracles would “follow” (attend) their Gospel presentations and be used as a catalyst to promote faith. Of course, all this was needed as the Gospel message was being presented during the new Church Age.

To conclude that every person who has been saved since this time must cast out demons and speak in tongues in order to confirm their salvation experience is a rather absurd and antibiblical conclusion. If this would be true, then the rest of the signs must also be experienced by all believers.

Zodhiates states:

“These signs, then, are apostolic and not intended for any other believers except those who were converted as a direct result of the personal preaching of the apostles.”

Of course, he is absolutely correct and yet the Pentecostals will use such a verse as this to teach that everyone who believes in Jesus should speak in

tongues following their salvation. This is erroneous. The Acts and early church record, as revealed in Scripture, clearly reveals that not every Christian spoke in tongues. Tongues was a special gift given only to a few Christians (1 Cor. 12:29-30).

The Bible declares that these “signs shall follow them that believe” (Mark 16:17). It does not conclude that these signs will be *performed* and *experienced* by everyone that believes. It’s outrageous to believe that every Christian went around performing miracles, raising the dead, healing others, and speaking in tongues. The Bible facts don’t support this interpretation.

By the way, if you claim to have the sign gift of speaking in tongues what about the other sign gifts? Can you go into a hospital and heal the people as the apostle did? Can you drink poison and not be harmed? If someone pours poison in your cool aid to get rid of you will you be in church on Sunday? What if you accidently run into a poisonous snake and it bites you, will you be okay without any medical treatment? God has not promised a protective gift for you as He did for His apostles as they went out into the world to preach the Gospel.



If you are crazy enough to misinterpret what God’s Word is saying about snakes and go down into the deep south to handle snakes in Pentecostal and cult-like services, then you will have to suffer the consequences. The apostle did not go around and put on snake shows! They were simply promised divine protection if they ran into a deadly snake and it bit them. Such was the case with Paul.

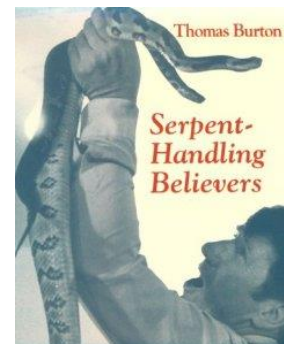
Acts 28:3

“And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand.”

Acts 28:5

“And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.”

I found a book you can purchase that tells you how to handle snakes religiously in Pentecostal services. It’s only \$25.42. Error is something that must be unlearned



and some of these Pentecostal services taking place today with snakes borders on the world of occult. The Bible condemns snake charmers in Deuteronomy 18:11.

God promised the original band of apostles this apostolic gift of protection, along with the other miraculous gifts, which served as credential signs for the Jews that these men were apostles and their message was true. If you tempt God by handling snakes today, then you are on your own! What God promised to His apostles is not a promise for all people today.



I was watching one of these crazy fellows who go around in the jungles and other parts of the world in search of different animals, such as snakes and all kinds of giant lizards and dangerous animals. This particular fellow was going around hunting for the deadliest snakes in the world. He was actually playing around with the world's deadliest spitting cobras. As he came close to them, within ten or fifteen feet, they would spit in his face and eyes. He would wear glasses but some of the poison would get behind the glasses and start to burn his eyes. He thought this was a great thrill when hunting, finding, and having these deadly snakes spitting in his face.

Of course, none of us, like the apostles, have the promise that when a cobra snake bites us, or spits in our eyes, that we will not be hurt!

Here is a news article that I recently read:

“This is what I saw through my camera lens: Pastor Randy Mack Wolford, tossing and turning on the couch in his mother-in-law’s West Virginia trailer, suffering from the pain of a rattlesnake bite he had received earlier in the day. Parishioners surrounding him in prayer in the stifling heat. His mother stroking his feet, her expression a mixture of concern, sorrow and, eventually, acceptance: This is how her eldest son — a legend in the local Pentecostal serpent-handling community — would die.

“Camera in hand, I watched as the man I’d photographed and gotten to know over the past year writhed, turned pale and slipped away, a victim of his unwavering faith, but also a testament to it. A family member called paramedics when Mack finally allowed it, but it was too late. Mack Wolford drew his final, labored breaths late Sunday night. He was 44.

“The scene has been playing over and over in my head since then, and the questions are weighing on me: The practices of the Signs Following faith remain an enigma to many. How can people be foolish enough to interpret Mark 16: 17-18 so literally: to ingest poison, such as strychnine, which Mack also allegedly did at Sunday’s ceremony; to handle venomous snakes; and, most incomprehensible of all, not to seek medical treatment if bitten? Because of this reaction, many members of this religious community are hesitant to speak to the media, let alone be photographed.”

Ignorance is not bliss! What is being taught in all of these verses is once again the sign feature of tongues, the miracles the apostles performed, and the protection they were promised in the initial days of the expansion of Christianity.

Once again, Mark 16:17 says that “these signs shall follow them that believe” (not be performed by the new believers). The original band of apostles and some of their close associates (Barnabas, Stephen, Philip - Acts 8:5-8) would go about preaching the truth and then confirm WHO they were and WHAT they were teaching with miraculous signs, one of them being the speaking in tongues (foreign languages). It was not the new converts performing the miracles but the apostles.

Mark 16:19-20 confirms this interpretation:

“So then after the Lord had spoken unto them (the apostles), he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they (the apostles) went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them (the apostles), and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.”

It’s the apostles who possessed all of these miraculous signs in order to confirm to the Jews, during the early expansion of Christianity, that they were sent from God, that the Gospel was true, and their messages were from God. It was the apostles who would perform the miracles, which accompanied the faith of converts (Mark 16:17), and the miracles would substantiate their message as being true and genuine.

Notice once again the sign character of tongues or languages (“confirming the word with signs following” – vs. 20). The original band of apostles (“them that believe” – vs. 17) were given the promise that they would perform miraculous signs to authenticate the Word they spoke. They would speak in languages or tongues as a confirming sign to the people,

specifically the Jews who required a sign, that the new revelation and message which they were speaking was true or genuine.

This *miraculous aspect* of the Great Commission, mentioned only in Mark's Gospel, was geared around the Jews and the sign they required to illicit believe (faith) in the new men (the apostles) and their new message (Messiah's death and resurrection).

2 Corinthians 12:12

"Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."

The primary tongue speakers and miracle workers during the infant days of the church were the apostles since they obviously would possess both the gift of speaking in tongues and miracles in order to convey the miraculous "signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds" before their Jewish audience (1 Cor. 1:22; 14:20-22). They spoke in these foreign languages to authenticate WHO they were and WHAT they said (Mark 16:20). These types of miraculous credentials were necessary during the infant and foundational part of church life and ministry while the Bible was being written, truth was being confirmed, and apostles were present.

Benjamin Warfield, the great Bible scholar, said:

"These miraculous gifts were part of the credentials of the apostles as the authoritative agents of God in *founding* the church. Their function thus confirmed them distinctively in the apostolic church, and they necessarily passed away with it."

Hebrews 2:3-4 is another verse declaring how the apostles used the gift of speaking in tongues as a confirming sign to the Jews during the infant days of the church. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first (during the beginning of the Church, the infant days of the Church) began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them (the apostles) that heard him. God also bearing them (the apostles) witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"

"How shall we escape?" Let me make something very clear; you cannot escape hell if you reject salvation through Jesus Christ! You will die and go straight to hell. In any event, Hebrews 2:3-4, a Jewish epistle, verifies that a

second generation of Jewish Christians were already looking back on the past use of these apostolic sign gifts of speaking in tongues and healing (“was confirmed unto us by them that heard him”). The writer is viewing these supernatural signs gifts to the Jews as part of the initial expansion of early Christianity during the first century and first generation of Christians (approximately 30 years) but there is no mention of these miraculous gifts continuing to have this function during the second generation of Christians.

Hebrews was written in A.D. 66 or 67. By this time the second generation sees the temporary gifts already disappearing. In time the apostles would eventually pass off the scene along with their revelatory and miraculous foundational gifts.

The Bible is remarkably clear on this matter. The confirmation took place “by them” (Heb. 2:3), which is a reference to the original apostles of the apostolic church, who were with Christ during His earthly ministry. Apostles were men who saw the resurrected Christ and who were officially commissioned by Jesus Christ.

I once spoke to a man who insisted he was an apostle. I told him that if it’s really true I want to take him to the hospital and let him heal everyone as the apostles did on many occasions. I then said that I want him to go to the graveyard and at a recent grave I want him to raise the dead for this is what the apostles did. These are men who were directly chosen by Christ (Matt. 10:1-4; Gal. 1:1), who witnessed the resurrected Christ (Acts 1:22; 1 Cor. 15:8) and who gave supernatural revelation to the Church (Eph. 2:20). Hebrews reminds us that it was the original apostles that “confirmed” (Heb. 2:3) the message of this “so great salvation” that Jesus spoke about. They were there with Him and they confirmed to the Hebrew believers that this message was true.

Hebrews 2:4 goes on to say that it was “them” (the original apostles) who were with Christ. They were men that God authenticated by giving them special abilities to perform miracles. They were given the special “gifts of the Holy Spirit” (Heb. 2:4) which would include speaking in tongues and healing people, even raising people from dead, in order to confirm WHO they were and WHAT they taught.

The miracles were called “signs” (Heb. 2:4) because they were miraculous gifts that served as outward tokens or markers to verify that these men

were true apostles and that the world which they spoke was true (“bearing them witness”). The miracles which the apostles did were authenticating gifts designed to prove the trustworthiness of their office and message.

The miracles which the apostles performed were also called “wonders” (Heb. 2:4) because they brought awe and amazement to those who saw them performed. Can you imagine seeing a man raised from the dead!! Can you imagine people flocking before Peter and his shadow falling on them and healing them of their diseases!

These gifts were given to the apostles “according to his will” (Heb. 2:4; 1 Cor. 12:7, 11) which indicates not all Christians would possess all the gifts like the apostles did. It was God’s will that the apostles would be able to possess the healing gifts and speaking in tongues in order to verify their ministry and messages to the Jewish nation before the Scriptures were canonized and New Testament truth was finalized.

Please note once again the past tense use that the writer of Hebrews uses in connection with the apostolic ministry of miracles. The wording of Hebrews 2:3 (“was confirmed” – not being confirmed) is in the past tense and gives an accurate reflection of the Greek text.

This indicates that the days of the apostles with their apostolic gifts of tongues and healings would be temporary and that these sign gifts were directed to the Jews and for the Jews during the infant days of the apostolic church, during the first century, when God was giving out new and direct revelation through the apostles. It was during these days, before the New Testament Bible message was completed (1 Cor. 13:10), that the Jews required a sign. Once the Scriptures were complete, God’s final voice would be recorded in the sacred text concerning the Gospel message and the program and formation of the Church. Since this was true, no more revelation was needed by the apostles.

There are many today who claim to be prophets and apostles. We need to stop all of this hocus-pocus and get back to the Word of God. The apostles and miraculous authenticating signs were something that had already occurred in their past (“was confirmed”) and could not be repeated once the apostles themselves and their foundational work were no longer present. In time the apostles would eventually pass off the scene along with their prophetic, revelatory, and foundational gifts.

Ephesians 2:20

“And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.”

Once the foundation has been laid and established there is no more need to go back to it. The early days of Christianity are gone with the apostles, who laid the Biblical foundation with their revelatory teachings, before the Bible was completed, and who performed the miraculous sign gifts to prove to the Jewish community that they were God’s messengers and had God’s message!

I was here when they laid the foundation for the Berean Bible Church. It was cold, hard work, and no fun. I remember when they put the first beam in the basement with a crane and how we attached it to the concrete floor. These were the early days! I do not want to tear apart the structure of the church and go back to rebuilding the foundation. The building is up! The beams are attached to the foundation. In a similar way, the Church was built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, but once the foundation was built, there would be no more need for apostles, along with their prophecies, revelatory messages, miracles, speaking in tongues, visions, and other sign gifts.

Ephesians 2:20 – church is “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets”



Once the foundation for the Church (the Scriptures) was completed the New Testament Church, which is pictured as a building framed together (“the building fitly framed together” - Eph. 2:21) was erected on the foundation, and there is no more need for rebuilding the foundation. Likewise, once the foundation was complete the foundational signs and apostles that were used to build it, were no longer necessary. This is because the foundation was already put in place – the Bible (“the perfect thing” - 1 Cor. 13:10). The Bible gives to us conclusive, Biblical evidence that the apostolic gift of prophecy and the miraculous gifts, along with speaking in tongues, were only for the first generation of believers, when the Church was declaring and speaking forth new revelation, prior to the completion of the Bible.

The time, purpose, and miracles of the apostles have long passed away. If it was true in the time of the writing of Hebrews, then how much truer is it today? Today we do not need the supernatural sign gifts. The issue today is not signs but doctrine. The issue today is this” What saith the Scriptures! Not what saith the apostles! At the end of the era of New Testament writings, the apostle John wrote his epistles. Listen to his instructions for detecting deceivers: “If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (2 John 10–11).

Many today are seeking for things that God has not promised them. Instead of experiencing the joy and fellowship that they can have with Christ and studying His Word they are seeking for the spectacular and are intrigued with the flashy, glittering, pseudo attempts to resurrect the past ministry of the apostles. In their addiction to witness and experience what the apostles did they sometimes become desensitized to what the Word of God is teaching them about tongues and the other sign gifts.

A little boy took the Bible off of the table in his home and said, "Daddy, is this God's book?" "Yes," replied the father. "That is God's book." The boy said, "Daddy, I think we better send it back to God, because we never read it." Dear friend, we need to study the Word of God that the apostles gave to us instead of trying to experience the miraculous things that the apostles did. When we study the Scriptures with a discerning mind we will come to the conclusion that the miraculous gifts were not given for us today.

Review: The purpose of confirming God’s new revelation to Jews.

In relationship to signs, the Jews were given sign markers to help them understand the Gospel plan and also the new revelation of the Church Age that had been inaugurated at Pentecost (Acts 2:33). The apostles spoke in different languages to share the Gospel plan with the Jews on Pentecost and they also presented the new information about the Church, composed of both Jews and Gentiles (1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28), how God was going to bless a new work and new people. The Jews were given miraculous signs, such as speaking in tongues (speaking in different languages) to help them know what was taking place was from God.

On our last trip, I was looking for a specific sign to get on to another freeway. Maybe you know what I was going through. I was traveling on the

695 and 495 beltways around Washington and Baltimore. It was Friday night! Need I say more! Talk about a rat race! Anyway, I was trying to find the 495 exit sign and noticed that there was one lane exiting off on to this highway. Of course, the cars were bumper to bumper and they were all moving at a very fast pace. Let me tell you something, you don't want to miss any of the signs when traveling the beltways or else you will go out of the way and start looping around again! The same is true in regards to the Jewish people who lived during the dawning of the new Church Age. They needed signs to confirm new truth to them which would guide them along the way.

During the early or infant days of Christianity the Jews needed to be presented with the clear truth about the Gospel and the Messiah and the new work that God was doing, building the Church, which was composed of both Jews and Gentiles (Acts 2, 10, 19; 1 Cor. 12-14). After presenting these truths the apostles would perform miraculous signs, one of them speaking in tongues, to confirm WHO they were and WHAT they were saying was true.

Israel was God's sign nation. The Jews were always looking for a sign because of their lack of faith in the Lord and God's program and Word. The Lord would be gracious to the Jews and give them a sign that would prove that what He was revealing through his prophets and spokesman was absolutely true. The sign that He would give them during the infant stages of the church was the supernatural ability for some people to speak in a different language that was previously unknown to them. This miraculous sign (tongues) and all the other miraculous gifts of the early church (gifts of miracles, interpretation of tongues, prophecy, etc.) would confirm to the Jewish people what was being said was true and could be believed.



I learned to color code my keys. After a while, I had so many keys on my key chain that I needed to color code my keys, so I would know which one was for the house and which one was for the church and so on. Well, if you want an easy way to remember the purpose for God giving the gift of languages, remember the analogy of a key. In every instance where we

see tongues being used in the Bible there are Jews present. This is a key that unlocks our understanding of the purpose of tongues. This is the key

that unlocks our understanding of all the tongues passages that are found in the Bible. This is because the speaking in tongues was a sign that was given to the nation of Israel to confirm the messenger and message of new revelation that God was presenting them.

If you want to follow the rules for speaking in tongues; there is one rule that cannot be overlooked. There must be Jews present when speaking in tongues.

We are now going to study every Bible reference where tongues (languages) were spoken and use the key that unlocks the purpose of tongues; they were a sign to the Jews. Since this is true, whenever tongues (languages) were spoken Jews would have to be present. Let's see if this is the case.

There is one passing note before we get started. In the Acts record, we discover how the initial receiving of the Holy Spirit (baptism of the Holy Spirit) by Old Testament saints was accompanied with tongues to authenticate to Jewish people what was occurring (a new work, the Church). However, the way the Holy Spirit was received and the results of the Holy Spirit's manifestations on some Old Testament saints, who were becoming New Testament saints (Acts 2, 10, 19), should never be considered NORMAL for today. We will see this later on in our study.

I. Acts 2

We now turn to Pentecost (Acts 2) and see if the key unlocks our understanding about the true purpose of tongues. At Pentecost, a confirming sign was needed in order to prove the validity of the Peter's ministry and message on Pentecost. This is the reason why the disciples spoke in tongues on the Day of Pentecost. It prepared the Jewish people to receive Peter's message about Israel's crucifixion of the Messiah, their need for repentance, and confirmed to the Jews of the new Advent of the Holy Spirit and Church Age. The tongues spoken proved the truth of Peter's message.

a. Were there Jews present?

Acts 2:5

“And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.”

The key works! This verse tells us that unbelieving Jews were present at Pentecost. We have seen how they came from 15 different surrounding provinces or countries. Therefore, the purpose of tongues was being fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. Jews were present to hear the new revelation and message of Peter.

b. Was new revelation being given?

Yes. Tongues authenticated what Peter was preaching. Peter’s revelation or message had several parts:

1. Jesus was the Messiah.

In Acts 2:22 Peter said:

“Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.”

Acts 2:36

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

Jesus was the Messiah who proved Himself by the miracles He performed and He is the One who has risen from the dead, who is alive today and at the right hand of God. What a message! Peter’s message could not be any clearer.

b. You killed the Messiah.

Acts 2:23-24

“Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.”

Now that cut right down to the heart! You are sinner and you killed the Messiah. You were wicked sinners who left the Messiah slip through your hands.

b. You need to be saved by the Messiah.

Acts 2:38

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

Peter was preaching to the Jews that Jesus was their Messiah and they needed to receive Him as their personal Messiah and Savior.

Please note that the fact baptism is mentioned with belief (faith) does not indicate that we need to be baptized in order to be saved and forgiven of our sins. The Greek preposition “for” (eis) can have the meaning of “because of” (indicating result). When I say, “I’m taking an aspirin for my headache, I’m not taking an aspirin in order to attain a headache but as a result of it. This is the sense in which baptism is being used in this text – a resultant sense. Baptism would follow on the heels of faith as a result of one’s faith and demonstrate their forgiveness through Christ and Christ’s authority over their lives.

c. You find the Messiah exalted at the Father’s right hand.

Acts 2:30-31

“Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.”

d. You must know the Messiah sent the Holy Spirit

Acts 2:33

“This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.”

This is the dispensational change. Verse 33 is capturing Peter's main arguments in the sermon. Jesus rose from the dead and we all saw Him as the disciples (vs. 32). Jesus is exalted at the Father's right hand in Heaven (vs. 33). Jesus had sent the Holy Spirit as the Father had promised (vs. 33). The coming of the Holy Spirit resulted in His baptizing work among the people and started the new work of God – the Church. Peter confirmed that the languages spoken on the Day of Pentecost were a direct sign to the Jews that Christ received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father and was now pouring it out upon them (verse 33). The Holy Spirit had come to save Jews and Gentiles alike by uniting them together by the baptizing of the Holy Spirit into a glorious body called the church.

In other words, the gift of tongues (verse 33) would also be a sign (proof) that Jesus had gone into Heaven and actually sent the Holy Spirit of Promise (Acts 1:5, 8; John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7). The Church had begun.

Dr. Myron Houghton captures the thought:

“The first purpose of tongues speaking in Acts was to get the attention of the Israelites on the Day of Pentecost to announce this transition. ... When Peter had the people's attention because of the sign gift, he stood up and spoke to the men of Israel (2:14). He announced that because they had rejected their Messiah, God was setting aside the nation temporarily and doing something new (2:22–36). God was no longer working with Israel as a nation. Now He would invite individuals, both Jews and Gentiles, to receive forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit as a gift through faith in Christ and to demonstrate that faith by being baptized by the authority of Jesus Christ (2:38, 39).”

Peter is saying that all these things took place (the death, resurrection, ascension of the true Messiah, the coming of the Holy Spirit, the formation of the Church) and you can be sure that all of these events did occur because of the sign that you witnessed. What sign was this? It was the sign of speaking in tongues! It was the supernatural ability to speak in different languages (“he hath shed forth this – vs. 33), which was given to the Jews, as a sign to prove the truthfulness of all these things that Peter had said in his sermon. The Jews both saw and heard them speak in different languages! Jesus' sending of the Holy Spirit of Promise resulted in what “ye now see and hear” (tongues — verse 33). These languages spoken by the disciples would were a sign (proof) to the Jews of the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5; 11:15-16) and how God had begun a new age whereby the

Gospel was to go into all the world (Acts 1:8) resulting in the formation of the church (Matthew 16:18).

The languages were confirming signs that proved the validity or truthfulness of what Peter had said in his sermon. This was the true purpose of tongues. Tongues were a credential sign or token of God's approval upon a certain man, a new revelation of truth being presented, and some specific event that occurs. In this case the man speaking was Peter, the new truth being taught had to do with Christ's death, resurrection, ascension and the coming of the Spirit to form the Church. The new event was Pentecost.

Again, the languages that were spoken served as credential signs that proved the man and the new message of revelation that was being was absolutely true. The languages at Pentecost authenticated the event of Pentecost and the new revelation of dramatic truth that was being presented.

So after the disciples spoke in different tongues or languages, Peter stood up and preached in the common Greek or Aramaic language and left them have it with both barrels to prove that his message was from God. The tongue speaking proved that he was God's man bringing forth God's message.

The key purpose for tongues is seen in this narrative. Tongues were a sign to the Jews.

II. Acts 10

In the next occurrence of tongues recorded in the Bible, we discover how Peter went to the Gentiles and opened up the Gospel door to the house of Cornelius and the Gentile visitors who were with him. This has sometimes been called the "Gentile Pentecost" or when the Spirit initially and officially arrived to indwell the Gentile for the Church Age.

Acts 10:23-28

"Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him. And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends. And as Peter

was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.”

We must understand that Peter was officially opening up the door for the Gentiles to be brought into the new work and program of God – the Church. It would be unbelievable for Gentiles to be blessed in the same way along side of the Jews. Gentiles were outside the Jewish blessing in the Old Testament. But things were changing! God’s plans change! God was going to reach out to the outcast Gentiles who were considered dogs in the sight of Jews.

Let’s see if the key unlocks our understanding about the true purpose of tongues.

a. Were there Jews present?

Acts 10:44-45

“While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

Those were “of the circumcision” refers to Jews who received the Jewish sign of circumcision. It was part of their Jewish heritage. So Jews were present with Peter when the Gentiles would speak in tongues. The key works once again. Jews were always present when people spoke in tongues.

b. Was new revelation being given?

Yes! God had cleansed what was formerly off limits according to the Mosaic Law. Peter had been given a vision of unclean meat and said that he now could eat it. Later he understood the true significance of the vision as referring to accepting the Gentiles, who were previously unclean and outside the blessing of God, into the new work of God (see Acts 10:9-16; 28). The Gentiles were being accepted into the church with the Jews and

Peter was recognizing this and preaching this new message. All former distinctions between the Jews and Gentiles were being done away with in the new work of God – the Church. This glorious new work of the Church began with the Jews and just a few Gentiles on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:10) but it had now officially spread to other Gentiles (Acts 10:44-48) and would continue to do so to the ends of the earth!

Once again tongues were spoken in order to be a sign to the unbelieving Jews. The tongues were a public testimonial sign to the Jews that God was also blessing the Gentiles in the Church.

Acts 10:45-47

“And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?”

We must place ourselves in the shoes of Peter and his Jewish friends. Throughout the entire lives of the Jews they had been taught that Gentiles could only be brought into the place of privilege except through becoming a proselyte to Judaism. Now God was starting a new work and program where all Gentiles would be placed on the same level with Jews in the Church through the baptizing ministry of the Holy Spirit. This was a revolutionary concept.

These Jews needed a strong sign and evidence from God that He was doing this new work. This is why the Gentiles themselves, who had just been saved and baptized by the Spirit into the new body of Christ (the Church), spoke in tongues or languages.

Cornelius and other members of his household were supernaturally enabled by the Holy Spirit to speak in languages they had not previously known but languages that were familiar to the Jewish brethren. The fact that the Gentiles were given the gift to speak in tongues, like the Jews on Pentecost, was an indicator that the Spirit had come upon their lives as well and performed His baptizing ministry and made them spiritual equals in the body of Christ – the Church. This was a turning point in God’s redemptive program.

I'm so glad God turned to the Gentiles or I would not be here today! God changed His plan and emphasis of reaching out to the nations of the earth with the Gospel. The tongue speaking by the Gentiles authenticated the new revelation that Peter has preached about the Gentiles being spiritual equals in the body of Christ – the Church.

1 Corinthians 12:13

“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”

Herbert Vander Lugt said:

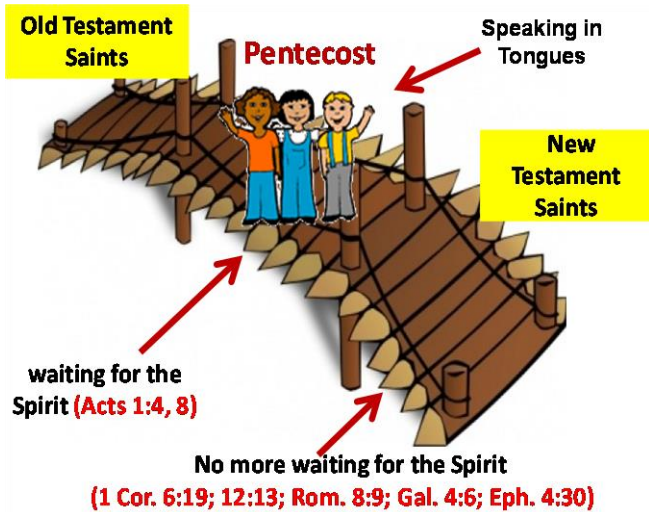
“The glossolalia was given as a credential sign to prove to Peter and others in the Jewish community that God was indeed admitting Gentiles into the body of Christ as their spiritual equals.”

Tongues were a credential sign and token of God's approval upon a certain man, new revelation of truth being presented, and some specific event. In this case the man speaking was Peter, the new message being taught had to do with the truth that former distinctions between the Jews and Gentiles were done away with in the new work of God – the Church, and the new event was Peter's vision. All of these things were confirmed as being true when the people spoke in other tongues or languages. God's man and God's new message was authenticated by the speaking in different languages. The Jews needed this proof and this is why tongues were used as Christianity initially began to expand.

The key purpose for tongues is seen in this account. Tongues were once again a sign to unbelieving Jews. They were designed to illicit faith in the Jewish people concerning God's new message and movement.

III. Acts 19:1-7

Here is another instance where tongues (languages) were spoken. The disciples of John the Baptist were next on the list to officially be introduced to the Holy Spirit, receive His baptizing work, and be brought into the body of Christ (Church).



Remember once again that these verses are NOT the NORMAL way to receive the Holy Spirit. They are transitional experiences that could only occur as people crossed over the bridge from Old Testament ground on to New Testament ground.

Old Testament saints were becoming New Testament saints. In this transitional account the disciples of John the Baptizer had

not yet heard or received the baptizing ministry of the Spirit. This is because they were spanning the bridge from Old Testament to New Testament saints. Therefore, they needed to receive the baptizing ministry of the Spirit and be placed into the Church.

Acts 19:2-3

“He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.”

The disciples of John the Baptizer could not have received the Holy Spirit when they believed John's message about the Messiah and entrance into the Kingdom since the Holy Spirit had not yet been given. John's message was Old Testament ground but these disciples needed to be updated about the new message and work of God regarding the formation of God's Church through the work of the Holy Spirit.



Not long ago we decided to update our old phones in church! They were becoming historic and we needed to do some upgrading! The same was true regarding the disciples of John the Baptist. They needed to be updated regarding what was happening. God was saving Gentiles and joining them together with Jews in the body of Christ – the Church (1 Cor. 12:13).

Acts 19:4-5

“Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

At this point, these disciples had only received the message of John the Baptizer that prepared them for entrance into the kingdom and they were still looking for the arrival of the kingdom. They were living by kingdom truth and not Church truth. They did not know that God had changed His program since the Jews rejected Him as their Messiah (John 1:11) and the Lord was now saving both Jews and Gentiles and forming a new work called the Church. So Paul needed to speak to them about the new working of God and how He was building the Church by the ministry of the baptism of the Spirit. They needed to receive the message of Paul about the baptism of the Holy Spirit and receive the Spirit's New Testament ministry upon their lives (baptizing, sealing, filling) and become part of the new work of God.

Demonstrating their faith in the new message and work of God these Old Testament saints were baptized by the Holy Spirit as promised and they received water baptism for this present age (“they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” – Acts 10:5) to identify themselves with the new work of God (the building of the Church) and demonstrating they had received the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit upon their lives.

Please note that these Jews were already baptized in preparation for the kingdom but now they needed to be baptized in preparation for the new work of God – the Church. It's for this reason that Paul rebaptized them in the name of Jesus Christ. This is the only place in the New Testament that refers to anyone being rebaptized and it was highly significant. Many Jews were not ready to leave behind the truth about baptism of John in preparation for the kingdom. They did not want to abandon this old truth. But they needed to dismiss the old message of baptism in preparation for the kingdom since they hung the Messiah on a tree. Now they needed to become part of the new work of God and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ in order to be identified with Christ and the church.

Baptism has the meaning of identification and when you are baptized in the authoritative name of someone you are identifying yourself with that

individual. These disciples were baptized in the name of Christ (Acts 10:5) and identified with Christ and His new work to form the Church.

Some have suggested that this is a different formula for baptizing people than what was given in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20). There was a “Jesus Only” formula and then the “Trinity” formula. I disagree with this conclusion. To be baptized in the name of Jesus speaks of the authority of His name – not a verbal formula of baptism. The fact that only the name Jesus is mentioned does not mean the name of the Father and the Holy Spirit were omitted. Although the correct verbal formula was undoubtedly used, this does not seem to be speaking of a verbal formula but the authority of Jesus’ name.

It is important to understand that the phrase “in the name of” in Biblical times carried the meaning “by the authority of” that person. This verse simply indicates that these new converts to Christianity were baptized according to the authority of Jesus Christ. It does not indicate that the words “in the name of Jesus Christ” must be liturgically pronounced over each person being baptized (Col. 3:17). It’s clear that the words “in the name of Jesus Christ” are not intended as a formula but as a theological and practical expression which indicates Christ’s authority over the one’s being baptized in the water. The converts were being baptized embracing the Lordship of Jesus Christ over their lives!

In any event, after their baptism, the Jews spoke in languages and once again (Acts 10:6) this supernatural gift became a credential sign and token of God’s approval of their baptism in the name of Christ and their identification within new work of God – the Church.

Once again, these disciples were crossing over the bridge from Old Testament saints and they were becoming New Testament saints being grafted into the new of God – the Church. This is another unique occurrence of receiving the Spirit and His ministry which could only occur during the initial days of the Church as people crossed over the bridge to receive the New Testament benefits of salvation, such as the Spirit’s baptizing work, filling ministry, and being joined to the Church.

Let’s see if the key unlocks our understanding about the true purpose of tongues.

a. Were there Jews present?

Yes. Apollos was a Jew – a disciple of John the Baptizer (see Acts 19:24-26). The other disciples of John the Baptizer were also Jews (Acts 19:4 – “the people” = Jews). Once again the key works. There were Jews present when these Gentile people spoke in tongues in order to confirm the new revelation about the Church to the Jewish brethren which was evident by the fact that the baptism of John had been replaced by Christian baptism, which was the sign of being a follower of the Gospel of God’s grace, as seen through Christ.

b. Was new revelation being given?

Yes, the new revelation was about the message of the Holy Spirit and how the people needed to receive of the Spirit’s ministry upon their lives in order to be taken into the Church (the new work of God).

Acts 19:6 records the sign:

“And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.”

The Jewish brethren of John the Baptist needed a sign or proof that Paul’s message was true. God gave them the sign when the Gentiles spoke in different languages, some of which the Jewish brethren knew and understood.

Apollos and the other disciples of John were given this confirming sign of tongues to authenticate the man and message that was being presented to them about the new work of the Spirit and the formation of the church. Tongues were a credential sign and token of God’s approval upon a new man, new revelation of truth being presented, and some specific event. In this case the man speaking was Paul, the new message being taught had to do with Spirit’s work and the formation of the Church, and the new event was their baptism in Jesus’ name (Christian baptism).

Once again, the key purpose for tongues is seen in this account. Tongues were a sign to the Jews. The tongues became a public testimonial sign to the Jews that God was also blessing the Gentiles in the program of His Church and was no replacing John’s baptism with Christian baptism.

Please note that the reception of the Holy Spirit in Acts does not follow any set pattern. He came into believers before baptism (Acts 10:44), after baptism (Acts 8:12–16; 19:6), and by the laying on of apostolic hands (Acts 8:17; 19:6). It's quite obvious that the transitional Book of Acts from Old Testament to New Testament ground is not to be used as a doctrinal source on how to receive the Holy Spirit. Today we do not receive the Holy Spirit through apostles not do we wait to receive the Holy Spirit after we are baptized. We receive Him at the moment of faith (Gal. 3:2) and are "all" baptized into the Body of Christ (Church – 1 Cor. 12:13).

This order of receiving the Holy Spirit is a special, non-repeatable, transitional order of events that would only occur in the lives of people who at the dawning of a new dispensation, who were crossing over the bridge from the Old Testament into the New Testament, from Judaism to Christianity, and identifying with the Messiah and the new work of God – the church.

IV. 1 Corinthians 12-14

In Corinth some (not all) of the Christians were given the gift of tongues. Only in the Church of Corinth do we read about the gift of tongues being used. Why is this? It's because next to the Corinthian church was a synagogue and they had a close connection with the Jewish people who came to the synagogue on Sabbath (Saturday). Some Jews were curious and wanted to visit the local churches in Corinth while others were invited to visit the church on the Lord's Day (Sunday). The tongue speaking in Corinth was once again designed by God to be a sign to the Jews.

Let's once again use the key to unlock the purpose of tongues which was a sign to unbelieving Jews.

a. Were there Jews present?

Yes. This is understood by what 1 Corinthians 14:21-22 says. This passage addresses the Jewish people and why tongues were given to them. Therefore, one must correctly conclude that Jews were flooding into the local churches. However, the fact that Jews were present in the Corinthian assembly is also brought out in Acts 18:1-11, where Paul evidently establishes a church in the home of Justus, whose house was right next to the local synagogue (Acts 18:7). In the synagogue Paul testified to the

Jews that Jesus was the Messiah and Savior of Israel (Acts 18:5). The Jews opposed and blasphemed Paul in verse 6, so he went next door and started a church in Corinth.

The church at Corinth evidently had a unique and widespread witness to the Jews. Perhaps no other church in Bible times was so closely watched, observed, and attended by Jews like the Corinthian church. The unbelieving Jews had their eyes and ears on this church which was next door to the synagogue. In time, the chief ruler in the synagogue was saved (Acts 18:8). I'm sure shock waves rolled through the unbelieving Jews of that day when this leading Jew defected from Judaism to the Church. In Acts 18:17, we discover that Sosthenes was evidently the next chief leader of the synagogue; however, we see by I Corinthians 1:1 that this man was even saved. The Corinthian church had two chief rulers of the synagogue in its membership!

It's easy to see why God gave this sign gift to people in the Corinthian church in a special measure. God did so because the gift of languages was to be a "sign" to these unbelieving Jews. There in the Corinthian church, next to the Jewish synagogue, the Christians began to speak in tongues. As Jewish brethren would enter into the church out of curiosity and see what was going on they witnessed this miraculous sign. These tongues (languages) being spoken next door to the Jewish synagogue became a sign to the unbelieving Jews that Paul's message concerning the Messiah and His salvation was true!

This is why Paul declares the Gospel unto the Corinthians immediately after discussing tongues in chapter fourteen of First Corinthians. He wants to remind them how these languages were to confirm the Messiah and His salvation which He offered to Israel (I Corinthians 15:1-4).

The key that unlocks the meaning and purpose of tongues fits this Corinthian text as well. There were Jews present and the Gospel witness of the Corinthian church to the Jews would necessitate that they were gifted in tongue or language speaking. The believers could present the Gospel message to them and confirm this message with signs following – the signs of speaking in different languages or tongues. The Corinthians needed to realize once again that the main purpose for this gift was to serve as a sign to the unbelieving Jew about the message of the Messiah.

Once again, there was a new people (the Corinthians Gentile believers) and new revelation being given to the Jews (Jesus was the Messiah and the Gospel message) and a new event occurring (the building of Christ's Church). In every instance where tongues are spoken Jews were always present. This is because the tongues were to aid them in their Jewish unbelief and illicit faith in their hearts regarding the Messiah, Gospel, and new work of God.

All of this was necessary before the Scriptures were canonized and the truth was etched in the eternal pages of God's wonderful Book – the Bible. Tongues or languages were spoken for about 30 years as the people transitioned from the Old Testament ground to New Testament ground, from Law to Grace, from Kingdom truth to Church truth, and when many Jews needed to be delivered from legalism to the liberty found in the Gospel. The Jews needed a confirming sign to prove the messenger and messages were from God. Tongues was that sign. However, once the transition was made and God's Word was completed, as the final witness to the Gospel and new movement of God, there would be no more need for these signs. Signs are for Israel – not the Church.

Israel is God's sign nation and He gave the Jews the signs they needed until the New Testament, as God's final witness, was completed. Afterward these signs were no longer needed. The purpose for them was no longer necessary since the final revelation of God's Word and truth would be given to mankind. The gift of tongues would disappear and the Jews would have to believe the written and final Word of God concerning the Gospel.

The issue today is not tongues and miracles but "What saith the Scriptures." The Word of God alone, the bare Word of God is what God is using today to convict and save souls. His finished and completed Word ("the faith once delivered to the saints" - Jude 3) is sufficient and will bring people to faith in Christ. God's Word is final and we do not need any tongues or miracles to confirm it!

We have been looking at the first purpose for speaking in tongues. The Bible reveals in every instance that the purpose of tongues was to confirm new revelation to the Jews (1 Cor. 1:22) during the early days of apostolic Christianity, prior to the completion and formation of the New Testament Canon.

2. The purpose of confirming coming judgment upon Jews.

This verse in 1 Corinthians 14:22 gives us a more specific statement about a secondary purpose for tongues. Yes, tongues were always a sign to unbelieving Jews regarding God's new message of revelation that was being given. However, Isaiah's prophecy reveals that tongues would send a specific sign to the Jewish nation of God's coming judgment that he was going to send upon them. Speaking in a different language or tongue had the additional purpose of confirming God's coming judgment upon the Jewish nation of that day.

In 1 Corinthians 14:21 Paul is specifically referring to those unbelieving Jews who rejected the Word of God in Isaiah's day. He is quoting Isaiah 28:11-12 and reminding them of the "other tongues or languages" and "other lips" (human speech) of the Assyrian captors who invaded Israel and took them into captivity. It was the Assyrians that were Israel's enemies in the past and who invaded Israel taking the people into captivity. In Isaiah's day the prophet warned the unbelieving and rebellious Israelites of coming judgment. Since they continued to reject God's plain speech (the truth of His Word from the prophets) they would soon hear God speaking to them through the unfamiliar language of their Assyrian invaders and captors.

Isaiah 28:9-12 says:

"Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little: For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear."

The speakers in verse 9 are probably the priests and prophets mentioned in verses 7-8. These people were angry because Isaiah was treating them as if they were young children who needed to be taught knowledge and doctrine. They felt they were adults who could think for themselves; they had no need for someone to tell them what to do or think. In other words, they had no time for what Isaiah was trying to tell them! Friend, we had better take time and listen to what God's servant is trying to tell us or else we will find ourselves walking down a path that we should not be on.

The problem with most folks today is they think they know what is right but they are spiritually ignorant of what God wants them to do. They need knowledge and doctrine. But like Isaiah's day, the people no longer wanted to hear what God's man and God's word really says! They want their worship teams and want to boot the preachers out of their sacred desks and want to get some kind of half-baked preacher who has no backbone to stand up for God and say what's right and do what's right.

Isn't this what is happening today? God help the church! In verse ten we see how the people mimicked Isaiah as if he were speaking baby talk to them when they mock his preaching of the Word - "precept upon precept" (command upon command) and "line upon line" (rule upon rule). In spite of what people are saying today, God does give us commands and rules to follow so we might live godly lives.

1 John 5:3 declares:

"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."

So what was happening? The people were mocking Isaiah because he was teaching them like little children would be taught ("here a little and there a little" – Isa. 28:13). This is the way that you communicate truth to people. This is the way we are to be taught today. This is how we grow in our Christian lives. However, the Jews mocked Isaiah for preaching the Word. We have this same thing going on today; God's people don't want the word taught to them! They don't want God's commands and rules. Instead, people are saying that they want to live and do what pleases them. They conclude, "No man is going to use the word of God to tell me what to do!"

Instead of the Bible's commands ("precept upon precept") and rules ("line upon line"), people want drama upon drama and dance bands upon dance bands and sermonettes upon sermonettes that can send them on their way happy and unchallenged about their worldly living. Many Christians simply don't want to hear the teaching and the application of God's holy truth to their lives any longer. There is a famine in the land!

Amos 8:11

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord."

People don't want to be told what to do by God's Word. They don't want God to run their lives. This was the problem in Isaiah's day and it's the problem today among many Christians. They might give God some things but not give Him their music, their dating, their money, or a totally surrendered heart.

In chapter 28:11, Isaiah said that if the people did not want to listen to his preaching about their wayward living and sins, then they would listen to another people who had a different speech, who would bring judgment against them. The word for "stammering" (Isa. 28:11) means foreign. Foreign lips refer to the Assyrians since they spoke a different language. Isaiah was speaking about the Assyrians who were advancing on Israel and would soon conquer the people.

In other words, because of their sins the people would be taken captive by the Assyrian armies and hear their enemies and captors speak in a strange foreign tongue. As they were taken into Assyrian captivity they would listen the foreigners talk in a different language and this different language would become *a sign of judgment* to them. They would know from the different language being spoken that they were being judged by God. They Jews would hear the unfamiliar dialect of the Assyrians and know that God was judging them for not listening to His servant. As they heard this foreign tongue, they knew God had judged them or that He had spoken (in judgment) "to this people" (the Jews).

In 1 Corinthians 14:22 Paul applies this Old Testament passage and relates it to the situation in Corinth and the purpose for speaking in tongues or languages during the early infant days of the church.

1 Corinthians 14:21-22

"In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe."

The expression "this people" and "they" refers to the Jews. The situation was similar in Corinth as it was in Isaiah's day. Many Jews were not accepting the new message of the Gospel or that Messiah had come and died for them and was now forming His Church. They did not want to hear



Tongues were a sign to the
Jews of the **AD 70**
Coming judgment.

the message of the Gospel and believe that God was turning to the Gentiles. As in Isaiah's day, Paul is saying that if the Jews do not accept the message, then they would be judged. Therefore, the tongue speaking that was going on in Corinth, which was next to the synagogue, would also serve as a sign of coming judgment upon the Jewish people. In Isaiah's day the

people would know they were being judged when they heard the Assyrian invaders speaking among them.

What judgment would come upon the Jews if they did not respond to the message of the Gospel as a nation? History tells us that in A.D. 70 Titus the Roman general came down and ransacked the city and killed many Jews. The Roman judgment would come upon the people (the Jews) if they do not listen or hear the message being spoken to them. In fact, the foreign languages or tongues that the Corinthians were speaking were but a foretaste of what they would hear when the Romans would come down and destroy them. So the Jews in Corinth needed to stand up and take notice!

God's revelation was being given to them about the Messiah and His salvation to all people. And languages or tongues were being spoken by some in Corinth to remind the Jews that if they refuse to hear, as they did in Isaiah's day, they too would be judged. This time they would be judged by the Romans. The Jews had no excuse for their unbelief. They had the Old Testament, which pointed to Christ. They also had the earthly ministry of Christ and the apostolic testimony. They should have believed but many did not. Their traditions were hard to overcome. So God gave His people the sign of languages or tongues to warn them about impending judgment if they do not believe on the Messiah.

The gift of tongues (different languages) was given to remind the unbelieving Jews in Paul's day of their coming judgment. The tongue speaking was to be a sign to the temple-attending, unbelieving, and Christ rejecting Jews that national judgment would again come upon them if they chose to reject the Messiah and His salvation! It's clear that the Jews remained in their unbelief (John 1:11) and because of this God had to

judge His national people once again. God allowed the Assyrian nation to judge His people long ago, now He will allow the Romans in A.D. 70 to judge His national people.

In A.D. 70, Titus, the Roman general, destroyed the Jewish Temple. History tells us this. In this judgment by another nation with another tongue, 1,100,000 Jews were killed. The temple was destroyed and surviving Jews were scattered over the rest of the world (James 1:1). God had once again spoken in judgment by another foreign nation. In a very real sense, Judaism ended and was now only a shadow religion of the past. God had warned them of this coming judgment by the sign gift of foreign languages spoken by specific people within the early church. How sad that they did not believe in their Messiah! All the warning signs of judgment were given to them through the gift of languages.

It's interesting to know and realize that approximately 10 years after Corinthians was written (A.D. 51 or 52), the temple was destroyed by the Romans. The unbelieving Jews had repudiated God's Word about the Messiah and were judged. Therefore, this sign of judgment (speaking in different languages) had no further value. The Jews had been judged and scattered in their unbelief. Therefore, the purpose for tongues to aid unbelieving Israel to accept her Messiah and escape God's coming judgment was no longer needed and is certainly not needed today.

Please note that God has not replaced Israel (His ancient people) with the Church but has taken them out of the place of blessing in this present age. God changed His program and is now blessing both Jews and Gentiles in a new work and body called the Church (1 Cor. 12:13). In summary, God has taken the Jews out of the place of blessing (Rom. 11:15, 20, 23, 25), judicially blinded the Jews (Romans 11:25) and turned to the Gentiles on a large scale, blessing them with the New Testament Church (Romans 11:11). Therefore, as we will see in I Corinthians 13:8, tongues would "cease" to exist at one specific point of time. This time would be in A.D. 70 when the Jews were judged and the sign had no more significance to them since God had already judged them and set them aside.

The Church has not replaced Israel in the plan of God.

Israel's blessings are put on hold:

- **Messiah ruling in Israel**
- **Millennial Kingdom**

God's plan is postponed for a later time!! Matthew 21:43

Throughout this present age God has temporarily set aside Israel from the place of blessing (Romans 11:15). God's promised blessing of the Messiah ruling in Israel and Israel entering the Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 20:10-15) is postponed for a later time when another group within the Jewish nation would receive Christ as her Messiah (Matt. 21:43). However, God will once again in the future Tribulation Period seek to bring Israel back to Himself through His chastening judgment.

According to Joel's prophecy, after the Tribulation Period has expired, prior to the Second Coming (Joel 2:28-32) and during the Millennium itself, the gift of languages will once again be restored and given to saved Jews who receive the Messiah. It will be a reminder of God's chastening judgment upon the nation and the promised blessing to come in the Millennium, after they turn to their Messiah in faith and then embrace Him at His Second Coming (Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:17-18 – "those days"). Joel likens these "days" to the time period preceding the Second Coming and the Kingdom blessing.

It's interesting that when the Grace Dispensation had dawned both Jews and Gentiles spoke in tongues to prove that God had turned to the Gentiles (Acts 2, 10, 19; 15:14). In a similar way, when the Millennium begins the Jews will once again speak in tongues to prove that God has turned back to His Jewish people in a favorable way.

Once again, the expressions "the last days" (Acts 2:17) and "those days" (Acts 2:18) refers to the time immediately after the Tribulation Period ("before that great and notable day of the Lord come" = the Second Coming - vs. 20). The "last days" refer to the time when Israel is saved, following the Tribulation Period, when she has all her enemies to her back, and calls upon the Lord (Hosea 5:15; Matt. 23:39). It also refers to the time when she enters the Millennium Kingdom. These are the promised "last days" of blessing that Israel will experience as she comes to faith in the Messiah and enters the Kingdom. Until this future time, when God is once again dealing with Israel, tongues would no longer be necessary. The

purpose for tongues would no longer be needed. This is because God would not be sending any new revelation to the Jews.

During this present time the Jews are not in the place of blessing as they were prior to the formation of the Church. Today God has been calling out His Church (Acts 15:14) and blessing the Church as His specific people (Col. 1:18, 24). The Jews have been judged as a nation; therefore, the sign of tongues (languages) is not needed to convict Israel of their rejection of Christ or of their coming judgment.

Larry Pettegrew summed up this truth when saying:

“The ability to speak in foreign languages, without having studied it, stopped when the purpose for this gift stopped. Paul clearly explained this gift to be a sign (1 Cor. 14:21-22) that was specifically to Israel to indicate that the nation had been removed from its mediatorial position and replaced by the international church. Because the nation ceased to exist in about 70 A.D. it was clear that God was no longer directly working with the covenant nation. Therefore, the gift of speaking in tongues stopped or ceased at this particular time. The gift of foreign languages was thus a minor gift that was necessary to the infancy of the church as a sign to Israel, but it ceased when its purpose was fulfilled.”

Yes, my Bible institute teacher was correct when he stressed, “Signs are for Israel - not the Church!”

C. Problems with tongues (1 Corinthians 14)

Outside Mark 16:17 and a few passages in Acts, we only see tongues being mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12-14.

Spiros Zodhiates made this observation:

“We have no record that this phenomenon occurred in any other New Testament church, nor did Paul ever seek to introduce it to them in his epistles. If this were the indispensable evidence of spirituality and the infilling of the Holy Spirit, we would certainly expect him to urge all believers to pray for this gift.”

This is true. There is no indication anywhere in the Scriptures that God gave this gift to any of the other churches. There is no evidence that it existed in any other apostolic church. Perhaps the reason for this is

because of their unique opportunity to reach the Jewish people. Their church was in close proximity to the Jewish synagogue (Acts 18:7) and the sign of tongues was given for the purpose of convincing the Jews of coming judgment, the Gospel, and God's new revelation. Nevertheless, the church at Corinth was carnal – not spiritual (1 Cor. 3:1-4). Some of them spoke in tongues but not all of them (1 Cor. 12:30). In addition, the people were confused about spiritual gifts and needed guidelines for the use of them in the public services of the local churches in Corinth. In these chapters, specifically chapter 14, Paul gives to them the necessary guidelines to follow in using tongues (speaking in languages), while the temporary gift was being used. The guidelines were needed for several problems had developed due to their carnally and selfishness.

There were three major problems.

1. Pagan practices

The pagan practices of the mystery religions were a very real threat to the local churches. These ancient pagan practices which began to be developed in Babylon were prevalent in Corinth. The Corinthians had come out of paganism and various forms of pagan worship (mindless emotional styles of worship) which some of them were evidently trying to mimic in their church worship.

1 Corinthians 12:1-2

“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.”

The mention of their past, when they were “carried away unto these dumb idols” suggests that they believers were once again trying to incorporate a pagan style of worship in their church services which resembled a type of mindless, emotional, frenzy, instead of ordered and sanctified worship. Paul is saying that what you were in the past should have no bearing on what you are in the present. The insinuation is that they are still being carried away. This expression has the force of being controlled by an influence they could not resist (Gal 2:13; 2 Pet 3:17).

There is an abundance of evidence which indicates that experience-oriented states of frenzy and ecstatic speech can be traced back to the

ancient mystery religions. Every false system of worship has roots in the mystery religions of Babylon since all false religion started at the Tower of Babel. Babylon was really the first sophisticated, organized counterfeit religion (Genesis 11:1-9). The scheme of these people was to establish a false system of religion which would be a counterfeit to the true worship of God. Babylon became the fountainhead for idolatry and paganism (Revelation 17:5). When God scattered these people throughout the world they took with them the seeds of this false religion that had begun at Babel. Wherever they settled, the people practiced some form of Babel's religion. Today, every false religion is the offspring of Babel and will ultimately culminate in an end-time Babylon (Revelation 17:5).

The mystery religions of ancient Babylon were noted for their secret teachings which were divinely revealed teachings of knowledge given only to a select group of people. These religious teachings were associated with emotionalism, frenzy, enthusiasm and ecstasy. Those initiated in these secret teachings went through experiences where their brain went into neutral and their emotions took over. They called it a "divine frenzy." It was a state of ecstasy where the worshiper was lifted above the level of ordinary experience and would help him communicate with the spirit world and their gods. Of course, this was all demonically inspired.

It was clear that these mystery religions were in pagan Corinth (I Corinthians 12:2). These people had in the past been victimized by a false system. The wording of 1 Corinthians 12:2 ("carried away" or lead away) may very well indicate that these Christians were attempting to follow the old ritualistic patterns of the mystery, pagan religions and incorporating them with their use of gifts. They were once again being swept away into these mindless and wild states of ecstasy and frenzy which would include speaking in a different tongue.

Many times their tongue speaking would occur during these emotional outbreaks and it would not be interpreted. This created confusion and disorder (1 Cor. 14:40). At other times, Satan entered into the experience causing the people to curse Jesus without realizing it. Such was the case in 1 Corinthians 12:3.

Mixing pagan worship with the gifts of the Spirit.
God hates a mixture!



I remember making a fruit smoothie in a blender. I added ice to the fruit and also some oatmeal. I could not get my son in law to drink it. He said it tasted too grainy! Case in point; some mixtures are not good! Apparently the saints were attempting to mix paganism with the gifts of the Spirit. We must remember that God hates a mixture! Sadly, the Corinthians tried to mimic these spectacular states of experience or frenzy in their saved life

and church worship. Their worship was being relegated to a mindless type of worship where people would be overcome by emotional ecstasy while at the same time speak in a different language.

The church of Corinth was carnal because they placed experience above Biblical order in their times of worship (1 Cor. 14:40). They were bringing their same old pagan patterns of worship into the church and were trying to recreate them in a religious setting (Rom. 12:2). In short, they were bringing the world into the church. As a result, the work of the Holy Spirit was being confused with the work of pagan ecstasies as indicated by 1 Corinthians 12:2. They were once again being “carried away” or lead back into the pagan experiences of their past and allowing their worship to be defiled.

These saints were very “ignorant” (1 Cor. 12:1) as Paul suggests. They were ignorant in their use and abuse of spiritual gifts, primarily the gift of speaking in tongues. How bad was the situation? It was bad! On some occasions, the tongue speaker, without even realizing it, would stand up and curse Jesus in a different language.

1 Corinthians 12:3 reveals, “Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.”

Hendrickson mentions the connection of this verse with the previous verses: “The force of the conclusive adverb *therefore* goes back to verse 2 and the entire preceding passage (vv. 1–2). If we understand the present verse (v. 3) as a conclusive statement, then we see that Paul describes the

spiritual condition of the Gentile Christians in Corinth ... Paul is now speaking about the spiritual life of the believers in Corinth. He says that he is going to make something known to them.” In other words, Paul is relating what was occurring in the Corinthian, local churches to what happened in their past.

The phrase “speaking by [literally, “in”] the Spirit of God” could refer either to a supernaturally given prophetic announcement or to speaking in tongues. It is likely a reference to tongue speaking, since no Christian would want to *openly* and *knowingly*, through a prophetic revelation, curse Jesus Christ. There was the real possibility that in the midst of their carnal worship some of the Corinthians were cursing or damning Jesus to hell without even realizing it, since they were overtaken by their past pagan ecstasies. They were speaking in a different language and condemning Jesus to hell! What was part of their past life (pagan worship) filtered into their worship experience in Corinth. They had shut off their rational thinking and found themselves overtaken by their past worldly experiences.

Paul informed them that no person “speaking” under the influence of the Holy Spirit would proclaim a heretical doctrine about Jesus Christ. Any person that would do so would either have to be unsaved or be under the influence of demons. Satan spends a lot of time in church. Nowhere is the devil more anxious to pervert God’s people than where they are worshiping. Apparently some of the Corinthians were so fleshly and given over to emotional ecstasies that they were in some measure being influenced by demons during their time of worship. In this condition, they actually claimed to be speaking in tongues while demonically blaspheming the name of the Lord whom they were supposed to be worshiping. What was their problem? They had been using the gifts on the basis of experience and not content (truth).

If a man speaks in tongues and says that “Jesus is accursed,” you can be sure that he is demon-inspired or influenced, since evil spirits characteristically blaspheme and curse the name of Jesus (1 John 4:2). The Spirit of God would never lead anyone to speak of the Savior in this way; His ministry is to exalt the Lord Jesus. The Holy Spirit leads people to say that Jesus is Lord. It’s quite clear that Satan and demons can mimic God’s gifts as seen here. This has always been true (Exodus 7:9-12; Matt. 7:22-23).

There are two possible sources for tongue speaking today.

a. Psychologically inspired

Much of what is happening in the Charismatic Movement today is self-induced or psychological. Psychosomatic (irrational, mental or emotional confusion) or Psychological manipulation (mind control) is the primary source of the tongue speaking that occurring in the modern-day Charismatic Movement.

Richard De Haan acknowledges:

“It is tragic, yet true, that a person may sincerely believe he is exercising a genuine gift from God, while in actuality he is playing a trick on himself.”

Dr. W. A. Criswell, Pastor of the First Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas, tells of a seminary graduate who had majored in Hebrew. Attending a tongues-meeting in California, he rose to his feet and quoted Psalm 1 in the Hebrew language and sat down. A man stood up, solemnly announced that God has given him the gift of interpretation, and proceeded to declare that this was a message dealing with women prophesying in church. After he had finished his speech, the seminarian made known what he had done. And pandemonium broke loose. Yes, it may be that the man who interpreted was acting in sincerity but it indicates how sincerely wrong someone can be and how far a person can go in self deception.

Many people who have come out of the Pentecostal movement are now convinced that they had been deceiving themselves. I've had several ex-charismatics tell me this. Much of what is taking place today is simply a learned behavior. You just learn how to do it. This is what tongue speakers will tell you. If you can go to the charismatic seminar they will "jump start" you and teach you how to manipulate yourself into speaking in some kind of ecstatic utterance.

Dr. Mansell Pattison, a psychiatrist who was engaged in an extensive examination of this tongue phenomenon, calls it, “an unusual pattern of aberrant speech ... a modification of the conscious connection between inner speech and outer speech, that may serve various psychodynamic functions.” Added to this, the recordings of tongue speaking that have been examined by reputable linguists have not revealed any instances where there was the miraculous use of languages. Much of the so-called tongue

speaking is a kind of a self-induced or group-induced hypnosis, somewhat like a trance, where you just yield up all of your will, and you yield up your vocal cords and you empty out your brain, and the power of suggestion takes over and you become psychologically induced. Once you have the alleged experience, you then learn to do it over and over again. Many studies have been done to show that the tongue speaking is purely psychological.

George Gardiner has well stated:

“Biblical tongues were not ecstatic speech and modern ecstatic speech is not Biblical tongues. The desire for experience has subverted sincere people into involvement with a psychological phenomenon which they mistakenly think is speaking in tongues.

“Such experiences not only give Satan an opening he is quick to exploit, they can be psychologically damaging to the individual. Charismatic writers are constantly warning tongues-speakers that they will suffer a letdown. This is ascribed to the devil and the reader is urged to get refilled as soon as possible. That such a “letdown” is not found in the book of Acts, and that the early Christians were not constantly speaking in tongues, doesn’t seem to face these teachers.

“So the seeker for experience goes back through the ritual again and again, but begins to discover something; ecstatic experience, like drug-addiction, requires larger and larger doses to satisfy.

“Eventually there is a crisis and a decision is made; he will sit on the back seats and be a spectator, fake it, or go on in the hope that everything will eventually be as it was. The most tragic decision is to quit and in the quitting abandon all things spiritual as fraudulent. The spectators are frustrated, the fakers suffer guilt, the hoping are pitiable, and the quitters are a tragedy. No, such movements are not harmless!”

Another former Charismatic writes:

“To say that speaking in tongues is a harmless practice, and is all right for those who want to, is an unwise position when information to the contrary is evident. Speaking in tongues is addictive. The misunderstanding of the issue of tongues and the habit, plus the psychic high it brings, plus the stimulation of the flesh, equals a practice hard to let go of. But to equate much speaking in tongues with advanced spirituality is to reveal one's

misunderstanding of Bible truth, and to reveal one's willingness to be satisfied with a deceptive and dangerous counterfeit.”

John MacArthur said this during one message:

“It is interesting to me that I have listened to people speak in tongues in many different parts of this country, on many different occasions, through many years, and I find very similar verbiage, so what they learn kind of gets filtered and passed through the whole movement. Why do people want to do this? Why are they getting into this? Well, many people are hungry to get whatever is missing in their spiritual life and they don't know that it is all about learning the Word and walking in the Spirit. They think they can get it in one big dose, in a sort of a shot, a jolt out of heaven. Many people are hungry to express themselves spiritually and they have been coming to Church for years and they aren't involved, and they find a place where they can speak out and go through this expression, and it kind of releases their pent up feelings.

“Some people want acceptance and security. Some people need to somehow verbalize their spirituality because they have so many doubts, that they are looking for something to prove that they are really Christians, and so they want to find some act, some verbalization, some physical thing that can help convince them their Christianity is real. And some people have been sitting in dead, cold churches for so long that the lifelessness, that permeates their religious experience, causes them to cry out for something other than what they have experienced.”

Many Christians are being psychologically induced to speak in tongues (not the tongues of the Bible!) and pass through many different types of experiences that are not found in the Bible. They may be sincere in what they are doing but sincerity does not determine the rightness of any action. Most Christians who claim to speak in tongues are seeking the spectacular in order to fulfill some deeper psychological need in their lives. Instead of finding their sufficiency in Christ (2 Cor. 3:5) and the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16) they try and fill the void through extra scriptural experiences and misguide their faith through mystical encounters.

b. Demonically inspired

As we see in 2 Corinthians 12:3, the alleged experience of tongues may be satanically-induced or at least *used by Satan* to steer a person away from

true spiritual living. The Corinthians had experienced the effects of evil spirits in their former pagan worship (1 Cor. 12:2) and Satan was once again attempting to pollute their worship of Jesus Christ as Christians. Satan's main objective is to steer us away from our devotion to Christ and keep us from recognizing His sufficiency for our lives (2 Cor. 12:3). One way he does this is by getting us to pass through unbiblical and emotional experiences which are not part of true sanctification and spiritual growth in grace (2 Pet. 3:18).

Satan knows how to create strife and psychological confusion in the minds and hearts of those who seek experiences outside the Bible (James 3:14-16). He knows how to create *deception* and *divert* Christians from their sufficiency and personal growth in Christ (Col. 2:10). I believe that many modern-day charismatics, without realizing it, have adopted the pagan ecstasy experiences of ancient Babylon, as they did in Corinth. We must beware that we do not traffic in the spirits instead of the Holy Spirit. Of course, this does not mean that every charismatic today is cursing Jesus, while they claim to speak in tongues (1 Cor. 12:2), but it demonstrates the shallowness and danger of attempting to worship God in a way that is not Scriptural.

In John 4:22, Jesus told the woman at the well: "Ye worship ye know not what ..." In John 4:24 He adds: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." People conclude today, "My style of worship feels so good! I never felt this way before! It must be of God." Since when does feeling and style determine what is right? We do not live by feelings but by the absolute standard of God's Word. The truth of the matter is this; your experience may not be from God at all! We must remember that "good feeling" does not mean that the experience is from God. An experience can be a diversion and deception from the Evil One.

The Holy Spirit does not cause God's people to enter into mindless worship and supernatural seizures where they are out of control and speaking in some kind of gibberish or nonsense (I Corinthians 14:32-33, 40; Galatians 5:23). When a person claims to have an experience that does not have a Biblical foundation they can in some measure open themselves to Satanic influence and deception (2 Cor. 11:3, 14) and can follow "doctrines of demons" (1 Tim. 4:1). This is why we are called upon to "test the spirits" to see "whether they are of God" (1 John 4:1). When a believer seeks an

experience without Biblical authority he gives the enemy an opportunity to counterfeit the work of God and introduce confusion into his life.

Merrill F. Unger stated:

“Although the grace of God to a large extent undoubtedly protects sincere but doctrinally ignorant saints, yet the peril is very real that demons may deceive and despoil when the protecting power of the Word of God is forfeited by falling a prey to unsound teachers and their teaching.”

It's very interesting that heretical groups have claimed to speak in tongues. For instance, the Mormons under Joseph Smith spoke in tongues. Brigham Young supposedly prayed in a “pure Adamic language.” Today tongues are found among many false religions and cults. Witch doctors, priests, and medicine men in Haiti, Greenland, Micronesia, Africa, Australia, and Asia have claimed to speak in strange tongues. Many voodoo practitioners claim to speak in tongues. Buddhist and Shinto priests have done it and even Moslems do it, claiming that Mohammed himself spoke in tongues. Satan knows how to counterfeit the gifts of the Spirit through emotional manipulation and recreation.



One writer said this about tongues: “Could it be demonic. Could it be satanic. I think it was in Corinth, in some cases. Ecstatic speech is a part of many pagan religions in Africa, East Africa. Tonga people of Africa, when a demon is exorcised, sing in Zulu even though they say they don't know the Zulu language. Ecstatic speech is found today among Muslims, Eskimos, Tibetan monks. It is involved in parapsychological occult groups. Did you know that the Mormons, even Joseph Smith himself advocates speaking in tongues? It could be demonic.”

We are living in a day of Satanic deception and duplication. Let us never forget this. When we open ourselves to paganism Satan can enter the experience and seek to confuse our spiritual lives, convince us that we are speaking in tongues, and in a worst case scenario, even counterfeit a gift. What was happening in Corinth is in some measure happening today in charismatic circles. Many services are a frenzied, chaotic, disorderly mess. Christians will attempt to enter some kind of emotional ecstasy or experience. This is what the Corinthians were doing in recreating the

atmosphere of the past (1 Cor. 12:1-2). In addition, they all stood up and spoke in tongues at the same time, speaking out loud and without any order. There was no interpretation of the tongues. This was all contrary to the Biblical instruction.

With all of the mystery religion ecstasies and all of the disorder, it's no wonder Paul said in I Corinthians 11:17 that their "coming together" was not for "the better but for the worse." Much worship today is nothing more than a time when the mind goes into neutral and people enter into some kind of semiconscious, hallucinatory state. This is not worship (John 4:24). Whenever the church gives in to pagan experiences they will reap the results of demonic influence in some measure.

Raymond Frame, a former missionary to China, once said:

"Evil spirits can easily find opportunity to operate in the believer's emotional life — especially when the believer is persuaded to suspend all intellectual activity and to yield his will over to an invisible intelligence (whom the Christian, of course, is persuaded to regard as being the Holy Spirit Himself). For this reason, the child of God who becomes preoccupied with that least of all gifts, tongues, places himself in a particularly vulnerable position in relation to the danger of demon depression, obsession ..."

Mindless Worship!



The Bible clearly says that our worship of the Lord is to be a "rational worship" (Romans 12:1) and not incoherent or mindless worship. It's never to be a type of worship or experience where the mind goes into a state of neutrality. We are to serve the Lord and worship the Lord with a self-controlled or disciplined mind (2 Timothy 1:7).

This does not mean that we are emotionless in our time of worship. What it means is that we do not put our mind into neutral and open up ourselves to a type of worship that is lacking the control, of the Spirit, truth, and order that resembles holiness.

Arthur Johnson, in his excellent expose of mysticism, entitled, "Faith Misguided," calls the Charismatic movement, "the zenith of mysticism." And he does so with good reason, since there is the desire, in some cases and through some experiences, to switch off the mind and disconnect oneself from what is rational, and reasonable, and logical. The Bible condemns this type of worship in 1 Corinthians 14.

Norman Geisler stated:

"A mystical maze has settled on our land. Fuzzy thinking is the order of the day. The Good Ship Evangelicalism is sailing without rational rudders in the hazy sea of subjectivity."

Dearly beloved, the Bible says we are to "prove all things" (I Thessalonians 5:21) which includes these experiences which are contrary to Biblical revelation and the fruit of the Spirit. We have every right to investigate and suspect demonic activity in pagan experiences. Lastly, we are told to "test the spirits" (I John 4:1) realizing that demonic intervention is all around us and wants to deceive us. We are to test the spirits behind doctrines, experiences, and people.

As we reflect upon paganism and worldliness in worship, we must note that some expositors have suggested that the distinction between the plural use of "tongues" and the singular use of "tongue" in 1 Corinthians 14 may be a key foundational point to the proper understanding to this chapter.

It's concluded by some Bible teachers that the PLURAL use of "tongues" indicates the *correct* and genuine gift of a foreign language (using the gift properly and having an interpreter) while the SINGULAR use of a "tongue" refers to the *counterfeit* use and abuse of the gift. It was perhaps for this reason that the King James Version (KJV) translators consistently added the word "unknown" before every SINGULAR form (see vv. 2, 4, 13, 14, 19, 27) to indicate the counterfeit tongues. In other words, the tongue speaking that was the pagan form of worship (a type of mindless and irrational worship) was always *unknown* to the speaker and others and was referred to in the singular. This type of tongue speaking (when used in the singular) was NOT according to the Biblical pattern. However, the other use of tongues (when referred to in the plural) was the correct form that was used during the infant days of the church. One thing is certain; there is no trace of Scriptural evidence that when the true gift of tongues was used it was heard by others as incoherent, incomprehensible babbling!

For those who make the distinction between the plural and singular use of tongues, the singular use of speaking in tongues would include mindless worship without possessing understanding, which might in some measure include pagan, ecstatic, unrecognizable speech, a type of chatter accompanied by states of extreme emotional bliss and ecstasy – drug-like worship! The singular use of tongues would include a senseless type of gibberish (meaningless words – a non-language).

Webster defines gibberish as follows: “senseless writing, nonsense, unintelligible language, babble, gobbledegook, inarticulate talk, meaningless words, foolish talk; Informal balderdash, stuff and nonsense, twaddle, fiddle-faddle, flapdoodle, hocus-pocus, mumbo-jumbo! This is what is occurring today in the modern Charismatic movement! Mumbo—jumbo!”

A Plymouth Brethren brother who knew the Scriptures well was attending a home Bible study. He told me that in the middle of the Bible study a woman began to make sounds. At first it sounded like moaning and she continued it sounded like a dog was barking! She supposedly was speaking in tongues. Well, this is the type of thing that may have also been happening in Corinth since there were many who wanted to speak in tongues (1 Cor. 12:3) and seek out the experience of this gift. There was likely some counterfeiting of the gift taking place in the local churches.

Those who attempt to differentiate between the plural and singular use of tongues in this section of Scripture do have problems with 1 Corinthians 14:27 where the true, Scriptural gift is referenced in the singular and is regulated by Paul. Even MacArthur, who espouses the dichotomy viewpoint, admits: “there are, however, kinds of languages in the true gift, for which the plural tongues is used. The only exception is in v. 27, where the singular is used to refer to a single man speaking a single genuine language.”

When reading 1 Corinthians 14:27, we do discover at least one exception to the alleged singular/pagan rule of tongue speaking. Of course, there may be other exceptions. In the end, we can't be sure that Paul makes any real distinction between the singular or plural use of tongues. Paul seems to be speaking of real language when speaking about tongues, as he did elsewhere.

In every instance of first century tongue speaking we discover that they were always real human languages being spoken. This is clearly verified from the accounts of Acts 2:8, 11; 10:46 and 1 Corinthians 14 where Paul argues for interpretation and understanding of the languages being spoken. The Greek word for tongues (“glossa”) refers to the human speech organ which brings forth human language and is the word used to convey actual speech and language (James 3:5-8; 1 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9). To “speak” (laleo) with other “tongues” or languages (glossa) is the understanding of Acts 2:4; 10:46; 19:6 and 1 Cor. 12-14.

In I Corinthians the same Greek word “glossa” is used for tongues which is the Greek word used for language. Likewise, in I Corinthians 12:10 Paul spoke of “divers kinds of tongues.” The word for “kinds” (“genos”) speaks of the family of languages and could only mean this. The idea that there is some type of unintelligible angelic language spoken in I Corinthians 13:1 is absurd. Whenever angels spoke in Scripture they always spoke in a genuine language. I Corinthians 12:3 and 13:1 allude to the fact that these tongues were real languages (“callesth Jesus accursed,” “tongues of men”). The idea that tongues were some kind of God-given gibberish seems foreign to the meaning that Paul was conveying. God is a God of order and not chaos (1 Cor. 14:40). He is a God of sense and not nonsense (14:33). God would never allow someone to worship Him without their rational mind (14:15).

Lehman Strauss gives us this worthy conclusion:

“I find no warrant for changing the meaning of tongues in First Corinthians. In every other place where the word is used it means languages. Why then should the meaning be changed in First Corinthians? I know of no textual license that will warrant changing the meaning of the word. All the usages of tongues in Paul’s treatment of the subject refer to foreign languages. ‘So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into air’ (I Corinthians 14:9).”

As we have seen, Paul did previously address the abuse of tongues as being counterfeit (1 Corinthians 12:3). However, the passage in 1 Corinthians 14 is hard to decipher between a true and counterfeit gift and no exact distinction can be consistently made between the singular and plural use.

In 1 Corinthians 14:18 Paul himself said:
“I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all.”

Robert Gromacki offers this advice and makes this distinction between the singular and plural when commenting: “Each Corinthian tongues-speaker apparently spoke in this one language (note use of singular, 14:2, 4, 13), but Paul could speak in many languages when he used the gift (note use of plural, 14:6, 18; cf. Acts 2:8–11). It does not mean that Paul spoke more often in tongues than they did.”

Spiros Zodhiates gives the same conclusion:
“He (Paul) uses the plural form in this verse, referring to various human languages known to different nationalities.”

What we do know from all the information is that Paul is reprimanding them for misusing the gift, whether it had to do with incorporating paganism into the tongue practice (emotional, mindless worship which may have included senseless speech or gibberish – unintelligent words), or abusing the true nature of the tongue gift. This would occur by failing to interpret the language while everyone was speaking at the same time, which in itself created a frenzy and a house of madness.

I believe the latter view is correct. The Corinthians were using the genuine gift of speaking in tongues. This is more probable since there is at least one singular reference (1 Cor. 14:27) that would indicate a correct use of the gift (real language) and also because of Paul’s statement which implied the use of many different tongues (1 Cor. 14:18). Making a distinction of true and counterfeit between the plural and singular is difficult if not impossible. There was no doubt a mindless type of hysteria and worship taking place as the Corinthians attempted to mimic their past pagan ways (1 Cor. 12:1-2), while they spoke in a real language, but there is no strong argument or hard evidence that there is any significant difference between the singular and plural emphasis of tongues in chapter 14.

1 Corinthians 14:23 declares:
“If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?”

This verse reminds us of the abuse of true gifts that were being used in a wrong way. One can use a genuine gift and still create bedlam. I recall watching of the charismatic chaos services on TV. Everyone was moving around, rolling around, and speaking out loud, supposedly in the gift of tongues. The whole service seemed like a zoo! I also remember going to the Philadelphia zoo. This particular day the monkeys kept on making loud noises all day long. They never stopped. You could hear them yelling or screaming over the entire zoo. It was indeed a zoo! There are many church services like this today. Between the rock music being played, the dancing, jumping, yelling, laughing in the Spirit and speaking in the alleged gift of tongues, it sounds more like a zoo than a sacred serviced that honors and glorifies God.

1 Corinthians 14:33

“For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.”

God is a God of holy order and those who worship Him must not adopt pagan styles of worship into their services and become pagan in their practice of worship.

2. Personal edification

We must remember when studying 1 Corinthians that this letter is one of Paul’s earliest epistles, written when the tongues, miracles, and healings described by Luke in Acts were still very much an evidence and confirming sign of apostolic doctrine. Therefore, there was much information given to this Church concerning their excesses and abuses of the gifts. Paul in 1 Corinthians 14 is giving a list of corrections. He chides them in this chapter for their disorderly actions of misusing the gift, failing to interpret their tongues and using all of their gifts in a systematic and orderly fashion (1 Cor. 14:5, 9, 12, 20, 23, 40). Apparently everyone was speaking out at the same time while experiencing a type of mindless worship which no one, not even themselves, could understand. The late George Gardiner called this “The Corinthian Catastrophe.”

Paul is correcting these saints for their misuse and abuse of tongues throughout this entire passage. Therefore, at the very beginning he reprimands them for seeking to edify themselves personally and privately in some way (1 Cor. 14:2) but not edifying one another.

1 Corinthians 14:5

“I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.”

1 Corinthians 14:12

“Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.”

1 Corinthians 14:26 goes on to say:

“How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.”

Tongues were given ONLY for corporate worship and not private worship experiences. This is why Paul reprimands them in this section of Scripture. Tongues were given as a gift to edify the other saints. They were never intended for self-edification.

John MacArthur writes:

“By their selfish, ego–building abuse of the gift of tongues they were, among other things, ignoring the rest of the family of God.”

The idea that 1 Corinthians 14 is favoring tongues for personal edification is erroneous; it is actually condemning the use of tongues for personal edification. The gift was never given for personal edification, whether in church or at home. The point is this; whenever someone does not understand in their time of worship then it becomes mindless and fruitless worship!

The people were misusing this gift in their mindless act of worship. In other words, they were speaking in different languages whenever they wanted to speak without any interpretation. They were using the gift greedily and not for its intended purpose. In this passage Paul is condemning the use of tongues for personal edification. Many of the saints were following the emotional ecstasy of the pagan religions and seeking to worship God without considering the other saints. They were entering into some type of hypnotic state while speaking in tongues and no person, not even themselves, could understand what they were speaking. It was chaos, disorder, and at times became demonically fueled as the people attempted

the mix the frenzied worship of their past with the local church services in Corinth. Satan is always ready to enter into the picture when we practice counterfeit experiences.

Tongues were never to be used for personal edification. Since tongues were not given for personal thrills or devotions, God doesn't need you to talk to Him in some ecstasy language which is being practiced today by the modern Charismatics and Pentecostals.

And yet, Donald Gee, a well-known Charismatic, says:

"The revealed purpose of the gift of tongues is chiefly devotional, and we do well to emphasize the fact."

This is an erroneous statement riddled with error.

Larry Christenson says:

"One speaks in tongues, for the most part, in his private devotions. This is by far its most important use and value."

This conclusion is unbiblical. It is an outright travesty of what God's Word is teaching. This is the very opposite of what Paul is teaching these saints.

1 Corinthians 14:2

"For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries."

This is not commending them but condemning them for their greedy worship. Paul is saying, "Your gift is not to speak to God only when worshipping corporately; furthermore, the gift is not for you." The whole point is, "It's for them, for them, for them" (other believers). So, if you seek to edify only yourself by speaking to God, then you're out of line!

There is definitely a note of correction and sarcasm here, when he says, "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifies himself" (1 Cor. 14:4). These saints were seeking their own personal gratification and not the building up of God's saints. Paul condemns this and argues for the use of the gift of tongues to edify other saints. The gift during apostolic Christianity was never given for personal or private devotions. It was never intended to be used for personal gratification. To assume that it was is to fall into the

same trap that the Corinthians had. They were misusing the gift as they personally sought gratification while incorporating the pagan experiences of their past.

Let's outline 1 Corinthians chapter 14 to see the argument of Paul. The theme of this chapter is very clear. There must be understanding in our time of worship (1 Cor. 14:2, 9, 14, 15, 19, 20). Our worship is to be rational worship. The Corinthian infatuation with tongues caused Paul to highlight the importance of rational understanding in our time of worship in order for our worship to be Biblical and fruitful. Worship is never a time when we disengage our mind and go into a type of hypnotic trance. It does not involve chaos, confusion, and personal frills. Paul is correcting them for not using this gift in an understandable way that would benefit other believers.

Of course, everyone thought that they were worshipping in the right way but both Jesus (John 4:22) and Paul (1 Cor. 14) tell a different story. You can't worship in any way that you please. There must be worship in truth (John 4:24) and have Biblical order in your time of worship.

Isaiah 1:13

"Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; *it is* iniquity, even the solemn meeting."

This is what happens when we abandon truth or wrongly interpret it for our own ends. We must know the truth and not allow others to steer us in a wrong direction.

For nearly fifty years, Alexander Whyte preached God's Word at Free St. George's Church in Edinburgh, Scotland, and gained a reputation for exposing the sins of the human heart and bringing them under the scrutiny of the Word of God. "Surgical preaching" people called it. At one time, he had an assistant named Hugh Black who preached at the evening service and was much more liberal and optimistic in his message. The congregation said they were blackened by Whyte on Sunday mornings and whitewashed by Black on Sunday evenings.

How important is the truth? If we don't know it, we cannot understand it. As a result, we can become whitewashed and not worship and live as God wants us to.

There must be understanding in our time of worship.

a. Understanding Scripture (1-6)

1 Corinthians 14:1

“Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.”

The most important part ingredient of worship is that we understand Scripture. This is why Paul in these first verses speaks of the importance of prophesying above the gift of speaking in tongues (“but rather that you may prophesy” – vs. 1). Prophesying was used to give out the Word of God that was being shown to the prophets during the early apostolic church. This is why prophecy excelled speaking in tongues which were never used to communicate the Bible to others but for prayer and praise (14-17).

1 Corinthians 14:2 says:

“For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.”

Personal gratification through speaking in tongues was not God’s design for this gift or any gift for that matter. Only God would understand what the speaker was saying but no other person would have understanding of what was being said. The tongue speaker would “in the spirit” (his own human spirit as in verse 14 – the Greek locative sense) speak “mysteries.” This term “mysteries” may refer to the undisclosed sayings that required a supernatural interpretation during early apostolic Christianity (1 Cor. 13:2). A mystery was a divine truth, unknown in the past, but revealed by God in the present. Thus, tongues were used to bring praise to God for some of the wonderful, new, and exciting things that God was presently doing as the Church Dispensation began.

Some have suggested that the word “mysteries” may also have reference to the actual pagan mystery religions that these saints were trying to recreate and mimic. There was a type of secrets associated with the pagan mystery religions, out of which many of the Corinthian Christians had come. It was the desire of the worshipper to enter into these secrets through mystical-type experiences. Maybe the Corinthians were trying to recreate these emotionally-charged experiences in their time of worship, so they

might understand these alleged “mysteries” (hidden truths) that God was revealing to them personally.

The carnal saints did not care that “no man understandeth,” or literally, “no one hears.” Their concern was for the excitement and self–gratification of speaking these mysteries in their own human spirit. They did not care that the mysteries had no meaning to themselves or to anyone else.

One charismatic said this of verse 2:

“We are speaking to God only, and therefore it is not necessary for us to understand what we are saying based upon 1 Corinthians 14:2 and 28).”

The phrase “unto God” (vv. 2, 28) means that if the Corinthian’s were speaking in a legitimate language then God would understand what they were saying but no other person would, not even the speaker. In the case of 1 Corinthians 14:28 the tongue person who actually understood what he was saying, possessing the gift of interpretation also, could during the church service legitimately “speak to himself, and to God” indicating that there would be understanding in his inner spirit and in God’s site.

It’s interesting that the Bible records no instance of believers speaking to God in anything but normal, intelligible language. Even in Jesus’ great high priestly prayer (John 17), in which the Son poured out His heart to the Father, when deity communed with deity, the language is simple and clear. The point is this; whenever people speak to God they are to do so with understanding, even when they are communing or praying in their inner spirit where all worship occurs.

Another Charismatic once said of verse 2:

“We are speaking in our spirit, and that is good for us because it releases us from an intellectual approach that confines and limits what we can experience (1 Cor. 14:2).”

This is a gross misunderstanding what Paul is teaching. He is actually condemning any approach to worship that has no intellect or understanding (vv. 14-16). Intellectual barriers (when our intellect is blocked) can never be a sign of genuine worship. If you cross the barrier of truth and the intellect in your time of worship, then you will move into the area of mysticism and esoteric experiences outside the Bible. Once again, the phrase “in the spirit” (vv. 2, 14-16) is used in a location sense and refers to the human

spirit where all rational worship occurs. Of course, it's the human spirit that is directed by the Holy Spirit during our time of worship and the Holy Spirit would never direct a person to speak in an unintelligent manner in their time of worship.

The Holy Spirit always leads people in rational worship for this is the only way we are commanded to speak to God. Even angels and Christ always spoke to God in an intelligent manner (1 Cor. 13:1).

John 16:13 declares:

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.”

The Holy Spirit does not guide our inner spirits into mystical and mindless experiences that are outside the realm of true worship. I remember a time when I tried to get into a restricted area while at the Daytona Speedway in Florida. If you don't have the right passes, you are not getting in to certain areas. The man refused my pass and said, “No admittance.” In a similar way, God has the right to refuse our worship when we present a type of paganized worship that defies truth, order, and holiness. Why? It's because He is the absolute holy God who sets the standards for worship. Worship that lacks understanding is worship He does not receive!

As the entire passage teaches, there must be understanding in our time of worship; therefore, God only hears (1 Cor. 14:2, 28) rational worship! He refuses to hear what He calls “vain repetitions (Matt. 6:7) which mean absolutely nothing to Him. God is not impressed with gibberish, psychosomatic worship, self-induced, ecstatic babble, and all other forms of mindless worship today. He defies it and will not accept it.

1 Corinthians 14:3

“But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.”

The emphasis was on prophesying for through prophecy the Scripture was given and people could all understand it and be edified. We find that the Scriptures were the central focus and it's through the Word of God that we are built up (“edification”), challenged (“exhortation”) and encouraged

“comfort” – Rom. 15:4). It’s only through the Word of God that I can grow and become stable and sound in my beliefs (1 Pet. 2:2).

1 Corinthians 14:4 says:

“He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.”

Paul contrasts the proclamation of truth with the personal gratification of tongues speaking. Truth wins out every time! Paul’s speaking to the Corinthians in sarcasm (scorn and mockery) when speaking to them about their personal edification.

One Charismatic said:

“We are edifying ourselves, and there is nothing wrong with that (1 Cor. 14:4).

Once again, this is a gross violation and misunderstanding of what Paul is teaching. Paul is actually arguing for ONLY corporate edification in the church life and reprimanding them for their personal edification. 1 Corinthians 14:5 says, “that the church may receive edifying”). Let’s study our Bibles!

John MacArthur is correct in his observation:

“I believe Paul’s point here is sarcastic. (His sarcasm can also be seen in 4:8–10, and reaches its height in 14:16, “was it from you that the word of God first went forth?”) Because even true tongues must be interpreted in order to be understood, they cannot possibly edify anyone, including the person speaking, without such interpretation. They cannot, therefore, be intended by God for private devotional use, as many Pentecostals and Charismatic’s claim. Paul here is referring to the *supposed* value the Corinthians placed on their self–styled tongues–speaking. The satisfaction many of the believers experienced in their abuse of tongues was *self–satisfaction*, which came from pride–induced emotion, not from spiritual edification. It is an illegitimate self–building, often building up nothing more than spiritual pride.”

1 Corinthians 13:5 gives this word about love. Love “seeketh not her own.”

1 Corinthians 14:5

“I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.”

Paul’s wish (“I would that ye all spake with tongues”) must be seen as his desire for them to receive edification in their ministry while others use this gift of tongues. However, Paul knew that all would never speak in tongues because that was contrary to the divine program (1 Cor. 12:7, 11, 18, 30).

Most Charismatic’s will read this verse flippantly and conclude that Paul wants us all to speak with tongues (1 Cor. 14:5). But this NOT what Paul is teaching. What he was saying is that *if tongues were used by everyone to bring glory to God, then everyone would be able to understand them and there would be much edification that would take place*. Paul’s point is that edification or the spiritual building up of the saints is most important. When people are speaking in unknown languages without interpreting them then no edification takes place, which is the intended purpose for the gift of tongues. The key word is “edifying” (vv. 5, 12, 26). Since prophesying served the purpose of declaring truth that could be understood then it served the purpose of edification to the people.

In addition, we must also remember that Paul shared this desire to speak in tongues while the gift of tongues was still operative in the Church of Corinth and when the gift had a specific intended purpose to serve as a sign of judgment for his Jewish brethren (1 Cor. 14:20-22). Although one might be edified by the praising, singing, and prayers that were spoken in a different language (1 Cor. 14:14-15) the main purpose was to ultimately warn the Jews of future judgment (1 Cor. 14:20-22) and serve as an aid to bring them to faith in Christ.

1 Corinthians 14:6

“Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?”

Paul is saying that if he speaks in a language which no person can understand what spiritual benefit would that bring to the believer? However, emphasizing the importance of Scripture over tongues he says that its far better to understand the “revelation” of the Word of God, the “knowledge”

(of God's word) "prophesying" (giving out the Word of God) and "doctrine" (teaching of the Word).

The purpose of gifts is to minister *for* God but not *to* God. Their purpose certainly is not to selfishly minister to ourselves, as some of the Corinthian believers thought they were doing by speaking in tongues. Our gifts are to minister to others for God's glory (1 Cor. 12:7). This reminds us that the gifts God has given to the church today are important for the benefit of the body.

b. Understanding sounds (7-12)

Paul is using an illustration of hearing and deciphering certain sounds to drive home his point. The Corinthians could especially appreciate the musical illustration because their city contained one of the great ancient music halls, seating about 20,000 people.

1 Corinthians 14:7 declares:

"And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?"

Even lifeless things, such as a flute or harp, are expected to make "distinction in the sounds" or sensible notes and sounds that correspond to musical order. The same should be true of language. Both human language and musical language must possess order and understanding. These two instruments must envelop a series of notes in harmony. Rhythm, structure, harmony, and other such orderly qualities make a group of notes music instead of mere noise. The modern church should read this verse and in doing so they could get rid of a lot of their modern noise! Much of what is called contemporary music today is nothing more than noise!

Here is the point; for music to be music it must be intelligible; it must make musical sense. If they do not produce a clear distinction in the "sounds" (tones) how will it be known what is played on the flute or on the harp? Have you ever gone to a band concert and listened to the band warming up? They were all playing different notes and had no unity in their playing. Everyone was doing their own thing. This is the way it was in Corinth. Everyone was doing their own thing and nothing made sense. Everyone was speaking out at the same time in their own unintelligible speech and

uninterpreted language and it sounded like a band warming up before the concert!

1 Corinthians 14:8

“For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?”

Paul now gives another helpful illustration. If a bugle produces an unrecognizable sound, then who will prepare himself for battle? If a bugler just plays a bunch of garble and noise, then no soldier is going to prepare himself for battle. The mere blowing of the trumpet was not sufficient. There had to be distinctions in the pitch of the sound or else there would be utter confusion in the camp. Hearing a bugle means nothing to a soldier if a definite military call is not being played. Mere bugle notes played randomly are meaningless, even if they are played by the official bugler on the best instrument available. A soldier gets no message from a bunch of random notes. He only gets ready for battle when “Call to Arms,” “Revelry” and “Charge,” or other such calls are played.

If the bugler is not sure whether he is calling “Retreat!” or “Charge!” you can be sure none of the soldiers will know what to do either! Half of them will rush forward, while the other half will run back! The call must be a clear one if it is to be understood. Worship must be understandable for it to be true worship.

1 Corinthians 14:9 declares:

“So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.”

The analogy is now made to what was happening in Corinth. Music must make sense and the use of our spiritual gifts must also make sense! We must use all of our gifts rationally or with understanding if we and others are going to benefit spiritually. We receive not edification nor do others when we can't know what we are saying! You are only fooling yourself if you think that you are receiving spiritual edification when you don't know what you are saying! You may have “a feeling” but you don't have edification.

1 Corinthians 14:10

“There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification.”

Paul continues to hammer away at the same point of intelligent understanding by using the illustration of language and voices. The word for “voices” is connoting a language. There are many kinds of languages in the world and no language lacks sensible meaning or understanding. No language is “without signification” (without no voice or lack of communication or meaning). A language without meaning is pointless. A language without meaning is not even a language. It is meaning that makes language a true language. There are many kinds of languages in the world (“many kinds of voices”) and all sound differently but they all communicate and transmit meaning among those who are speaking them and to their listeners.

1 Corinthians 14:11

“Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me.”

By definition communication must be two-sided. “Therefore if I (the one listening) know not the meaning of the voice (language being spoken), I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian (one that does not understand), and he that speaketh (the one doing the talking) shall be a barbarian unto me (one that does not understand). Unless a person speaks with articulate sounds, no one can understand. Both lose out! It’s like the deaf leading the deaf without sign language!

In that day, a “barbarian” was regarded as one ignorant of culture and language, living outside of the civilized Roman Empire. A barbarian was a person who lived a life that was foreign to most people and spoke a type of language that no one could understand. His language was unintelligible to everyone. Paul is saying that when you don’t understand what you or other people are saying then you are acting barbaric! There are a lot of barbaric saints today in the Charismatic movement! They make no sense to anyone and God says, “Stop your senseless noise and chatter! None of this amounts to a hill of beans when it comes to worship and communicating truth.”

When witnessing modern-day Charismatic services, it sounds like a bunch of barbarians have gathered together for a mindless and meaningless display of worship. There is no understanding of what is being said or happening. Paul condemns this.

1 Corinthians 14:12

“Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.”

The application of the illustration to the Corinthian problem is now given. These saints were “zealous” (possessed a burning desire) “of spiritual gifts” their goal should be for the “edification” of the saints – not the personal, self-gratifying, and unbiblical use of the gift of tongues. The Corinthians were infatuated with speaking in tongues, so much so that there were those who were trying to mimic the gift and this is why Paul must remind them that not everyone has the gift (1 Cor. 12:30). They were obsessed with the miraculous but had lost site of the ministry of gifts. This reminds us that our zeal must be according to truth and knowledge (Rom. 10:3) for it to be acceptable to God. Our zeal can be misdirected and we can be misinformed about the truth; therefore our zeal can become misleading to us.

Proverbs 23:23

“Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.”

I remember buying those old baseball cards that had a stick of gum in the same packet with the cards. Usually there were three cards in them. I often wished I had not traded off some of those cards to my buddies but kept them. There were some classic rookie cards I had in my hand and thought nothing of it at the time. If I had only known! Here is the point. Don't sell the truth! Know what you have and cling to it and follow it tenaciously. Your life and worship will be much better for it.

In England's Fairford churchyard there is a monument to a cat. The cat used to wander in during worship and make itself at home. Villagers said that the cat spent more time in church than any church parishioner, so they erected a monument to the worshipping cat! Well, cats don't worship God but people do, as they submit to God's pattern for worship.

Erwin W. Lutzer

“If we haven't learned to be worshipers, it doesn't really matter how well we do anything else.”

When we submit to Jesus' lordship over our lives, we'll give him our worship! We must allow Christ to be Lord over our time of worship. We will seek to give Him pure worship – not worship that is marked by worldliness, disorder, and impurity.

Review: Let's recall what we have learned thus far about the type of worship that was taking place in Corinth. The Corinthian believers were relegating their worship services to irrational, mindless, emotional worship. People were speaking in a tongue (language) they could not interpret or understand. There was mass chaos occurring. In some cases, the saints were attempting to create the gift of tongues by their own power and in these cases the messages were not even languages but gibberish. There was a return to their former pagan ways of worship as they attempted to use their gifts for the Lord. They practiced a bizarre form of mindless and irrational worship which was not really worship at all.

They were greedily worshipping for their own personal thrills instead of wanting to edify the body of Christ. Paul reprimands them for this (1 Cor. 14:2) and concludes that our serving gifts are to be used in corporate worship and they are to edify (build up spiritually) the people (vv. 5, 12, 26). Mindless, selfish, and disorderly worship is forbidden by God. This was the Corinthian catastrophe.

Our worship must be rational (we must understand what we are saying to God or what someone else is saying to God).

c. Understanding speaking (13-20)

The next set of verses deals with tongue speaking which was to be relegated to an actual language that could be understood by everyone. The Corinthians were no doubt experiencing great “feeling” in their act of worship but feelings do not tell us what is true. Feelings are not bad in themselves, and sometimes our feelings are aligned with scriptural truth. However, they are more often aligned with our sin nature. The fickle nature of the heart makes it a very unreliable compass!

Jeremiah 17:9

“The heart (with all of its feelings) is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”

Many today say they “feel” like they are worshipping God when they are rolling around and laughing. They term this “laughing in the Holy Spirit” and claim that it has been manifested in Charismatic revivals. Yes, it is revival – counterfeit revival! The Toronto blessing was pseudo-revival. The most convincing scriptural argument against what is called “holy laughter” is found in Galatians 5:22-23. It says here that the work of the Holy Spirit manifests itself in self-control. If self-control is a fruit of the Spirit of God, how can uncontrollable laughter also be a fruit of His Spirit?

1 Corinthians 14:33

“For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.”

1 Corinthians 14:40

“Let all things be done decently and in order.”

What is sometimes called worship and revival is simply a selfish and carnal diversion of worship. It also seems, from what Paul is saying, that which is called “holy laughter” would fall under the category of what is “not edifying” (vv. 5, 12, 26) to the body of Christ, and should therefore be avoided. Uncontrollable spasms of emotion are contrary to the nature of the Holy Spirit. It is advisable and Biblical to conclude that one should NOT look to “holy laughter” as a means of growing nearer to God or as a means of experiencing the Holy Spirit.

The idea that God would make people act drunk or laugh uncontrollably or make animal noises as a result of the Spirit’s anointing is directly opposed to the way the Spirit acts, according to Galatians 5:22-23. There was no one in the Bible more filled with the Holy Spirit than Jesus, and not once does the Bible ever record Him laughing uncontrollably. Our worship must be rational and pure.

1 Corinthians 14:13

“Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret.”

In these verses (13-20) we again note that tongues (speaking and understanding a human language) were never used for preaching the Word of God but for prayer (vv. 14-15) and praise (15b-17). You will never find anywhere in the Scripture where tongues were used for the actual preaching of the Word of God.

At Corinth there apparently was an abundance of tongues-speakers, but few, if any, interpreters. In the services, three could speak in tongues, and that in turn (“by course”) but only if one could interpret (1 Cor. 14:27). There was the distinct possibility that no interpreter would even be present at the meeting to give the understanding of the tongue message (1 Cor. 14:28).

Because spiritual profit through understanding was Paul’s main thrust, he advised the tongues-speaker to pray for the gift of interpretation (“pray that he may interpret” – 1 Cor. 14:13). He was not to seek the interpretation after he had spoken in tongues, but before the meeting started he was to seek out one to interpret the message, so when the service occurred, the tongues-utterances could be translated for the edification of the church (“except he interpret” - 14:5). In other words, the presence of the interpreter in the meeting had to be known in advance or else those who had the gift of tongues were to remain silent (14:28).

Why seek for an interpretation? So everyone else in the assembly could understand what you were saying and the saints could be built up. Without edifying, what you were speaking would be unfruitful and unproductive from a spiritual standpoint (“but my understanding is unfruitful” – vs. 14). In other words, no other person “that occupieth the room” (vs. 16) could understand what was being said. A person’s prayer, singing, or praise would not be discernible and therefore lack edification. All that would take occur was confusion and worship that was not based upon rational truth regarding God and His promises. When there is no understanding in our time of worship, there is mindless worship, which is not true worship.

Drug addicts want to escape reality and put their minds into neutral. I’ve talked with them and they have told me that they want to escape and go to another place. For some Christians today, their time of worship is viewed and relegated to a mindless escape from reality where their brain goes into neutral and they say and do things which make absolutely no sense. This is not worship; it’s an addiction to some kind of experience that has no Biblical support behind it.

Some Christians are addicted to their form of worship and “worship their worship” instead of Jesus Christ! Such things as contemporary Christian worship, counterfeit tongue speaking, and other types of religious phenomenon (laughing in the Holy Spirit, slayings in the Holy Spirit), which is considered by many to be a legitimate form of worship, can actually turn into a form of rebellious, self-centered and self-gratifying worship. This is happening at alarming rates today.

1 Corinthians 14:14

“For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.”

Once again, we realize the importance of understanding and rational worship (Rom. 12:2). Worship is not a mindless experience that brings a person into a state of ecstasy outside the realm of his senses. Worship is always connected with understanding of God’s truth, character, and purposes. Paul says if no person knows or understands what is being said than your understanding and worship is fruitless (“my understanding unfruitful” – vs. 14). This would be true in relationship to both the speaker and listeners. What good is worship if you don’t understand whether you are praising God, expressing truth, or ascribing adoration to God’s will and purposes in Heaven and on earth?

“All creatures of our God and King
Lift up your voice and with us sing,
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Thou burning sun with golden beam,
Thou silver moon with softer gleam!
O praise Him! O praise Him!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!”

Now this is real worship! I understand this and I’ll take this worship any day over some kind of pseudo-worship that no one understands.

1 Corinthians 14:15-16

“What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?”

Worship is not true worship when it lacks understanding. This is brought out in the following verses: “pray with the understanding” (verse 15) and “sing with the understanding” (verse 16). If there is no rational understanding what is being said in the prayer or praise session, then worship is not taking place. It would be nothing more than mindless ecstatic (emotional) prayer and praise that had no foundation or base.

This is what Paul is getting at in these verses. Worship and edification cannot exist apart from the mind. Worship and spirituality involves more than the mind, but it never excludes the mind (Rom. 12:1–2; Eph. 4:23; Col. 3:10). The mind is never disengaged in worship! In Scripture no premium is placed on ignorance! We must hear the truth and respond to it.

The famous Congregationalist minister, Dr. Joseph Parker, preached at an important meeting and afterward was approached by a man who pointed out an error in the sermon. Parker listened patiently to the man’s criticism, and then asked, “And what *e/*se did you get from the message?” This remark simply withered the critic, who then disappeared into the crowd. Too often we are quick to judge the sermon instead of allowing the Word of God to judge us! Truth sometimes hurts but we desperately need it or else we will lead astray into error and false forms of worship.

Our worship must be based on truth, or it will become superstitious emotionalism that has no basis of truth attached to it! One false prophet was telling people that they should send in their house mortgages to his ministry and they will burn them on the altar of worship together at the same time and their debt will be declared by the would-be-prophet to be miraculously erased. This is not worship – it’s weird and bizarre and has nothing to do with faith or worship! Fanaticism has overtaken much contemporary worship today, whether it is charismatic worship or CCM.

Please note that Charismatic teaching places an emphasis on praying in tongues from this verse (“pray with the spirit” – verse 15). They claim that there is some kind of “heavenly language” that we can pray through the Holy Spirit’s enablement. These conclusions are erroneous. In the first place, the lower case “spirit” is likely referring to the location of one’s worship and prayer, which is the human spirit, the place where all worship occurs. Second, even if the reference is to the Holy Spirit there is no Scripture suggesting that the Holy Spirit would lead a person to pray in some kind of ecstatic utterance or gibberish. When Jude talks about

“praying in the Holy Ghost” (Jude vs. 20) he is referring to praying under the Spirit’s guidance – not praying in a Holy Spirit tongue! There is no mention of tongues after the Book of Corinthians. The failure to mention tongues in the later epistles proves that the purpose for tongues was finished.

1 Corinthians 13:1

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.”

Charismatic’s conclude there is some kind of heavenly, angelic language that we can pray and speak when we are filled with the Spirit based upon a misinterpretation of 1 Corinthians 13:1. For some reason Charismatic’s interpret this to mean that there is some kind of angelic language, which is different from human language, which Spirit-filled and initiated Christians speak who have the fullness of the Spirit’s ministry upon them. However, Scripture clear affirms that whenever angels spoke in the Bible they always spoke in a language people could understand.

There is no Biblical teaching of a unique or special angelic language or dialect. In the countless records of angels speaking to men in Scripture, they always spoke in the language of the person being addressed. There is no indication that they have a heavenly language of their own that men could learn.

Paul simply is saying that if he were to have the ability to speak with the skill and eloquence of the greatest men, even with angelic eloquence, he would only become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal if he did not have love. Don’t read more into Paul’s analogy. Paul is simply saying that without love we are only a bunch of noise!

Charismatics have also misinterpreted Romans 8:26:

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself (autos - Himself) maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”

Charismatics have long misapplied this verse in the Bible. They claim that this reference speaks of the Holy Spirit working in connection with the believer’s prayer life so he can speak in tongues during his time of prayer. The “groanings” are some kind of Holy Spirit sent heavenly language that

only a Spirit-filled Christian can speak during his time of prayer. Contrary to the interpretation of most Charismatics, the groanings of the Spirit are not utterances in unknown tongues or some kind of ecstatic gibberish (non language) that has no rational content. Such an interpretation lacks Biblical sense and runs away from what is actually being said in this text. First, it's the Holy Spirit praying and not the believer ("but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us"). There is no mention of a believer praying in some kind of tongue language. Only a Charismatic who is looking for an opportunity to speak in tongues would every come up with such a loose interpretation.

Second, the Holy Spirit is praying or interceding before the throne of God and not directly through the believer's prayer life. In other words, the Holy Spirit is not talking through people but to the Father. The next verse gives the accurate interoperation.

Romans 8:27

"And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

The "he" (the Father) not only searches our hearts but He also knows the mind or thinking of the Holy Spirit as well. Furthermore, it's the Holy Spirit that makes intercession for the saints of God before the throne of the Father, on the believer's behalf, since the Father knows what the Holy Spirit is thinking.

Paul says the communication taking place between the Godhead is termed as "groanings" (sighs) which are not even audible and are actually inexpressible in words. These groans or sighs carry profound content and they are actually divine appeals by the Holy Spirit before the Father for the spiritual welfare of each believer. In a way infinitely beyond our understanding, these groaning (sighs) represent what someone called "intertrinitarian communication," or divine articulations by the Holy Spirit to the Father. These inarticulate prayer "groanings" are not words per say but longings and desires understood by the Godhead alone in their time of discourse.

Why does the Holy Spirit prayer for us? It's because we don't know how to pray. The "infirmities" (Rom. 8:26) in this context have to do with prayer infirmities. Basically, we do not always know how to pray and what to pray for in certain situations. Even the apostle Paul did not pray properly in

relationship to his healing (2 Cor. 12:3–9). He undoubtedly needed this special and precious ministry of the Holy Spirit just as we do in our time of praying. The Holy Spirit communicates to the Father on our behalf, interceding for us, praying for us, making prayers that are aligned with the will of God for our lives.

Once again, our “infirmity” is a prayer infirmity or weakness of not knowing how to pray in connection with certain problems, needs, and situations that we face. It is also an inability to pray at times because of great burdens of heart and physical problems that we face.

Richard Mayhue summed it up well:

“If the Spirit interrupts our prayers to edit them in conformity to God’s will, then how much more should we labor to pray in God’s will (Rom. 8:7). Our confidence in prayer can be measured by the certainty of praying in God’s will.”

I can’t fully understand this but I believe it does happen. The Holy Spirit has an important prayer ministry for us before the Father. He directs His prayers for us, according to the Father’s will, so that we might experience God’s will in our lives.

We have all seen an interception in football game. The defensive player runs in front of the offensive player and intercepts the football. Beloved, in some way unbeknown to us, the Holy Spirit undoubtedly intercepts our prayers sometimes fixing our prayers and heightening the intensity of our prayers before the Father.

When does the Spirit intercede in our prayers?

1. The Spirit prays when we don’t pray as we should.

Because of our imperfect perspectives, finite minds, human frailties, and spiritual limitations, we are not always able to pray in absolute consistency with God’s will. Many times we are not even aware that certain spiritual needs exist, much less know how best they should be met. Even the Christian who prays sincerely, faithfully, and regularly cannot possibly know God’s purposes concerning all of his own needs or the needs of others for whom he prays.

As already mentioned, even the apostle Paul, who lived so near to God and so faithfully and sacrificially proclaimed His gospel, did not always know how best to pray (2 Cor. 12:8-9). Paul's request did not correspond to the Lord's will for him at that time. Even when we do not know what God wants, the indwelling Spirit Himself intercedes for us, bringing our needs before God, even when we do not know what these needs are or when we pray about them unwisely. The Holy Spirit "helpeth our infirmities." He corrects and aligns our prayers in accordance with the will of God.

It's wonderful sometimes to go to the Lord and say, "Lord, I don't know what to ask for. I don't know what to say. But I'm coming to You as Your child. And I want Your *will* done." The Spirit of God will then make intercession for us "according to the will of God" (Rom. 8:27b). Have you gone to God in prayer when you actually did not know what to pray for? All you could do was just go to Him and say, "Father." You could not ask anything because you didn't know what to ask for. At times like this the Spirit "helpeth our infirmities." How wonderful that is!

2. The Spirit intercedes when we can't physically pray.

When we groan in these earthly bodies (Rom. 8:22-23) the Spirit can take those groans (sighs) and turn them into His own groans. When we can only groan and not gather our thoughts in prayer – the Holy Spirit prays for us. Yes, even when the believer groans the Spirit can in some way interpret that groan and bring it to the Father in the expressed form of God's will – "according to the will of God" (Romans 8:27b).

I have been told by those lying on hospital beds that they could not gather their thoughts the way that they wanted to and yet they knew that their prayers were going up to God and were being expressed to God! The Spirit prays when we are burdened down with a heavy load and can't seem to pray nothing more than Peter did, "Lord, save me!"

God is concerned about the trials of His people. Today the Holy Spirit groans with us and feels the burdens of our weaknesses and suffering in our earthly humanity. But the Spirit does more than groan. He prays for us in His own groaning so that our sighs and groans in this life might be translated into the will of God. We do not always know God's will during the time of suffering. We do not always know exactly how to pray, but the Spirit

intercedes for us, so we might live in the will of God in spite of suffering. The Spirit shares our burden.

3. The Spirit prays even when we do pray according to God's will.

Even when we pray correctly, according to God's will, we still need the prayer ministry of the Spirit on our behalf. Even when we pray, "Thy will be done," the Spirit takes this desire of our hearts and brings it before the Father with His moans and sighs and actually expresses God's will before the Father. The Spirit expresses it in such a way that our prayer is heightened before God's presence and impressed upon His heart. In all of these ways the Spirit intercedes for our prayer infirmities.

Grampa was going by his little granddaughter's room one night when he saw her kneeling beside her bed, head bowed and hands folded, repeating the alphabet. "What are you doing?" he asked her. She explained, "I'm saying my prayers, but I couldn't think of just what I wanted to say. So I'm just saying all the letters, and God can put them together however He thinks best."

Now back to 1 Corinthians chapter fourteen.

1 Corinthians 14:16

"Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?"

Paul continues teaching and says if you "bless" (give thanks to God) in the spirit (inner man where worship occurs) only, then how will the one who fills the place of the ungifted say the "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he will not know or understand what you are saying?

The "unlearned" speaks of a person who is ignorant, unlearned, or unskilled in the language being spoken. If you speak Spanish to me I would be ignorant of what you are saying! If you speak any other language to me other than English, I would be ignorant and unlearned. My understanding and worship would be unfruitful.

In other words, a person who is unschooled in the language being spoken cannot possibly understand what he hears. In a worship service, for example, he could not know when to say the "Amen" after one gives

thanks. This is a Hebrew word of agreement and encouragement, meaning “So let it be,” and was commonly used by worshipers in the synagogue. The practice carried over into some early Christian churches and is common in many churches today. Here is the point; a person cannot know when to “Amen” if he does not know what is being said.

I once heard a Charismatic preacher speak forth what I call gobbledygook (unintelligent jargon) and the people sitting in the audience began to say “Amen” and “Praise the Lord” to his ecstatic utterance. How could they do this? They had no idea what he was saying! These were fruitless and empty Amen’s. When there is no understanding we cannot legitimately say “Amen” to what is being said.

Scripture commands that believers to meditate in three areas:

1. God (Ps. 27:4; 63:6)
2. God’s Word (Josh. 1:8; Ps. 1:2)
3. God’s works (Ps. 143:5; 145:5)

Meditation demands understanding! It demands rational worship; therefore, anything less is not true worship!

1 Corinthians 14:17

“For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.”

The person speaking in a tongue (in a language or some kind of ecstatic utterance) may feel he is giving thanks well enough, but no one else will know what is being said. The other man is not edified (spiritually enriched), as he should be when the gift was ministered properly with interpretation (14:5, 12). Once again, there must be understanding if worship is to be true worship!

William Temple wrote:

To worship is:
To quicken the conscience by
the holiness of God.
To feed the mind with the
truth of God.
To purge the imagination with
the beauty of God.
To open the heart to

the love of God.
To devote the will to the
Purpose of God.

We can do none of this when our mind is disengaged and devoid of understanding. Our worship is vain without knowledge that is backed by truth. A pastor who used to “speak in tongues” said he had taught many Christians to “speak in tongues” and could teach anyone to do so. According to him it just requires learning a few phrases, getting oneself into the proper emotional state, and releasing one’s inhibitions. He later came to realize the phoniness of this approach and came to realize that the true gift of tongues was understandable languages – not unintelligent gibberish (non-language). This man came to realize that worship should never be selfish!

1 Corinthians 14:18

“I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all.”

Charismatic Christians have quoted this verse out of context many times to approve of their alleged tongue speaking among their ranks. They ask, “But didn’t Paul say that he spoke in tongues?” Yes he did but Paul was an apostle who was greatly used to proclaim the Gospel to the Jews with confirming signs of tongues (Mark 16:20). Furthermore, since Paul lived and died before the AD 70 judgment he exercised this gift wherever and whenever it was possible to do so as a confirming sign of judgment coming upon the Jewish nation (1 Cor. 14:21-22).

We must remember when Paul said this and the purpose for tongues. Paul is simply using his tongue speaking as a lesson for the Corinthians. He would proclaim the Gospel in a commonly understood language (Aramaic language) and then afterward break forth in praise and prayer using the native dialect of the listeners. Paul reference to speaking in tongues more than everyone else is not a blanket statement that every Christian would nor should speak in tongues. The phrase “more than ye all” may mean that Paul used this gift more than others or that he actually spoke in more languages than some of the others did, since the other saints may have possessed only one tongue-speaking language (note again the use of singular, 14:2, 4, 13). Paul could speak in many languages when he used the gift (note the use of the plural, 14:6, 18; Acts 2:8–11). This may be another legitimate way to explain the difference between the singular and

plural use. Like the other apostles, Paul the apostle used tongues as a confirming sign in the initial expansion of Christianity and during the foundations days of the church (Mark 16:20).

Earlier in the letter Paul makes it clear that tongues–speaking was NOT an evidence or proof of the baptism of the Holy Spirit: “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body” (1 Cor. 12:13). Every Christian is baptized by the Holy Spirit, but not every Christian is given the gift of tongues (1 Cor. 12:30). At no time has EVERY believer received or been promised the gift of tongues, not even during apostolic times, when that gift was active.

Richard De Haan writes:

“The book of Acts certainly does not support the contention of those who say that the gift of tongues is a sign that one has received the Holy Spirit. The vast majority of those who turned to Christ did no exercise this gift, and no one ever agonized or pleaded for it.”

1 Corinthians 14:19

“Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.”

Paul once again reiterates the need for “understanding” during the worship services and in all aspects of our worship. He clearly states that “in the church” (the meeting place of believers for worship and instruction) he would rather speak five words which could be understood by his listeners than “ten thousand words” (innumerable words) in uninterpreted tongues. The word is “myriads” is the largest number in the Greek language. It goes beyond ten thousand to countless myriads. How important is understanding? To Paul is meant everything. The kind of mindless worship that was occurring in Corinth was shallow, senseless, selfish, and in some cases Satanic (1 Cor. 12:2-3)

1 Corinthians 14:20

“Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.”

Verse twenty can be understood in several ways. First, the Corinthians were children in their understanding of the purpose of tongues or why the sign gift was given. In verse 21 Paul will state the purpose of tongues. It

was a sign to the Jewish nation. Therefore, in verse 20 Paul could be saying something like this: “Don’t be infants in understanding, grow up, be mature and know why the gift of tongues was given.” The Corinthian believers were playing with tongues as if they were a toy and they had forgotten the true purpose for tongues. Therefore, they were immature in their understanding of the purpose of tongues.

Second, the Corinthians were children in their understanding because nobody was interpreting the tongues or languages that were being spoken. They were immature or childish in their approach to worship.

If I spoke to Silas, my four-month old grandson, about the sky, moon, stars, and cars, he would have no idea what I was saying! This is because he is a child in understanding. A child does not understand what is being said and the Corinthians were acting childish, like young children, in their worship! These carnal Corinthians (1 Cor. 3:3) actually believed that tongue-speaking demonstrates spirituality and was an evidence of maturity. Paul says just the opposite. They were acting like “children in understanding.” It was a sign of their immaturity.

This is hitting them where it hurts. Paul was explaining that their unintelligent and uninterpreted tongue-speaking was like little infant children who could not understand what their parents were communicating. In fact, earlier Paul even alluded to the tongue speaking and the temporary sign gifts to “childish things” (1 Cor. 13:11) when compared to the lasting gifts that would continue to manifest themselves in the church. The gift of speaking in tongues was in itself comparable to a child speaking since it was only a temporary gift to be used during the infant days of the apostolic church. It was comparable to child talk to be used only during the early or infant days of the Church.

Paul appeals to the Corinthians to be mature in their thinking and worship. We must remember that it was their immaturity and carnality (1 Cor. 3:1) that caused their theological, spiritual, and moral problems, including their misuse of the gift and even possibly counterfeiting the gift through gibberish or ecstatic unintelligible words.

There is a sense in which it is good for Christians to be childlike, namely in our innocence regarding evil – “in malice be ye children” (1 Cor. 14:20). In other words, we don’t have to know all the dark secrets of wickedness, sin

and underworld. We should thrive on righteous living and be more “simple” concerning evil (“but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil” - Romans 16:19). Yes, we don’t need to know all the dark secrets of sin and the underworld. However, in understanding, we need to be mature and not be lead astray into impure worship and worship that is not in accordance with God’s divine standards (1 Cor. 3:1–2).

I was in Sebring Florida during a church service. Another one of my grandsons, Titus, had a bag of different items to keep him occupied during the message. He needs a few things (coloring book, a toy car) to keep him seated and settled. The Corinthians were like children in their understanding because they could not understand what was being said by the tongue speakers. Like young children, they sat in the services, playing with gifts like they were toys, without possessing intelligent understanding of what was taking place and being said.

In actuality these saints could not be taught because they were not interested in learning the truth about gifts. They really wanted to serve their own ends. They were not interested in truth but in experience, not in right doctrine or right living but only in good feelings. They were NOT interested in pleasing the Lord or edifying fellow Christians but only themselves. Their experiences and feelings always won out over the truth and their ecstatic experiences and emotions always won out over reason, and their self-will always won out over God’s will. They did not bother to “try the spirits to see whether they [were] from God” In essence, everyone “did what was right in his own eyes” (Judg. 17:6; 21:25). They were not like the Bereans “who searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”

A. W. Tozer said:

“God is trying to call us back to that which He has created us, to worship and enjoy Him forever!”

This can only be done when we meditate upon God rationally and reflect upon His truth in a perceptible way; otherwise we are not enjoying Him. Instead, we are creating our own form of worship that is a diversion from truth and God’s way to worship.

Is you worship pure? What about your experiences? Are they backed by a correct understanding of God’s truth? God demands understanding when

we worship Him. We can't truly worship when our mind is disengaged from God and truth.

Romans 12:1

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service (rational worship)."

Ephesians 4:23

"And be renewed in the spirit of your mind."

What about purity? Is your heart clean before the Lord?

2 Timothy 2:22

"Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

Hebrews 10:22

"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

Yes, God also demands purity when we come to Him worship! We can't truly worship when we are unclean.

"And now the wants are told, that brought
Thy children to thy knee;
Here, lingering still, we ask for naught
But simply worship thee."

A small town had experienced rapid growth, and the local church congregation had outgrown their building. The members formed a committee to plan and build a new church. The committee told the minister to take care of the flock and they would handle the details of church construction. The minister complied with the request and kept his distance.

As the new building was nearing completion, the committee chairman invited the minister to view their new house of worship. Entering through the main doors, the minister noted only the last row of pews had been installed.

'Since people always fill the last row of pews first, we had a special feature installed,'" the chairman said. He pressed a button on the wall and the pew moved forward while another popped up – and so on and so on it went. When someone would sit in the last pew it would move forward and another one would pop up in its place. The minister was very impressed.

The big day finally arrived for the first service in the new church. The minister peeked out as the pews filled from the back and then moved forward. He was ecstatic. When the time came for the sermon, the minister was so filled with joy and goodwill, he delivered his prepared message and then some. At 12 o'clock, he was still joyously sharing the good word when the church bells began to ring...and just then the pulpit and the minister slowly began to sink beneath the platform and descended from the view of the people. In the new building project, the people had installed a way to get rid of long-winded preachers.

This is a rather silly illustration regarding a worship service. However, what we have been studying about is not silly. The Corinthian believers were relegating their worship services to irrational, mindless, emotional worship. People were speaking in a tongue (language) they could not interpret or understand. There was mass chaos occurring. In some cases, the saints were attempting to create the gift of tongues by their own power and in these cases the messages were not even languages but gibberish.

There was a return to their former pagan ways of worship as they attempted to use their gifts for the Lord. They practiced a bizarre form of mindless and irrational worship which was not really worship at all. It is well known that in many pagan temples the immoral priestesses spoke in ecstatic tongues as they carried on their frenzied dances. In Corinth a great temple had been erected in honor of the Greek goddess, Aphrodite, which in Latin was called "Venus." The depraved worship of this pagan deity featured among other things ecstatic (emotionally charged) speaking in tongues. It is possible that some of that which passed for the "gift of tongues" in Corinth resembled this pagan display more than the genuine gift. Although they were using the true nature of the gift of tongues (speaking in genuine languages) it's very possible that some of them were practicing a frenzied type of tongues-speaking that resembled their past pagan ways. In fact, some of what was occurring may have been a carbon copy of the actions that occurred during their previous days in paganism.

These carnal Corinthian believers were greedily worshipping for their own personal thrills instead of wanting to edify the body of Christ. Paul reprimands them for this (1 Cor. 14:2) and concludes that our serving gifts are to be used in corporate worship and they are to edify (build up spiritually) the people (vv. 5 12, 26). Mindless, selfish, and disorderly worship is forbidden by God. This was the Corinthian catastrophe.

Once again, our worship must be rational (Rom. 12:1). This means we must understand what we are saying to God or what someone else is saying to God in order to worship God. Anything else is a form of deviant worship that is not profitable to us.

d. Understanding the sign of tongues (21-22)

The special gift of tongues that was given during the infant or early days of the church, primarily first century Christianity, during a period of about thirty years, had a specific purpose that was temporary in nature. It was given as a sign to the unbelieving nation of Jews. We have studied this already; therefore, we will briefly outline this purpose for speaking in tongues (the true gift of languages).

1. The proclamation in the past (21a)

“In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people...”

Paul is looking back into the past, reviewing an Old Testament quote, which he applies to the present Jewish situation in the early New Testament Church period. Isaiah’s prophecy (Isaiah 28:11-12) reveals that tongues would send a specific sign to the Jewish nation of God’s coming or impending judgment upon them. In 1 Corinthians 14:21 Paul is specifically referring to those unbelieving Jews who rejected the Word of God in Isaiah’s day. He is quoting Isaiah 28:11-12 and reminding them of the “other tongues or languages” and “other lips” (human speech) of the Assyrian captors who invaded Israel and took them into captivity.

In Isaiah’s day the prophet warned the unbelieving and rebellious Israelites that because they continued to reject God’s plain speech (the truth of His Word from the prophets) they would soon hear God speaking to them through the unfamiliar language of their Assyrian invaders and captors.

2. The people are stubborn (21b)

“and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.”

The Jews were given a national judgment because of their stubbornness of rejecting their personal Messiah. I was talking to a man just this past week. He came to my house and was selling children’s books that were religious in nature. I think they were primarily good books. Anyway, I began witnessing to him about Christ and discovered he was a believer. He mentioned about a close Jewish friend of his who came down with cancer and was scared to die. In talking to him he told him about Jesus and how through Him alone he could find forgiveness for his sins and peace in his heart. The Jewish man told him, “I just can’t do it, believing in Jesus would offend his mother and father’s beliefs.” The man told him, to the best of his knowledge his Jewish friend passed into eternity without Christ and salvation.

This Jewish man was stubborn and the same could be said for many Jewish people today. They want to persist in their own stubborn ways and such was the case during the early days of apostolic Christianity. The Jews had the messengers and the sign (speaking in different languages) to prove that Jesus had come as their Messiah. They could believe the Gospel message and be saved and yet many were stubborn and stooped in their religion.

In Paul’s quote of Isaiah 28:11, he was teaching that if the Jews did not want to listen to Isaiah’s preaching about their wayward living and sins, then they would listen to another people who had a different speech, bringing judgment against them. Isaiah was referring to the Assyrians who were advancing on Israel and would soon conquer the people.

In other words, because of their sins the people would be taken captive by the Assyrian armies and hear their enemies and captors speak in a strange foreign tongue. As they were taken into Assyrian captivity they would listen the foreigners talk in a different language and this different language would become a sign of judgment to them. They would know from the different language being spoken that they were being judged by God. They Jews would hear the unfamiliar dialect of the Assyrians and know that God was judging them for not listening to His servant. As they heard this foreign

tongue, they knew God had judged them or that He had spoken (in judgment) “to this people” (the Jews).

The expression “this people” and “they” (vs. 21) refers to the stubborn Jews. The situation was similar in Corinth as it was in Isaiah’s day. Many Jews were not accepting the new message of the Gospel or that Messiah had come and died for them and was now forming His Church. They did not want to hear the message of the Gospel and believe that God was turning to the Gentiles.

3. The purpose is stated (22)

“Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not.”

Paul is teaching that the tongue speaking (different languages) being spoken in the Church of Corinth serves as a coming “sign” of judgment against the unbelieving nation. In Isaiah’s day the people would know they were being judged when they heard the Assyrians speaking among them in a different language. As in Isaiah’s day, so it was in his own day. If these Jews do not accept the message, then they would be judged. They were once again being given the “sign” of speaking in different languages to confirm their coming judgment for rejecting the Gospel message and Messiah. Therefore, the tongue speaking that is going on in Corinth, which was next to the synagogue, would serve as a sign of coming judgment upon the Jewish people for their rejection of the Messiah. Their time as a nation was running out. Judgment was coming! The tongue speaking of different languages confirmed this.

What judgment would come upon the Jews if they did not respond to the message of the Gospel as a nation? History tells us that in A.D. 70 Titus the Roman general came down and ransacked the city and killed many Jews. The Roman judgment would come upon the people (the Jews) if they do not listen or hear the message being spoken to them. The foreign languages or tongues that the Corinthians were speaking were but a foretaste of what they would hear when the Romans would come down and destroy them. So the Jews in Corinth needed to stand up and take notice!

The gift of tongues (different languages) was given to remind the unbelieving Jews in Paul’s day of their coming judgment. The tongue

speaking was to be a sign to the temple-attending, unbelieving, and Christ rejecting Jews that national judgment would again come upon them if they chose to reject the Messiah and His salvation! It's clear that the Jews remained in their unbelief (John 1:11) and because of this God had to judge His national people once again. God allowed the Assyrian nation to judge His people long ago, now He will allow the Romans in A.D. 70 to judge His national people.

In A.D. 70, Titus, the Roman general, destroyed the Jewish Temple. History tells us this. In this judgment by another nation with another tongue, 1,100,000 Jews were killed. The temple was destroyed and surviving Jews were scattered over the rest of the world (James 1:1). God had once again spoken in judgment by another foreign nation. In a very real sense, Judaism ended and was now only a shadow religion of the past. God had warned them of this coming judgment by the sign gift of foreign languages spoken by specific people within the early church. How sad that they did not believe in their Messiah! All the warning signs of judgment were given to them through the gift of languages.

As stated earlier, it's interesting to know and realize that approximately 10 years after Corinthians was written (A.D. 51 or 52), the temple was destroyed by the Romans. The unbelieving Jews had repudiated God's Word about the Messiah and were judged. Therefore, this sign of judgment (speaking in different languages) had no further value. The Jews had been judged and scattered in their unbelief. The purpose for tongues to aid unbelieving Israel to accept her Messiah and escape God's coming judgment was no longer needed and is certainly not needed today.

Larry Pettegrew is worth quoting once again:

"The ability to speak in foreign languages, without having studied it, stopped when the purpose for this gift stopped. Paul clearly explained this gift to be a sign (1 Cor. 14:21-22) that was specifically to Israel to indicate that the nation had been removed from its mediatorial position and replaced by the international church. Because the nation ceased to exist in about 70 A.D. it was clear that God was no longer directly working with the covenant nation. Therefore, the gift of speaking in tongues stopped or ceased at this particular time. The gift of foreign languages was thus a minor gift that was necessary to the infancy of the church as a sign to Israel, but it ceased when its purpose was fulfilled."

Remember that “Signs are for Israel - not the Church!” Tongues were a sign to the unbelieving Jews of their national judgment. For those caught up in the Charismatic Church teachings, one must understand what the Bible says at this point. It teaches that tongues were a sign “to them that believe not.”

George, Gardiner, an ex-tongue speaker and ex-member of the Charismatic movement says this: “Tongues ARE NOT a sign to Christians! What consternation that verse caused me the first time I really saw it. I had been taught that tongues was a sign to Believers that the Holy Spirit was so controlling that even the tongue was subject to Him. Then I saw the verse, ‘tongues are for a sign NOT to them that believe, but to them that believe not.’”

Tongues are not for the spiritual profit of believers but for unbelievers – unbelieving Jews! Tongues were never to be a sign of spirituality that all Christians should possess nor were they ever to be used for personal profit. Tongues (speaking in languages) were always designed for unbelievers! Study the Bible and you will find this to be true.

4. The prophesying of Scripture (22b)

Paul concludes this point: “but prophesying (the declaration of the Word of God) serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.”

Paul makes an important distinction at this point. The “prophesying” through which the Word of God was revealed and taught was said to be profitable not to unbelievers but to believers, or to those already saved. Preaching the eternal truth of the Word of God in the church setting is for believers – not unbelievers. This is something many people do not understand today. They think the church service is primarily for unbelievers (evangelizing the lost) but Paul says it is for the edification of believers (vv. 4, 5, 12, 26, 31). A consistent diet of “Ye must be born again” messages will not help the saints to grow in their Christian lives.

Although we present the Gospel to those who are unsaved in our church services, the worship services are NOT to become a primary evangelistic outreach to the lost. They are to be for the edification or building up of God’s saints. Actually, the primary thrust of evangelism is to be outside the normally stated church gatherings (Mark 16:15). However, this does not

mean churches will not have special services and occasions for Gospel outreach. Nor does it mean the Gospel is not clearly presented in the church meetings. What it means is that the church services are not to be geared around the lost and lack edifying preaching and teaching for the saint's spiritual growth.

1 Peter 2:2

"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."

We are saved by evangelistic witness; however, we can't grow and mature in our Christian life on evangelistic preaching. We need the whole counsel of God's Word presented to us for our spiritual profit and benefit.

Billy Sunday once said in a sermon:

"So many church members know nothing about the Bible. A preacher will take a text from the Bible, and get as far from it as east is from the west."

We can't grow in our Christians lives without hearing the clear teaching, exposition, and explanation of the Bible.

Billy Sunday went on to say:

"A young preacher just out of the seminary said: 'Must I confine myself and my preaching to the Bible?' Just like a shrimp who would say, 'Must I confine my roaming to the Atlantic Ocean?' Imagine a little minnow saying, 'Must I confine myself to the Atlantic Ocean?' 'Must I confine myself to the Bible?' Just as if his intellect would exhaust it in two or three sermons."

You see, the teaching of the Bible is so vast and measureless that it would be senseless to not take time to preach its eternal truths to the people so they might grow spiritually.

e. Understanding the saints (23-25)

In these verses, Paul is reminding the Corinthians how important is for unbelievers to understand what the saints are saying. If an unbeliever attends a church service and does not understand what is being spoken, he will think that you are crazy or insane, and rightly so! The worship of the saints must be understood by the unsaved, if they are ever going to be saved and brought into the family of God.

1 Corinthians 14:23

“If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?”

Once again, Paul is focusing on the stated gatherings of the church (“the whole church be come together into one place”). God has guidelines to follow when we meet together for worship! When we meet together there are Biblical rules to follow. It’s not a free-for-all and every man for himself. This produces disorder and bedlam.

This text of 1 Corinthians 14:23 should be written over the front door of every Charismatic Church. Paul says that if everyone was speaking in tongues at the same time, then the unbeliever who is visiting the church service would think you are crazy. And I might add, rightly so! When your worship is out of order then nothing good can come from it.

John MacArthur wrote:

“The limited function of the genuine gift of tongues can be seen in the fact that, even during its proper time in history, it could be misused and become a hindrance to worship and to evangelism.”

The Corinthians were out of order in their services. Everyone was speaking in tongues at the same time, whether all of them were genuine languages or not cannot be said dogmatically. However, there was mass confusion and hysteria occurring in their church services. No sense and interpretation was being given for the tongue speaking. This resulted in the “unlearned” or “unbelievers” (unbelieving visitors who have no knowledge about the Gospel) leaving a church service saying “ye are mad”, or to put it in today’s lingo, “Those people are nuts!” Again, I might add that this is a legitimate conclusion.

The Greek language identifies the unlearned and unbeliever as the same person (vv. 23-24). They are referring to those who don’t understand the truth and who are not saved. For instance, an unbelieving Jew would have been turned off because of the bedlam and confusion taking place in the worship service.

I have seen and heard many stories of some of the strange and weird things that occur during Charismatic meetings.

George Gardiner remarks of his past Charismatic experiences:

“Sometimes the bizarre is introduced. I've seen people run around a room until they were exhausted. I've seen people climb tent poles, laugh hysterically, go into trances for days, and do other weird things, as the "high" sought becomes more elusive.”

It's no wonder the unsaved think these type of people and services are maddening. The word for “mad” (vs. 23) means to be in a frenzied rage or to be beside oneself. An unbeliever, Gentile or Jew, would go away from such a service thinking this service was just another wild and meaningless pagan ritual of the Gentiles, if the Corinthians did not begin to worship Biblically and rationally.

Tongues were to be understood. The amazement of the Jewish visitors in Jerusalem at Pentecost was in the fact that they understood what was spoken in tongues in their “own tongues” (Acts 2:11).

Acts 2:11

“Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.”

1 Corinthians 14:24

“But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all.”

Paul is now teaching that disorder would not advance the cause of Christ in Corinth. However, to “prophesy” (to proclaim the truth including the Gospel message) was desirable and needed because it would not only benefit believers, as we have seen (vv. 3, 22), it would also expose unbelievers to conviction (“convinced of all”) and judgment (“he is judged of all” - 1 Cor. 2:15). The Spirit of God convicts men of sin, righteousness, and judgment through His spokesmen (see John 16:8). This is why we need to be a spokesman for God – not a selfish worshipper.

Here is the point; when the truth is made clear and understandable, then God can work in the hearts of the unsaved. Without the clarification of the truth there is no hope of a person's salvation. This is why our worship must be clear and the message made clear.

1 Corinthians 14:25

“And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.”

Clear preaching brings conviction and salvation since through the proclamation of the truth a person’s heart can be openly revealed to him (“the secrets of his heart made manifest”). The truth of the Gospel exposes the wickedness of the human heart which can result in a person’s salvation. People are won to Christ through clear Gospel preaching – not through worship techniques designed to market sinners.

1 Corinthians 2:4-5 speaks of Paul’s Gospel witness in Corinth:

“And my speech (the way Paul spoke) and my preaching (what Paul taught) was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom (marketing techniques and crybaby stories), but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power (the Spirit’s infilling power in his life and in the hearts of the lost): That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men (man’s intellectual arguments and techniques), but in the power of God (the power of the Gospel message that saves souls).”

Sadly, many people are not converts of Christ but converts to pragmatism, the techniques of man (“the wisdom of men”). Pragmatism says, “If it works; use it.” The problem is this; it doesn’t work. Pragmatism never wins souls – the Gospel does!

There are some preachers that think they have a better way to win converts to Christ other than the way of the cross and the Gospel! They have marketing techniques designed to lure sinners into the Gospel net only to find that it breeds much confusion and a lack of repentance on the sinner’s part.

One man who grew up with pragmatic marketing said this:

“I’ve watched evangelists use every trick in the book to get people down the aisle, including wrenching stories, mesmerizing music, grotesque pictures and nearly irresistible peer pressure. And I have lived with the resulting hallowing of pragmatic methodology, taking the church away from its confidence that scripture is sufficient in matters of method as well as message.”

The Scriptures are enough! The Spirit is enough! The Gospel is enough! One thing is certain; in order for salvation to occur in the heart of a person, his faith must rest in the “power of God” which in this context refers to the Gospel message (see 1 Cor. 1:18). Our effectiveness in evangelism does not depend on our arguments or persuasive gimmicks. It depends upon the work of the Spirit and Gospel message working in the hearts of the unsaved.

Boyer correctly observes:

“The vindication of the cross is not wisdom, that it *makes sense*; but power, it *works*.”

When Jesus sent out His disciples He gave them the Word of God and the Spirit – not books written by “Bill Hybles,” “Rick Warren,” and other church gurus which are designed to market sinners – not save souls!

There are Ten Steps to Becoming a "Pragmatic Church."

- Proclaim the need for faith without repentance.
- Place an emphasis on man’s techniques instead of the Gospel.
- Preach that grace *replaces* holiness instead of *producing* holiness.
- Picture love and truth as being opposed to each other.
- Portray obedience as legalism.
- People can live carnal, worldly lifestyles, and be acceptable to God.
- Pass over Biblical teachings that create humility in man.
- Positive preaching instead of negative preaching. Be "seeker-friendly" and avoid being "offensive."
- Possess a low view for sound doctrine.
- Place being "relatable" above "biblical accuracy."

1 Corinthians 14:25

“And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.”

The lost sinner can only be saved through clear preaching about the judgment of God and the inner conviction of the Spirit in his heart. Afterward, the sinner’s newfound salvation can be evidenced by His worship (“so falling down on his face he will worship God”).

This was Paul's experience.

Acts 9:4-6

“And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.”

The newly saved sinner will also recognize that God was with the church working through the Gospel message (“and report that God is in you of a truth” - 25). It's the Gospel that brings people to Christ – not chaos and bedlam. Disorder in the time of worship gets in the way of sinners coming to faith in Christ. We need to remember this today. It's the Gospel message that changes lives. It makes saints out of sinners (1 Cor. 6:9–11) and preachers out of blasphemers (1 Tim. 1:12–13).

f. Understanding self-discipline (26-35)

In our time of worship there should always be self-discipline. Whenever we make the claim that we could not help what we said or did, we are sending the message that our worship was not Biblical.

1 Corinthians 14:26

“How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.”

The expressions of worship mentioned here such as a “psalm” (Scriptural reading or song from the Old Testament), “doctrine” (teaching), “tongue” (speaking in a language), “revelation” (revelatory knowledge prior to the canonization of the Bible), and “interpretation” (explaining what the tongue speaker was saying) were to be done in an orderly fashion. There was no interruptions, overpowering, and mass hysteria, where everyone was doing their own thing, in their own way, at the same time.

Verse 26 implies that everyone, whatever they were doing, tried to shout everyone else down. This is not worship – it's bedlam!



I think the Corinthians worship services resembled more of a hockey game than a church worship service. If you have ever been to a hockey game everyone is shouting at the same time. Men are flying up against the glass, fights are breaking out, a spirit of strong rivalry, opposition and competition is felt.

Someone has remarked:

“When ministry becomes performance, then the sanctuary becomes a theater, the congregation becomes an audience, worship becomes entertainment, and man’s applause and approval become the measure of success.”

Have you ever gone into a large room before a banquet started? Let’s say there are about five hundred people in the room. Well, before the banquet starts everyone is talking at the same time and it is actually hard to hear. It sounds like a chicken house. Everyone is cackling at the same time and nothing makes sense. This is a picture of what was occurring in the Corinthian local churches. Everyone was trying to do their own think at the same time. There was no order in the services and anyone who was a visitor would come into the services and say, “These people are nuts.”

The Corinthians had lapsed into a type of mindless worship that nobody could understand. Many of them were speaking in different languages at the same with no interpreter and the entire service was bedlam. In light of such confusion and disorder, Paul exclaims: “Let all things be done unto edifying.” The term “edification” literally means “house building,” the architectural construction of a house. Figuratively, it refers to growing, improving, or maturing. Have you been building up your life by the truth of God’s Word, by being spiritually enriched in the truth, and through obeying it? Christians are built up by only one thing, the Word of God. That is the tool with which all spiritual building is done (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Edification can only occur when the church worships in an orderly and reverent manner. When everyone is doing their own thing at the same time, then worship becomes man centered instead of God centered. As a result,

no edification can take place in the hearts and lives of the would-be worshippers.

There is another similar command given regarding worship.

1 Corinthians 14:40

“Let all things be done decently and in order.”

The Charismatic chaos taking place in many church services today defies this clear Biblical command. Confusion abounds as people are all speaking in their gibberish and when people are dancing, rolling around the aisles, and seeking a type of worship that defies emotional stability, rational thinking, and edification for the entire body.

The point of this verse is that clear preaching and teaching results in edification, not selfish and carnal diversion of worship. The discipline in worship is clearly evidenced in the following verses. Some of the worst offenders that were causing the most trouble were those who had the gift of tongues or who were at least trying to mimic the gift. The prophets were also interrupting one another. The women were also interrupting when they were to be silent. When everyone is doing their own thing at the same time, then worship becomes man centered instead of God centered. Therefore, Paul lays out some guidelines for those who possessed these first century gifts.

1. Rules for the Tongue speakers (26-28)

1 Corinthians 14:26-28

“How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.”

A church service can either be Babel (confusion) or a place of blessing? When the saints are out of order in their time of worship and use of gifts, a service become more like Babel, the time when the people were confused, since no one could understand one another. God had confused their

languages and utter chaos broke out. The same was happening in the Church of Corinth.

The Corinthians and Charismatics of today must play by the rules. This is what Paul is teaching. First, no more than three people could speak in tongues in any one service (14:27a - "let it be by two, or at the most by three"). Second, the two or three speakers were to speak one at a time ("by course"). There was to be no simultaneous speaking in competition or in unison. This was not permitted. Orderliness, understandability, and courtesy were all part of this command.

John MacArthur states:

One of the strongest indictments of the modern charismatic movement is the common practice of many persons speaking, praying, and singing at the same time, with no one paying attention to what others are doing or saying. It is everyone for himself, just as it was in the Corinth, and is in clear violation of Paul's command that each speak in turn.

I've been in church services already where some of the men got caught up in the "Amening." Don't misunderstand me; there is nothing wrong with a good "Amen." However, these two particular men began to compete with each other and everyone with any kind of discernment knew it. It became like a ping-pong match shouting Amen's back and forth! It got so bad that I wanted to yell out at one point, "Will you men put a sock in your mouth!" People compete with one another and they do so to be seen of men. This ought not to be in any worship service.

Third, there was to be only one interpreter for all three tongue utterances ("and let one interpret" – 27b). Everything spoken in a tongue must be interpreted and it was to be done by only one interpreter. In the Greek construction, the word "one" is in what is termed the emphatic position, which indicates that a single person is involved.

Apparently the interpreters in Corinth were also self-serving in their time of worship as those who spoke in tongues. Each tried to outdo the other. Therefore, Paul tells them that only one was to interpret. Interpretations of the tongue speaker were never to be by two or three different men. This was not permitted.

Fourth, there was to be no public tongue-speaking if a person with the gift of interpretation was not present (“But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God” - 1 Cor. 14:28). Speaking in languages and translating those languages were distinct gifts; they were not to be used apart from one another.

If this rule for speaking in tongues were followed in the Charismatic church much of what is called tongues would no longer be spoken. The guarantee of interpretation had to precede the actual tongue speaking. In other words, plans needed to be made ahead of time to make sure there was a genuine interpreter present and if there were none available, then the tongue speaker was to be silent. In other words, if he could not add to the edification of the meeting, he was not to take away from it with an uninterpreted utterance.

Fifth, if no interpreter was present, then the tongues-speaker was to speak silently “to himself, and to God.” If no interpreter was present, a person who felt compelled to speak was to silently meditate or pray and speak “to himself and to God” within the realm of his own human spirit where all true worship occurs.

You will note that in 1 Corinthians 14:2 Paul chides them for private worship without any interpretation, since this is not the purpose of corporate worship. The Corinthian’s were greedily worshipping for self-edification and not providing any edification for the saints. However, if no interpretation is possible the tongue speaker could inwardly “speak to himself and to God” (vs. 28) without violating the principle of edifying others. The rule was clear and simple: no interpreter - no speaking out loud.

One charismatic said:

“When you pray with your spirit you do not think of the sounds of the language.”

This contradicts his conclusion since the verse assumes that the one speaking to himself could understand the message that was being given to him by God or else no inner worship could occur (“worship ... in spirit and truth” - John 4:24). We cannot worship God without knowing truth! Truth is always involved in our time of worship. Perhaps this individual also had the gift of interpretation as well and could therefore understand and worship

God in the inner spirit knowing what he wanted to speak if an interpreter were present.

More likely the tongue speaker could know in his mind what he wanted to say, even though it came out in a different language. He thought of the sounds of the language in his mind and spirit but in this case could not reveal them. One thing is certain; no person who possessed both gifts (speaking in tongues and interpretation of tongues) could use them at the same time. An additional interpreter was needed that could accurately interpret and convey to others what was being said and check his message.

2. Discipline for the prophets (29-33)

1 Corinthians 14:29

“Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.”

The original band of apostles and prophets (Mark 16) must be distinguished from individual believers with the gift of prophecy (1 Cor. 12:10, 1 Cor. 14). These believers *complemented* the ministry of the apostles (Eph. 4:11), functioning exclusively within a particular local congregation, while the apostles had a broader ministry. In *contrast* to the apostles, whose doctrinal revelation was foundational to the church (Acts 2:42; Eph. 2:20), the message of the prophets was built upon apostolic doctrine (Acts 2:42). They would receive new revelation from God concerning matters that would later be covered in Scripture but their revelation would ALWAYS have to square with apostolic teaching or tradition (2 Thess. 2:15).

The prophets proclaimed the truth during the infant days of early Christianity. However, this revelatory aspect of the gift of prophecy ceased at the close of the apostolic era with the completing of Scripture. The revelatory (predictive) and reiterative (preaching) aspect of the prophets' ministry of doctrinal and practical exhortation has now been taken over by the evangelists, pastors, and teachers (Eph. 4:11). In fact, in the last letters Paul wrote, the pastoral epistles, he does not refer to prophets at all; instead, teaching is to be done by the elders (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9). The transition from temporary apostles and prophets to elders and evangelists had been made. The lack of references to prophets is especially significant

in epistles, which are devoted largely to church structure, officers, and service (1 Tim. 3:15).

Similar to the apostles, the unique office of a prophet ceased to exist even while the church was still very young and in its infant stages. Paul's Pastoral Epistles (1 & 2 Timothy and Titus) do not mention prophets simply because the purpose of their ministry ceased even before the end of the apostolic age.

Prophets received divine revelation from God prior to the completion of the canon of Scripture. Their messages were in piecemeal and did not give the completed message of the entire New Testament.

1 Corinthians 13:9-10

“For we know in part, and we prophesy in part (partial New Testament Scripture). But when that which is perfect is come (completed New Testament Scripture), then that which is in part (prophecy or piecemeal revelation) shall be done away.”

In the later Church letters, Paul makes considerable mention of church leadership (elders, deacons, and bishops) but he makes no mention of prophets. Along with the apostles, prophets were a part of the foundation of the church (see Eph. 2:20). Once the foundation has been built (the completed canon of Scripture) then there is no need for the partial or piecemeal revelation of truth.

New Testament prophets spoke for the Lord in two ways. In some instances, they gave new revelation from God to the church. Also, by reiterating what the apostles taught (Acts 2:42) they also proclaimed what had previously been revealed, much as preachers and teachers of the Word do today. When Paul wrote this letter to Corinth, prophets were still a central part to the work of the church. In fact, nowhere in the Corinthian letter is there mention of a pastor, elder, or overseer. The prophets seem to have been the key leaders in the early days of the church (Acts 13:1). Since this was true, Paul gave them some clear procedures to follow in their time of revelation.

We do read about some women prophets during the infant days of the Church. Luke records about Philip's daughters and their prophetic ministry (Acts 21:8-9). Luke records no details regarding Philip's daughters'

prophetic ministry; therefore, impossible to know how often they prophesied, or even if they did so more than once. However, the New Testament does not permit women to assume the role of preachers or teachers in the church (1 Cor. 14:34–36; 1 Tim. 2:11–12). Women could only use this gift within her appropriate spheres of ministry. It is likely, therefore, that they prophesied outside the local church setting. They must have also given instruction to individuals rather than to congregations (1 Cor. 11:5, 17). But God apparently did give this prophetic gift to some women during the early expansion of Christianity.

Now let's get to the regulations for the prophets as outlined in 1 Corinthians chapter 14. Four regulations are given in 1 Corinthians 14:29. First, only two or three prophets should be allowed to speak in one service ("Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge" – 29a). This may also mean that if only one prophet was present he was not permitted to speak. Second, the other prophets, or those with the gift of discerning spirits (1 Cor. 12:10), were to judge the declarations that were given ("and let the other judge" – 29b). Those who judged the prophetic revelations had to determine what to do with what was revealed. Was it true or false?

It was possible for a speaker, under the control of his own emotions, to imagine that God was speaking to him and through him. As a result, the message would not be directly from God but the result of his emotional. Then too, it was even possible for Satan to counterfeit a prophetic message (2 Cor. 11:13–14). This is why the messages being presented needed to be judged.

The listeners, especially those who possessed a special gift of ("discerning of spirits" - 1 Cor. 12:10), would test the message by Old Testament Scriptures, apostolic tradition, and the personal guidance of the Spirit. Although everyone was to possess discernment, there was a special discerning gift that was needed during the early apostolic church when prophetic messages were still being given out, prior to the final canonization of the Bible. Those who possessed this gift would have the special ability to determine whether or not the message was according to God's standard of truth, demonic in nature, or purely psychological.

The fact that there would be many false prophets in the early apostolic church (2 Pet. 2:1; 1 John 4:1) would indicate the need to judge the messages and make sure they were from God. During the time of transition

from prophetic messages to teaching and preaching from the completed Scripture (the New Testament) there would be many false prophecies given which needed to be judged, weighed in the balances, and rejected by early apostolic Christianity. There was no room for compromise! Wrong doctrine results in dishonoring God and His Word. It also results in wrong living. Judgment was necessary. Anyone who says judging is always legalistic, unloving, and wrong does not know what they are talking about!

We are called upon to judge the messages of those who are presenting truth. Some of the charismatic charlatans of our day try and make fun of those who judge their false sayings and teachings by identifying them as “heresy hunters.” This kind of name calling is simply a diversion to downplay anyone who would evaluate their teachings and experiences in relationship to God’s absolute standard – the Word of God. I will choose what the Bible says over any Charismatic heresy!

This reminds us that even today we must judge what the preachers and teachers of God’s Word are saying. Is their doctrine pure in light of the revelation of God’s Word? Is what they are saying in accordance with the Scriptural record? If not, we are to reject it and correct it with the absolute standard of truth.

1 Thessalonians 5:20-21 gives this command for early apostolic Christianity, when prophesying was still needed: “Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” The early Christians were not to “despise” (treat with contempt, look down upon, consider unimportant) “prophesying” (prophetic utterances) since it was thought these utterances that the Word of God was being given to them, prior to the completion of the canon of Scripture.

The word “prove” (Gk. - dokimazo) means to discern, examine, and scrutinize the message being spoken. The early church was not to turn a blind eye to error and false teaching. They were not to sweep it under the carpet. A person might claim to be a prophet but if what he is saying goes against the rest of the apostolic truth, which was being gathered and confirmed as God’s final revelation, then the church was to reject the message.

Prophecy was foretelling the truth before the Bible was written down but it also included to some degree forth-telling the truth when presenting it to

others. The temporary and revelatory prophetic utterances (1 Cor. 12:10) were limited to the apostolic era. However, the non-revelatory aspect of the gift of prophecy, which reiterated or proclaimed apostolic doctrine, would find a later and more far-reaching fulfillment in preachers who are called to “preach the word” (2 Tim. 4:2) or boldly proclaim the divine record of Scripture.

Prophecy, as a term, is actually used to refer to God’s Word which was initially given to prophets and then recorded down in the Bible for us today. The apostle Peter wrote in 2 Peter 1:20-21, “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture (the revealed Word of God) is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

This reminds us that the entire Bible is the result of prophetic utterances being given to both old and New Testament prophets which were eventually recorded down in the sacred Scriptures that we possess today.

Prophecy and prophetic revelation was the giving out of God’s mind and truth which eventually resulted in the formation of the canon of Scripture. Therefore, Paul says we are not to despise or treat the prophetic word lightly but guard it and maintain the truth at all costs.

Why should we never treat the Word of God as something which is unimportant? It’s because of Scripture’s essential character. The Bible is authoritative (Isa. 1:2); completely infallible (Ps. 19:7); inerrant in every part (Prov. 30:5–6; cf. Matt. 5:18); sufficient for all spiritual needs (Ps. 19:7–11; 2 Tim. 3:15–17); absolutely effective (Isa. 55:11); and it is determined one’s spiritual destiny (John 5:24).

We should never despise or consider the truth unimportant because of Scripture’s generous benefits. It is the only supreme source of truth (John 17:17); it is the source of all true happiness (Prov. 8:34; Luke 11:28); it is the source of victory over sin and the forces of evil (Ps. 119:9, 11; Matt. 4:1–11; Eph. 6:17); it is the ultimate source of spiritual growth (2 Tim. 3:16–17; 1 Peter 2:2); it is the only perfectly and reliable source of guidance (Ps. 19:8; 119:105); and it is our source of hope (Ps. 119:116; Rom. 15:4). For all these reasons and more we should not despise, or treat lightly what the Word of God says. We should not think that it is unimportant and not worthy of protecting or guarding at all cost.

“Despise not prophesyings” (1 Thess. 5:20). How do we apply this instruction to the church today since we do not have New Testament prophets, but we do have the completed Scripture? For one thing, we must use the Word of God to test every message that we hear, asking the Spirit to guide us. There are false teachers in the world and we must beware of their impact upon the church today (2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 4:1–6).

2 Peter 2:1

“But there were false prophets (during the early apostolic church when the gift of prophecy was still being used) also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you (in the later church era when no more prophecy was given), who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”

This passage (1 Thess. 5:21) has relevancy for us today; we are called upon to “prove” or test and examine whatever a person says and make sure that it lines up with God’s eternally revealed truth. The qualifying phrase “all things” (1 Thess. 5:21) means there are no exceptions; it includes every issue and idea that is taught which affects the believer’s doctrine and living. There is much to receive but much to reject! Don’t be a “yes man” to everything that is spoken today or some new thing that comes down the pike.

We are to reject the errant teaching and “hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess. 5:21) which means to “to embrace wholeheartedly” or keep in firm possession of” so as not to lose the Word of God. We have a treasure; it’s God’s Word! The word “good” (*kalos*) reminds us of the treasure, the word denotes what is inherently genuine, true, noble, and right (Rom. 12:2). Nothing is purer and true than God’s infallible Word.

“The B-I-B-L-E,
Yes that the Book for me,
I stand alone on the Word of God,
The B-I-B-L-E.”

I’m still singing it! Like never before, believers need to resemble the Bereans who “received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11).

I once heard a man tell his audience, including all those who were watching by way of TV, that if they send in a seed gift of \$50.00 dollars they would in return receive “holy sand” from the “Holy Land.” Upon receiving it they could claim victory over their diseases, debt, and broken relationships. People apparently bought into this scheme and sent literally thousands upon thousands of dollars into this would-be prophet. Does the Word of God support this kind of statement? Nowhere does the Bible declare this to be even remotely true! We don’t need holy sand; we have the Holy Spirit and God’s Holy Word to guide us in the truth and give us the spiritual discernment we need for life’s decisions and during these last days of deception.

Thank God for the treasure we have in God’s Word! It’s our responsibility to guard it, cling to it, and live by it. If we do, our doctrine and life will remain pure.

1 Corinthians 14:30

“If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.”

Here is another guideline that the prophets of the early apostolic church needed to follow. Third, the prophets were to speak one at a time and not interrupt each other (1 Cor. 14:30-31a). The word “peace” (vs. 30) is an important word in this section of Scripture (“God is not the author of confusion, but of peace” – vs. 33). Where there is order there is peaceful worship that results in understanding and exhortation. God is a God of order and peace. This is one reason why I reject the modern CCM (Contemporary Christian Music) that is being played in the modern church. It not only is confusion musically (consisting of rock beats, loudness, a sound that Satan uses to promote rebellion, drugs, and sex) it breeds confusion in worship. You might say, “Preacher, CCM my taste.” I don’t care about your taste; I care about God’s standard for worship!

Discipline yourself in your time of worship and follow God’s rules – not your rules! Your rules and feelings don’t mean a hill of beans when it comes to worship. What is important is God’s standard and rules for worship.

1 Corinthians 14:31

“For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.”

The goal of the peace and orderliness was so the saints could “learn” the word of God and therefore grow in their understanding and application of God’s Word to their lives. They would also “be comforted” (same word translated “exhortation” in verse 3). This word refers to instruction that results in both learning and consolation.

Romans 15:4

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”

When we come to church we are exhorted to live for God and find the comfort we need to deal with life’s demands! When we attend church we are to come to learn the Bible and as a result we will be instructed in godly living and find comfort for our souls. We are not to come to church in order to experience a rock concert, disorder, confusion, and selfish gain. We are to come to learn and grow by hearing the Word of God taught clearly, purely, and without apology.

Fourth, at all times the prophets should be in control of themselves and should act according to the regulations.

1 Corinthians 14:32

“And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.”

This means the human spirits of each prophet should at all times be subject or under the control of the speaker. Therefore, no prophet could claim that they were led by the Spirit to speak when they would interrupt another prophet or when they conducted themselves in a manner that was not in control of their emotions and speaking.

Apparently the gifts were able to be used in the energy of the flesh as well as under the control of the Holy Spirit. The Corinthians likely had the false idea that the more a man was possessed by the Spirit of God, the less self-control he had. To them, a man under the control of the Spirit was in a state of passivity (not in control of himself). Therefore, he could not control his speech, the length of time he spoke, or his actions in general.

This kind of mindless and out-of-control worship is prevalent today in the Charismatic Churches. God condemns it! This is because God does not bypass men’s minds, rational thinking, or emotions when they preach and

teach the Bible. When a preacher or some other worshipper says, “I just couldn’t help myself” you can be sure that they are not worshipping in a Biblical fashion. Preaching is never to be done mindlessly and without the individual possessing discipline or control over his human spirit. When the Holy Spirit is in charge, the preachers will have self-control since self-control is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:23).

One minister relayed this story. “I once shared a Bible conference with a speaker who had ‘poor terminal facilities’ (he did not know when to finish). He often went fifteen to twenty minutes past his deadline, which meant, of course, that I had to condense my messages at the last minute. He excused himself to me by saying, “You know, when the Holy Spirit takes over, you can’t worry about clocks!” My reply was to quote 1 Corinthians 14:32: ‘And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.’”

Much of what is labeled worship is not “Spirit directed” but “fleshly-directed” and is worship that lacks discipline. Another preacher once said that during an informal gathering of the church a lady supposedly was under the control of the Spirit. However, he recalled, “She took forty minutes telling a boring experience and, as a result, destroyed the spirit of the meeting.”

Evangelist D.L. Moody was leading a service and asked a man to pray. Taking advantage of his opportunity, the man prayed on and on. Sensing that the prayer was killing the meeting instead of blessing it, Moody spoke up and said, “While our brother finishes his prayer, let us sing a hymn!”

Don’t tell me your praying, singing, or preaching is Spirit-directed when it is undisciplined and out-of-control. Much of what is labeled “Spirit-directed” is nothing more than “man-directed” and as a result worship becomes man-centered. We see this happening today since the church has entered the entertainment world.

Tozer said:

“The church that can’t worship must be entertained. And men who can’t lead a church to worship must provide the entertainment. That is why we have the great evangelical heresy here today - the heresy of religious entertainment.”

The church today is saying, "Give me that show-time religion" instead of "The old-time religion" that is centered upon the expositional teaching of God's Word, Christ-centered music, and holy or reverent worship.

1 Corinthians 14:32

"And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets."

Are you a victim of your circumstance? Do circumstances overcome you or do you overcome them by relying on God's power and grace to pass through them victoriously? We do not have to allow our human spirit to control us; instead, we must control our human spirit by God's power and self-control of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). This is wonderful promise that should have practical implications for our lives. We do not have to be overcome by feeling, difficult situations, and temptation since God is on our side and providing us with His enabling victory.

1 Corinthians 14:33

"For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."

The expression "as in all churches of the saints" would include the Charismatic churches! Paul was emphasizing the fact that the principle of order in the churches services was not a local, geographical, or cultural command, but a universal command to be followed by all churches. The reason is now stated why the proclamations of the prophets needed to be orderly and disciplined. It's because God's is not the author or originator of confusion but of peace (harmony and unity).

This is the key to the entire chapter. Our worship of God should reflect the character and nature of God. He is the God of peace, order, and harmony - not of strife and confusion (Rom. 15:33; 2 Thess. 3:16; Heb. 13:20). When our worship reflects disharmony, then it becomes a diversion from true worship, since all worship is to be a reflection of God's character or peace and order.

God is a God of order and of peace; therefore, confusion and competition during our time of worship is an expression of the flesh. We are not competing with one another nor are we competing to be seen of men. Our worship is always to reflect God's nature of order and peace. In addition, when we worship at the altar of our own "felt needs" and say, "This is what I

like in worship – jive music, jungle music, jazzy music,” then we are not reflecting God’s character during our time of worship. Instead, our worship becomes selfish.

We need spiritual discipline in our time of worship and this is one reason why we need to stop the madness of Christian Rock Music that is occurring in many church services today. CCM (Contemporary Christian Rock Music) is a type of music that is not designed after God’s nature! It detracts from who God is! It is a sound that mimics rebellion, disorder, and chaos; it does not reflect a God who is orderly, holy, and righteousness.

Here is the point; God cannot be honored where there is disharmony and confusion, competition and frenzy, self-serving and self-glorifying. Chaos and discord in a church meeting is certain proof that the Spirit of God is not in control. Where the Holy Spirit rules there is always peace and harmony in all areas of worship (James 3:14–18). The service that is disorderly, confusing, and disruptive is not of God.

3. Discipline for the women (34-35)

1 Corinthians 14:34

“Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.”

Paul was not about to dodge the problem of women who were out of order in the local churches and neither should we today! We must deal with this hot potato issue. In the midst of Paul giving instructions for tongue speakers and prophets (proclaiming the Word) during the main service (“when ye come together” – vv. 23, 26), he reminds the Corinthians that the women of the assemblies were forbidden to speak in any authoritative way during the church services (“for it is not permitted unto them to speak” - 1 Cor. 14:34).

This command for women being silent in the local church service was set in the overall context of prophesying, speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, and the evaluation of prophetic messages (vv. 23-33) during the early apostolic assemblies. The women could not take on any of these leading roles when the assembly came together in one service (1 Cor. 14:23, 26).

It is often said that what Paul is forbidding in this verse is for the women to stop chattering or gossiping while the service is going on and interrupting the service. In other words, Paul is only forbidding the women to not to talk in a disruptive manner during the church service. However, such an interpretation is incorrect. The word in 1 Corinthians 14:34 which is translated speak (laleō) did not mean to chatter or gossip. This same word is used eighteen times and relates to speaking with tongues or prophesying (vv. 3, 29). It means the woman were not to speak authoritatively and take on a leading role and position in assembly life. This command was not against making noisy interruptions but against taking an active part in oral ministry.

Once again, Paul is forbidding the women to exercise the gifts of speaking in tongues and prophesying when the church meets together corporately in one service (1 Cor. 14:26; 11:17-18, 20). The women were to silently submit to the preaching elders, who were male leaders and not participate in the preaching. They also were never to participate in tongue speaking, since speaking in tongues during the corporate church gatherings included the “up front” roles of speaking authoritatively and praying. For this reason, the tongue speaking in church was always done by men (vv. 13-14, 16).

In short, the women who joined in with this chaotic, self-expression of worship were condemned for not only adding to the confusion, but were also reprimanded for speaking, since they were forbidden to speak. In other words, one way to end the confusion was for the women to obey this command and not speak within the church services where men were to have the lead in speaking authoritatively.

The expression “the churches” (vs. 34) is not only referring to the local churches of Corinth but to all churches both then and today (“as in all the churches” - vs. 33). Once again, this was not a local, geographical, or cultural command, but a universal command to be followed by all local churches that would exist during the Church Age (1 Tim. 2:11-12). Paul could not be clearer on the matter of women speaking in the local churches. “Let your women keep silent in the churches.” If this command were followed it would stop much of the senseless and shameful preaching being done by women in Charismatic Churches today. Women preachers of today have no regards for God’s design or His command, not do they possess any shame. They are openly defiant against God’s creative order

and will one day be ashamed for the disobedience when they stand before the Lord.

1 Timothy 2:11-12 is an apostolic command:

“Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority (govern, exercise dominion) over the man, but to be in silence.”

In this similar verse, we discover once again that women were never to usurp man’s God-given place of authority in the local church setting, when the church was corporately gathered together in one service. Paul clearly instructs that the preaching and leadership or governing roles within the church were to be done by men. Only a feminist with an axe to grind could miss this point!

The women were to also be in “silence” (1 Cor. 14:34; 1 Tim. 2:11) in regards to preaching and teaching. In fact, they were not to exercise dominion over the man in any preaching or leadership role and position. Instead, they were to be “in subjection” to the men in the assembly life, who were elders (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6), since it was these men that were endowed with the God-given right to preach to the congregations.

One must understand that Paul’s argument for male leadership and preaching was NOT based on cultural standards (as the feminist interpreters of Scripture teach) but on two historic and foundational facts: (1) The Genesis Creation - “For Adam was first formed (created), then Eve” – 1 Tim. 2:13 and (2) The Genesis Fall – “Adam was not deceived, but the woman” – 1 Tim. 2:14. These two historic and foundational factors are why women are not given the authority over men in the church or home. God has given this leading role to men based upon Genesis.

When Paul adds in 1 Corinthians 14:34, “but they are commanded to be under obedience” he is referring to obeying God’s design for male leadership in the local church and place themselves under the teaching elders in the congregation who were men. In short, they were to rank themselves under the male leadership within the church and not seek overthrow or override male positions of teaching and leadership.

He then states the reason for their obedience, “as also saith the law” (1 Cor. 14:34). Once again, Paul was basing this command on the Genesis

law of creation. This “law” has reference to the woman being submissive to the man as God designed in Genesis. This “law” of women being submissive to the man is clearly taught in Genesis 2 and 1 Corinthians 11:3, “But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.”

1 Corinthians 14:35 concludes this section:

“And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.”

Paul now gives an additional point to consider regarding the role of women speaking in church. He reminds them that if they want to ask questions they should do so in the home setting. Paul implies that some women were also out of order in asking questions in the church service regarding the content of prophetic messages (1 Cor. 14:29). They were not only seeking to speak in tongues and prophesy, they were also asking questions which also violated their role of submission. The women were not given the authority to ask questions in the assembly. The evaluation and judgment of the prophetic messages was to be done by the men during the local assembly.

Paul is teaching in 1 Corinthians 14:34 that any type of authoritative speaking such as tongues, preaching revelatory messages, and openly evaluating the prophetic messages were to be done by men. He adds about the audibly questioning the prophetic messages in 1 Corinthians 14:35 since this also was a violation of a woman’s submission to male leadership within the local church setting. Some of the women were likely asking questions in a disruptive manner and seeking to dominate the church service. Paul slams the door on this practice as being out-of-sync with a woman’s role of submission to male authority.

Richard De Haan adds:

“It is obvious that the tongues part of the church meeting had become highly emotional, and that it led the women to behave in a very unbecoming manner. An outsider might have concluded that their conduct was similar to that which took place in the heathen temples, where the prostitutes and other immoral women in their frenzied dervishes would often speak in tongues.”

Once again, the speaking relates to speaking in an authoritative manner before the congregation which in this context would include speaking in tongues, prophesying, and evaluating prophetic messages through questions and arguments. Paul says the married women were to “ask their husbands at home” (1 Cor. 14:35). This could mean several things. First, the woman was not to ask the prophet questions about his message during the main church service. Second, the woman should not even ask her husband questions about the message during this church service. Instead, she was to wait until they returned home and then speak to her husband about the prophetic revelations that were given in the church service. This would be a sign of her submission to the God-ordained church order. She should not want to be seen as disruptive in any way or taking on any speaking position that God has forbidden her to do. A woman was to possess a sensitive and submissive heart to her role in the church ministry.

If one asks how this applies to an unmarried woman or a widow, the answer is that the Scriptures do not try to take up each individual case, but merely set forth a general principle for women. If a woman does not have a husband, she could ask her father, her brother, or one of the elders of the church. Of course, there are times in informal meetings and Bible studies where it is entirely proper for men and women to share equally in exchanging questions and insights. But when the church comes together as a body to worship God in one service, His standards are very clear: the role of preaching and leadership is reserved for men.

In London fifty women marched on the British passport office to protest against being known as “Mrs.” or “Miss.” They want their passports to carry “Ms” as the term of address. Why is this? It’s because they want to be known as woman libbers and this was the original designation for a woman who no longer wanted to follow traditional roles for women. Well, when it comes to church leadership, we must follow the Biblical rules God has established. When we resist the rules we create chaos and disorder.

Of course, Paul was demeaning women in any way but maintaining a Biblical order for church services. Women are highly valuable to church ministry and life. The Sunday School teacher asked one little girl if she knew the story of Adam and Eve. “First God created Adam,” she said, “and then He looked at him and said, “I think I can do better,” So He created girls!”

g. Understanding sanctity (36-40)

Paul comes to this conclusion as he corrects the Corinthians of their deviant and disorderly worship. He summons them to obey what the Bible says and correct their form of worship since God calls for reverence and sanctify in our time of worship. Apparently the Apostle Paul realized that his teaching about women and other issues would cause considerable contention. This was a proverbial hot potato!

1 Corinthians 14:36

“What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?”

In this verse, Paul reminds the Corinthians that they did not set the standard for how the church meetings should proceed. God did and Paul revealed God’s truth to them. Paul uses irony (sarcasm) in 1 Corinthians 14:36 by asking: “What? came the word of God out from you?” In other words, did the word of God come from you? Are you the originator of God’s Word and are now the sole authority on the matter of gifts, worship, and conduct in the local church? The answer is understood. The Word came from God and they should obey it and follow the apostolic teaching regarding worship and women in the church.

Paul asks another question: “or came it unto you only?” In other words, “Are you a member of an exclusive Bible club and church that has their own take and interpretation on the Bible? Do you have a special revelation from God on how to conduct yourself in Church?”

By their attitude these saints seemed to set themselves up as an official authority on the matters of gifts, church order, and worship. But the facts are that no church originated the word of God and no church has any exclusive rights to misinterpreting it for their own selfish and carnal purposes.

John MacArthur explains the verse like this:

“If you didn’t write Scripture, then obey it. If you are not the sole receivers of God’s Word, then subject yourselves to it as faithful children of God, as Christians everywhere else are obliged to do.”

No believer has a right to overrule, ignore, alter, or disobey the Word of God. To do so is to put himself above God’s Word.

1 Corinthians 14:37

“If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.”

Paul is hitting them where it hurts! He has been focusing on prophets and speaking in tongues. Apparently there were those in the congregation who thought they had arrived and were spiritual because they were a prophet or a tongue speaker. Paul reasons, “If this is the case, that you are a spiritual person, then acknowledge that what I’m telling you is God’s commandment and obey it!”

Many Christians today claim to be spiritual while they are disobeying God’s Word. They claim to be living on a higher spiritual plane when in reality their worship is marked by disobedience, immaturity, and confusion. True spirituality is evidenced in obedience to God’s truth in our time of worship.

We discover from this statement that submission to apostolic authority was the true test, not speaking in tongues. Submissiveness to the apostles and their teaching (God’s commandments) was an expression of submission to the Lord Himself (1 Cor. 7:10, 25).

Charles Haddon Spurgeon once said:

“If you desire Christ for a perpetual guest, give him all the keys of your heart; let not one cabinet be locked up from him; give him the range of every room and the key of every chamber.”

Obey God’s commands and then your life will be marked by spirituality. God honors and blesses obedience. There is an ancient story of a sentry standing day after day at his post with no apparent reason for his being there. One day, a passerby asked him why he was standing in that particular place. “I don’t know,” the sentry replied, “I’m just following orders.” The passerby then went to the captain of the guard and asked him why the sentry was posted in that place. “I don’t know,” the captain replied. “We’re just following orders.” This prompted the captain of the guard to pose the question to higher authority. “Why do we post a sentry at that particular spot?” he asked the king. But the king didn’t know. So he summoned his wise men and asked them the question. The answer came back that one hundred years before, Catherine the Great had planted a

rosebush and had ordered a sentry placed there to protect it. The rosebush had been dead for eighty years, but the sentry still stood guard.

1 Corinthians 14:38

“But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.”

I once quoted this verse to a man who told me that his interpretation of the beast of Revelation 13 was a prophecy of his former mother-in-law! Ignorance is not bliss! Paul adds that the Corinthians had no justification for their ignorance on the subject of the spiritual gifts anymore. He had taught them the truth and it was up to them to obey it or remain in their ignorance. Yes, sadly, there is a group that might be labeled “Ignorant Brethren” because of their refusal to see the truth and obey it. We must be submissive to truth and not remain ignorant concerning the purpose, nature, and cessation of the gift of tongues and the early sign gifts.

1 Corinthians 14:39

“Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.”

Remember that Paul stated this during early apostolic Christianity when the gift of tongues was still a sign of judgment upon the Jewish population (1 Cor. 14:21-22). This is not a command that we can embrace today since the gift of tongues has fulfilled its purpose and ceased (1 Cor. 13:8-10). Paul summarized the main teachings of 1 Corinthians 14 in verses 39–40. Prophecy is more important than tongues (1 Cor. 14:3), but the Church of Corinth should not prohibit the correct exercise of the gift of tongues, since it does serve a purpose to the Jewish people before AD 70 and the final formation of the canon of Scripture. Paul now closes the chapter with the main theme.

1 Corinthians 14:40

“Let all things be done decently and in order.”

The purpose of spiritual gifts is the edification of the whole church; therefore, gifts must be exercised in a reverent and orderly manner. The word “decently” is a word that connotes a “seeming manner” or a manner that is reverent and respectful to God’s character. The word “order” speaks of having decorum in our meetings which is opposite of confusion, carnality, and compromise with the world.

God demands sanctity in our time of worship! We just don't barge into the presence of God any way that we want to. Our meetings are to be "holy convocations" to the Lord (Lev. 23:2, 4). We must follow God's guidelines for worship and seek to demonstrate decency and respect for God. When our worship is worldly, selfish, and irreverent we are not worshipping in a manner that is pleasing to the Lord and representative of His character.

1 Corinthians 10:31

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

When we worship to the glory of God we are worshipping in a way that reflects His character of peace, order, holiness, and righteousness. Any other type of worship becomes disorderly and deviant worship. Today many people want their own greedy form of fleshly worship and are in essence worshipping their own worship instead of worshipping God.

In Marvin Vincent Word Studies in the New Testament, 4 volumes, he wrote these words: "Unfortunately, preachers with ear-tickling messages are all too abundantly available. In periods of unsettled faith, skepticism, and mere curious speculation in matters of religion, teachers of all kinds swarm like the flies in Egypt. The demand creates the supply. The hearers invite and shape their own preachers. If the people desire a calf to worship, a ministerial calf-maker is readily found."

In short, people choose to worship as they please but the way they worship is not always pleasing to the One who is to be worshipped. Yes, God wants and deserves our worship. However, our worship can become selfish, carnal, and a diversion from true worship which is to be Biblical, wholesome, pure, and reverent. We should always express pure and reverent worship to God – not worship that is marked by worldliness, disorder, and impurity.

Someone wrote:

"Gracious God, we worship Thee,
Rev'rently we bow the knee;
Jesus Christ our only plea;
Father, we adore Thee."

One preacher made this remark:

"When I was driving through the city of Dallas on Friday, I noticed a number of huge billboards on all sides of the city as I was trekking back and forth in meetings. And they were advertising the name of a man, Robert Tilton. Robert Tilton preaches every Sunday in Dallas, and he will mail you a miracle coin which by the way, is actually worthless; but it is a miracle coin. He has mailed them to hundreds of thousands of people promising them a financial miracle if they will send him, quote, 'A check for the best possible gift you can give.' And then there is a reminder in this mailing, quote, 'Only you and God know what your best gift is.' A little intimidation there, and if you will send for him the best gift you can give, you will get a miracle coin that guarantees you a miracle. A Secular paper calls Tilton's Television program, quote, 'The fastest growing empire in religious television.' The things that he promises and says are absolutely bizarre, and yet the bizarre has become the commonplace."

Many of these charismatic charlatans are running a business. There are many con artists today who are leading would-be worshippers down a road of absolute chaos and immaturity in their worship. In fact, they will claim that the greatest part of worship is to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues.

One Catholic testifies: "I was so joyful that all I could do was laugh as I lay on the floor" (Ranaghan, p. 28). Another Catholic said: "The sense of the presence and love of God was so strong that I can remember sitting in the chapel for a half hour just laughing out of joy over the love of God" (Ranaghan, p. 64). A Protestant testifies that at his baptism, "I started laughing... I just wanted to laugh and laugh the way you do when you feel so good you just can't talk about it. I held my sides and laughed until I doubled over" (Sherrill, p. 113). Another Protestant said: "The new tongue I was given was intermingled with waves of mirth in which every fear I had just seemed to roll away. It was a tongue of laughter" (Sherrill, p. 115).

This kind of action and philosophy is not Christian. The "laughter of the Holy Spirit" is unheard of in the whole history of Christian thought and experience. The alleged "charismatic revival" reveals itself as purely worldly and pagan in these kinds of acts that involve mindless worship. For the most part, this type of behavior is nothing more than emotional hysteria and psychosomatic manipulation. The Corinthians needed to grow up and so do many that are involved in this type of mindless hysteria.

There is the ploy charismatic's use. They say, "Well, we would expect you to be against it since you haven't had the experience." This kind of ploy or trick is nothing more than Gnosticism, which believes a person has been elevated to a higher level of comprehension which the uninitiated have no understanding.

Speaking of understanding, a woman wrote to one preacher and she was seething in anger: "You resort to Greek translations and fancy words to explain away what the Holy Spirit is doing in the Church today. Let me give you a piece of advice that might just save you from the wrath of the Almighty God. Put away your Bible and your books and stop studying. Ask the Holy Ghost to come upon you and give you the gift of tongues. You have no right to question something you've never experienced."

Such an attitude prevails in the Charismatic Movement, the tendency to gauge truth by personal experience.

Norman Geisler is worth quoting again:

"A mystical maze has settled on our land. Fuzzy thinking is the order of the day. The Good Ship Evangelicalism is sailing without rational rudders in the hazy sea of subjectivity."

D. Playing by the rules when speaking in tongues

We have learned from 1 Corinthians 14 and other texts of Scripture, which teach the purpose for tongues, the rules that one must follow, if they want to speak in tongues. If the Biblical rules for tongue speaking would be followed by the modern Charismatic and Pentecostal Movement the entire movement would cease to exist.

Rules for Speaking in Tongues

1. You **MUST** speak a human/intelligent/discernible language (Acts 2:4-6; 1 Cor. 14:9).
2. You **MUST** be living before AD 70 (1 Cor. 14:21-22).
3. You **MUST** be living during the 1st century when new revelatory messages for the Bible were being given (Mark 16:17, 20; Heb. 2:4).
4. You **MUST** have an incomplete Bible (1 Cor. 13:8-10).
5. You **MUST** have Jews present while speaking (1 Cor. 14:21-22; Acts, 2:1-4; 10:44-48; 19:1-7; Acts 18:7 with 1 Cor. 14).

6. You MUST never use tongues for personal devotions (1 Cor. 14:1-3).
7. You MUST edify others with the gift (1 Cor. 14:5, 12, 26).
8. You MUST take your turn in speaking (1 Cor. 14:27).
9. You MUST have an interpreter (1 Cor. 14:13, 27-28).
10. You MUST be a man – not a woman in the church service (1 Cor. 14:34-35).

When parting from the rules there was chaos, confusion, and competition in the Corinthians assembly. The same is true today when Christians seek to revive the alleged gift of tongues and once again become involved with the ecstasy religions of ancient Babylon. People compete with one another as they attempt to receive this gift and they look down upon another person if they don't receive the gift. They compare themselves with one another (2 Cor. 10:12) and make receiving this gift the hallmark of spirituality. Of course, nothing could be further from the truth.

E. Passing away of tongues

Are the miraculous gifts for today? In other words, has the Church been given the promise of possessing and using the miraculous gifts, such as speaking in tongues, healings, and ongoing revelatory knowledge throughout the future centuries of its existence? Or was there a time when these special gifts were no longer necessary and their purpose expired? The Bible reveals to us that the sign gifts, many of them which were practiced by the apostles and some Christians of the early Church period, have ceased, served their purpose, and are no longer given to the church today. This means that no Christian should expect to receive these miraculous/sign gifts from God and if they think that they possess these miraculous gifts, they are only deceiving themselves.

Have you ever gone to a restaurant and ordered off and early bird menu? I've done this while vacationing in Florida. The early bird prices are cheaper. Paul now speaks of the nine gifts as "early bird" gifts. They are not for the LATER church period but only for the EARLY Christians living during the first century.

In 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, Paul mentions the nine miraculous sign gifts which were given to the early or infant Church in order to declare and confirm God's Word before the Bible was complete. The nine gifts are clustered together so there could be no mistake about what Paul was

teaching in 1 Corinthians 13 when speaking of their cessation or ending. The term “charismatic” actually comes from the Greek word “charisma” and means “gift of grace.” It refers primarily to the gifts bestowed by the Holy Spirit which are spoken about in several places in the New Testament. The gifts listed below were temporary. They were needed for launching the Church and were used during its initial stage.

1. Word of wisdom – an early first century gift which involved specialized, spiritual insight given from God, as a result of predicting God’s Word. It involved receiving special revelation of the mind of God in matters dealing with doctrine.
2. Word of knowledge – a first century gift which involved the special ability to understand revelatory truth and then communicate, systemize, and apply the information to people’s lives before the Bible was canonized and complete.

Today charismatic leaders often claim they have “a word of knowledge.” One charismatic preacher said, “God is giving me a word of knowledge. Someone out in TV land has troublesome headaches and God is going to heal you of those headaches today. Agree with me right now and God will heal you.” Well, if there were a half million people watching this would-be preacher, there would definitely be someone in the audience with a headache! These charismatic leaders are phonies. The gift of knowledge had nothing to do with discerning the headaches and health problems of people. It spoke of predicting God’s truth, the Scriptures, before they were written down and canonized.

3. Faith – a first century special gift of faith given primarily to the apostles so they could perform supernatural miracles and miraculous healings (1 Cor. 13:2).
4. Gifts of healing – early first century gifts given primarily to the apostles and their direct associates to restore health (Acts 3:6-8; 5:15-16; 8:7; 9:17-18; 33-35; 19:12; 20:9-10; 28:9). The gifts of healing were not the result of human medical practices but had to do with cures wrought by special supernatural powers.
5. Working of miracles - an early first century church gift that covered a wider range of miracles other than physical healing as mentioned in

the previous gift. It extended to raising the dead (Acts 9:40; 20:9-12), inflicting blindness (Acts 13:8-11), and the ability to cast out demons through God's supernatural intervention and power (Acts 8:6-7; 19:11-12). *This gift was given primarily to the apostles and their associates.*

We have seen in this study that the period of the miraculous was specifically during the period of the Acts – the early church days and transitional days from Judaism (old truth) to Christianity (new truth). It was during this time when new information was being given out and the truth about the New Testament document was being established.

There is another interesting note that should be reiterated at this time. It's the specific period of time of these miracle workers and miracles. Mark 16:17 and 20 records how the miraculous sign gifts would be used by the apostles during the original spreading of the Gospel and expansion of the early church. However, it's rather interesting that Mark did not say that the miracles would continue to exist throughout the ongoing Church Age.

Mark 16:15

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”

Mark 16:20

“And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.”

Note how the words “to the end of the age” are not found in Mark's record of the Great Commission as they are in Matthew 28:18–20. This is significant. Mark was emphasizing the early signs (sign gifts) that were needed, as the Gospel was being preached during the original expansion of the church, while Matthew does not highlight this aspect in the Great Commission passage but declares that Christ's disciples were to make other disciples until the end of the Church Age.

Matthew 28:20

“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

Matthew looks right to the end of the Church Age (“even unto the end of the world”). In doing so, Matthew was not directed by God to record about any ongoing miraculous confirming signs. This is because the miraculous signs (sign gifts) would cease to exist throughout the future years of the church age since the canon of Scripture would be complete (1 Cor. 13:10).

Mark viewed the Great Commission from the perspective of the *early* church and did not therefore give the instruction for discipleship and training. Matthew viewed the Great Commission from the perspective of a *maturing* church that was well rooted, grounded, growing, and thriving upon the completed Scriptures. Therefore, there would be no need for any ongoing apostolic sign/miracle gifts.

I once saw a sign which read: “Have you had your miracle today?” It was promoting new charismatic meetings in some town. Many people seem to think that miracles and miracle workers occurred throughout the history of mankind but this not the case. There were only three outbreaks of miracles recorded in the Bible, which were performed by miracle workers, and all of them deal with the giving of new revelation.

The Bible is not a continuous account of miracles from Genesis to Revelation. There are only three major outbreaks of miracles in the Scriptures: Moses and Joshua (1441-1370 B.C.), Elijah and Elisha (870-785 B.C.), Christ and the apostles (A.D. 28-70). Every time there was a cluster of signs (miracles) there were two things involved: new *revelation* and new *men* of God. Furthermore, the miracles never broke out before the messenger and his revelation (message) had been revealed (Exodus 7:2-3). These miracles served as signs even during the Old Testament days as God was giving out the Old Testament revelation. These periods of revelation and miracles during the Old Testament lasted about 150 years. The miracles of the New Testament church era lasted about 30-40 years until the Bible was complete.

Using Usher’s dates on the earth’s history, one would conclude that out of approximately 4,100 years of human history, miracles were common during only 320 of those years. This shows that sign manifestations were always temporary and were used to confirm men and their new messages of revelation (II Corinthians 12:12). As the Word of God was completed there was no more need to confirm any new revelation. Therefore, the “working

of miracles” and other sign gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 have ceased (I Corinthians 13:8-11).

Allow me to assure you that I do believe God can heal and do miracles today. We serve an all powerful God who cannot be placed in a box. Although we are not witnessing any true outbreak of miracles being done by some specific chosen person or group of men (Moses, Elijah, apostles, prophets), we do know and believe that God still does heal. I know many saints who have been genuinely healed through the prayers of God’s people.

We must understand that miracles have not ceased, but men working them have ceased (I Corinthians 12:10). There is a difference! God does not work miracles through specially chosen men today. Therefore, we are NOT witnessing continuous miracles today like they did in the early church. There have been only several clusters of miracles during brief eras of human history. People tell me, “You are putting God in a box if you don’t believe in continuous miracles and miracle workers.” This is not putting God in a box (limiting God) as some teach today but putting the Bible and truth of Scripture into our hearts.

6. Prophecy - an early first century church gift given to the apostles and prophets so they could *predict* God’s mind and Word (1 Cor. 14:30, 36) before the Bible had been canonized or completed.
7. Discerning of spirits – an early first century gift of distinguishing the spirits (Holy Spirit or demonic spirits) which were behind prophetic messages. It was the special ability to discern true and false revelation before the Bible was completed. Paul elaborates on the exercise of this gift in 1 Corinthians 14:29 when saying, “Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.”
8. Divers kind of tongues – a first century gift which was the supernatural linguistic ability to speak in different kinds of literal human languages in order to confirm new revelation, apostolic authority, and coming judgment upon the Jewish people (Mark 16:20; 2 Cor. 12:12; 1 Cor. 14:21-22).
9. Interpretation of tongues – the first century given ability to translate what others said in different human languages and give the exact

meaning to the church. In this way the message could become spiritually profitable to the church. Without interpretation there could be no edification and this is why Paul argues for its use (1 Cor. 14:5, 13-19, 27-28).

All of these nine gifts, which were clustered together in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, were in some way associated with early apostolic Christianity and were used for the purpose of declaring, expressing, and confirming God's new revelation as it was being given.

These gifts in this list (1 Cor. 12:8-10) are seen to be *temporary* gifts that served their purpose during the first century prior to the completion of Scripture. Not all the gifts would abide or remain in the church as the fruit of the Spirit would (1 Cor. 13:13). The transitory character of the nine gifts is clearly seen. With the Jewish nation being judged in AD 70 (1 Cor. 14:21-22) and the formation of the official canon of Scripture, these nine temporary gifts were done away with and no longer are being given to God's people today. This is what our text in 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 reveals.

The miraculous gifts of tongues (speaking in different languages), along with the other eight sign gifts such as healings, revelatory knowledge, and prophecy did cease for the simple reason that they did not occur for almost 1,900 years of church history and certainly have not continued in an unbroken line of succession. Everyone recognizes this, even the honest Charismatic believers. This is a proven fact of history. We don't read about the miraculous sign gifts occurring during some 1900 years of church history, following the days of the apostles.

Alva McClain wrote:

"When the church appears in the second century, the situation as regards the miraculous is so changed that we seem to be in another world."

It's like being in Disney World for five days and then you leave for home. Good old, same-old home! You leave the hoopla and come back to reality. The early Church with its transitory gifts and miracles transitioned into a later Church period that no longer possessed these miraculous gifts. It's was indeed an altogether different world or Church era in which to live.

Historically we know that the church no longer was experiencing the supernatural signs gifts. That the sign gifts did cease at one time is an irrefutable fact admitted by most Charismatic's and Pentecostals. However, since the apostolic, supernatural gifts did cease for some 1900 years, the burden of proof is entirely on the charismatics to prove they would start up again and prove their validity.

The charismatic's must prove Biblically that the sign gifts will start up again during the later church age and that today's phenomena are this reoccurrence. In other words, they must prove that their experiences are the reoccurrence of gifts that have not occurred for almost 1,900 years of church history!

Am I really missing something because I've never spoken in the alleged tongue experiences, or received what they term the baptism of the Holy Spirit and other miraculous happenings? The reformers like Calvin and Luther never claimed to speak in tongues or possess any of the supernatural sign gifts. The Puritan writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have never claimed to have these gifts in all their writings. Men God used in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth century's have never laid claim to the miraculous gifts. Learned and godly men such as Griffith Thomas, Charles Spurgeon, D. L. Moody, Billy Sunday, J. N. Darby, C. I. Scofield, Arno Gabalein, Augustus Strong, James Orr, Benjamin Warfield, J. Gresham Machen, Henry Thiessen, Charles Fuller, C. T. Studd, Hudson Taylor, David Brainert, William Carey, Adoniram Judson, (and all the great missionaries God has used), Charles Ryrie, John Walvoord, J. Vernon McGee, etc., etc., etc., have never once claimed to possess the miraculous gifts in their ministries or speak in tongues.

Church history on the whole, godly men of past generations, and godly men of the present generation have never laid claim to the miraculous sign gifts. The silence of church history and the silence of godly, learned saints of the past and present, concerning the miraculous gifts, should cause all those who claim to have these gifts to reconsider their authenticity or trustworthiness.

Be honest with yourself today. Has God really given you something which has not been possessed by God's people for eighteen or nineteen

centuries? In your thinking, a red light should be displayed and cause you to reconsider such claims. To conclude that the practice of speaking in tongues is to be part of the Christian's experience today, simply because it is mentioned in the Bible, is to fail in rightly dividing the Word of Truth (2 Tim. 2:15).

We now want to turn to an important text of Scripture that verifies tongues would cease along with all the other revelatory sign gifts that were given during the infant days of the church, which were given to verify new men, new revelations of truth before the Bible was complete, and the new program of God (the building of His Church).

1 Corinthians 13:8-12

“Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.”

We can prove unmistakably from this set of Scriptures that the sign gifts would cease which includes the gift of tongues. Paul says in this section of the Bible there would be no more speaking in tongues or ongoing revelatory knowledge occurring once the canon of the Bible was complete.

The early signs gifts would cease.

The cessation teaching is unfolded in four ways.

1. The prediction of the end is given (verse 8)

The Bible predicts that the supernatural gifts would cease, phase out, and pass off the scene after the apostolic days had expired.

1 Corinthians 13:8

“Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.”

A contrast is being made between the unending nature of “love” and the cessation or ending of the gifts of “prophecies,” “tongues,” and “knowledge” which are seen here to be representative or examples of all the nine gifts Paul just mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. As we have seen, the nine gifts were needed during the original growth and expansion of Christianity during its infant stage of development. The gifts were used to give out new revelation before the Bible (New Testament) was written down and also confirmed the words being spoken by the apostles and prophets.

Have you ever been to a band concert? There are many different kinds of instruments being played together to create the music. The nine gifts were used in concert (together) to help establish the truth and begin the Church Dispensation.

I man’s car battery failed in the parking lot across from driveways and helped the man jumpstart his car with my car and battery cables. One way to view the nine sign gifts is that they were used to jumpstart the Church Dispensation. These specialized gifts were for special times – not for all times! They were foundational gifts designed to jumpstart the Church and eventually faded off the scene as Scripture came to be established as a finalized revelation.

Three predictions are given.

a. Prophecies would fail – vs. 8a

The text says, “whether there be prophecies, they shall fail” (vs. 8). The “prophecies” once again dealt with being given truth directly by God (prediction) and then giving out God’s Word (proclaiming). This is actually a compound word including the verb “to speak” (phemi) and the preposition “before” (pro) which indicates that it was a ministry of speaking beforehand and connotes prediction. The prophet would predict God’s mind in regards to truth and then declare it to others.

Paul clearly reveals that the era of predicting God’s Word would come to an end. The supernatural gift of prophecy would “fail” (katargeo) which means to become idle, inactivated, and rendered inoperative. A time would come when the gift of predicting God’s mind and word, receiving truth directly from God, would end. There can be no question about this. As we will see, prophecies ended when God finally brought the Bible together and the

Church began to use the completed Scriptures. Once God's mind was revealed in the completion of Scripture no more prophecy was necessary. The gift would naturally run its course and be finished when God's initial program of bringing the Scriptures into Church life and ministry was completed.

This is why there are no prophets today. There is no more need for prediction! God's Word is finalized and complete. God has given to us His completed mind. We need not look elsewhere. I was at one of our roadside produce stands a while back. I met someone that I graduated with and we began talking. Eventually she told me about a new prophet that was at her church who was prophesying about revival that would come upon the nation and prophesying blessing upon their church families.

Of course, this was not the function of a New Testament prophet. Prophets were used to declare God's Scripture, the Bible, not their own ideas about when revival is coming to the church and how families would be blessed in the New Year. Those who claim to be prophets today are only fooling themselves and the people they are allegedly prophesying to are also being duped. If we don't know the true purpose of the early prophets, we will be gullible and be led to believe things which God has never promised. Get your information from the Bible, not through charismatic prophets. Your guidance and promises are found in the revelation of God's Word.

Psalm 119:105

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

Years ago I used to go on youth retreats. The paths throughout the woods became very dark during the evening. There were no lights around to lighten the paths. You needed a flashlight to get around or you would be totally lost. Today, we need the flashlight of God's eternal Word to direct our lives and lead us in the paths of righteousness. I don't need prophets; I need promises! I don't need apostles; I need the application of Scripture to my heart and life.

b. Tongues would cease – vs. 8b

Paul says, "whether there be tongues, they shall cease." The gift of speaking in different languages would definitely serve its purpose when the church was born and began its initial expansion. The infant church needed

certain confirming signs to authenticate the message and messengers. Tongues were used as one of the signs to authenticate the new messengers (prophets and apostles) and their messages.

One example is given in Mark 16:17:

“And these signs shall follow them (not be performed by them) that believe; In my name shall they (the apostles) cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues.”

Mark 16:20 then adds:

“And they (the apostles) went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.”

These words and promises were given to the apostles and they do NOT find their fulfillment in the present history of the Church but in the apostolic age. They were given to confirm and authenticate the message of the apostles (Heb. 2:3-4 – “God also bearing them witness”). These verses in Mark record Christ’s commission to the eleven apostles after His resurrection and speaks of the miraculous things they would be able to accomplish such things as speaking in tongues (Acts 2, 10, 19), casting out demons (Acts 16), their hands on the sick and miraculous healing (Acts 5, 19) and serpents being taken up without bodily harm (Acts 28). These were the hallmark of that time, which was an age of transition, when signs and evidences were needed to authenticate the apostles and their messages, prior to the canonization of the Scripture.

These signs followed the apostles and to this day we have them recorded for us in Scripture corroborating their message during early Christianity (2 Cor. 12:12) along with the many miraculous signs that Jesus did (John 20:30-31). The confirmation of these signs were already recorded and confirmed in the book of Acts (“the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following”) and God did bear witness to the apostles with the signs, wonders, miracles, and gifts of the Spirit already in the early days of Christianity when the signs were necessary. *The need for a sign came to an end* (John 20:31). The cessation of the sign is evident. All of this confirmation is already past (“was confirmed” – Heb. 2:3) and is no longer necessary since we have the New Testament Scriptures finalized and confirmed to us today. The miraculous sign gifts of the first century died out and were no longer needed to establish Christianity.

This being said, the issue today is no longer signs but Scripture! We don't need the miraculous confirming signs anymore since we have all the Scriptures that God has intended to give us. We have "the faith once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). These supernatural gifts with their original purpose (confirming new revelations of Scripture) would cease to exist as the apostles died and the church progressed through its infant stage. The Bible was being progressively written during the early days of the church but in time it would be finalized, complete, and delivered to the saints. At this point of time, there would be no more direct revelations from God nor confirming miraculous signs, since these gifts would no longer be necessary with the completion of the Scripture. This Bible passage in 1 Corinthians 13:8 is clearly teaching this.

The word "cease" (pauo) in 1 Corinthians 13:8 means to stop. In the greater context of this passage we discover that tongues, which were a sign to confirm or authenticate God's Word prior to the completion of the Scriptures, would also pass off the scene, as the Bible was finished and came into the hands of the Church. There would be no more need to validate God's Word when it was finalized, written down, and distributed among the churches. Once the Bible was being disseminated throughout the churches the necessity of this gift (tongues) would cease. It would no longer be needed to validate God's prophetic Word since God's truth would be completed and given in its final form.

Alden Gannett has stated:

"The gift of tongues as produced by the Holy Spirit ceased during the age of the apostles. The question today is *not*, as so many propose, can God bestow the gift of tongues today? Of course He can. *Rather*, the issue is, has God *purposed* to do so since His purpose for tongues has already been fulfilled? It is most significant that, historically speaking, tongues occurred *only* in connection with the ministry of the apostles, that both this sign and healing and other miracles occurred less and less through the Book of Acts."

It's equally true, as some suggest, that the verb "cease" might also reveal how the gift of tongues would stop on its own in relationship to its purpose for Israel. Tongues were a sign of judgment to the Jewish nation of their impending judgment (1 Cor. 14:21-22). Once the Jewish nation was judged by the Romans in AD 70, the purpose for this gift would cease. As a result

of the judgment, the gift would no longer be given and used within church life and ministry.

In the context of this passage, which deals with prophetic revelation, it seems that Paul is teaching how the gift of tongues would also cease in relationship to the completion of the Scripture. However, it is equally true that it would, out of necessity, also cease when Jerusalem was destroyed and the Jews were judged by God.

c. Knowledge would vanish away – 8c

Paul stated, “whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.” Initially, God would speak directly to prophets, giving them prophetic revelations of Scripture, which they could understand and communicate in an effective way to the people. However, once the Scriptures were completed and distributed among the local assemblies this special first century prophetic gift of knowledge would no longer have a purpose and use. All the knowledge would be given and found directly in the Bible.

2 Timothy 3:16

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”

There would be no more revelatory knowledge given to prophets since the complete revelation was finalized. The words “vanish away” is the same Greek word used for “fail” which means to render idle and inactive. It indicates a time when revelatory knowledge would no longer be used. There would not be any need for ongoing revelation when the final revelation has come.

Jude 1:3 declares:

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

You heard about the horse who was told to move when the man said, “Praise the Lord” and stop when he said, “Woe!” One day the horse was galloping along when all of a sudden the man realized he was moving toward the edge of a cliff. He started yelling out, “Woe! Woe!” The horse

came to a screeching halt just in time. They were right at the edge of the cliff and the man looked over into the deep ravine, while wiping sweat from his forehead. And he said, "Praise the Lord!"

The application of this funny story to our present text is simple. The nine gifts would at one point come to a screeching halt. This is evident by what Paul is teaching in this section of the Word of God and it's also evident when viewing church history. Church history reveals there were no sign gifts being used during the second century of the Church and for approximately 1,900 years of Church life and ministry, until the rise of the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches, when the alleged supernatural gifts were resurrected for the last days. However, both the Bible and secular history reveal that these miraculous sign gifts were never intended to be ongoing gifts that would be used in the Church nor were they designed to start up at a later point in the history of the Church. The Bible teaches the cessation of the early sign gifts.

There would come a time when God's full revelation was "once delivered" which means it would be finalized and completed. It would essentially stop. Therefore, the nine gifts, represented by the gifts of prophecy, tongues, revelatory knowledge outside the Bible would come to a screeching halt ("fail", "cease" and "vanish away"). This is because there would be no more need for validating or confirming truth when the Bible would be canonized and completed. God is declaring that once the Bible was complete, the era of new revelation with its sign gifts would no longer be necessary.

Paul is predicting an end to an era of ongoing prophetic revelation and the accompanying sign gifts. The nine gifts would serve their purpose in establishing, confirming, and spreading truth throughout the infant days of the Church, before God had revealed the completed form of Scripture. These special gifts were used for a special time, while the truth was being gathered and correlated.

Jude and other texts (Rev. 22:18-19) reveal that when "the faith" (body of truth that Christians believe) would be completed, the nine early spectacular gifts, which were needed to reveal and confirm the new revelation through prophets, would no longer be necessary. They would pass out of the church since their purpose would be finished.

Cleon Rogers, writing in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, said:

“After examining the testimony of the early Christian leaders whose ministry represents practically every area of the Roman Empire from approximately A.D. 100 to 400, it appears that the miraculous gifts of the first century died out and were no longer needed to establish Christianity.”

2. The piecemeal revelation is examined (verse 9)

1 Corinthians 13:9

“For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.”

Paul now explains the reason for the temporary nature of these nine gifts, by examining one specific gift, the gift of prophecy. Paul starts with nine temporary sign gifts (1 Cor. 12:8-10) and then gives examples of these gifts by mentioning three of them (1 Cor. 13:8-9) and now he represents all of them by highlighting the one gift of prophecy (1 Cor. 13:10), which will be used to convey His point about the temporary nature of all the gifts.

“For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.” This was true of the prophets as they received direct revelations from God (1 Cor. 14:29-30). Revelatory knowledge was always “in part” which means that God did not give to every prophet the entire revelation. This is why Paul concluded that during his own day he could only “know in part” the meaning and revelation of God’s mind. God did not express His truth in a completed format during early apostolic Christianity. It was always in piecemeal revelation. Therefore, the prophets could only “prophesy in part” which means they gave out piecemeal revelation as God revealed it to them, but it was never God’s complete revelation.

I hate puzzles. If you want to give me a birthday present, don’t give me a puzzle. I don’t have the patience to put all those pieces together. I got so mad one time when trying to put a puzzle together that I actually used a hammer to try and make two pieces fit together! Now you know my dark side. Puzzles and I don’t get along very well.

As I think of puzzles, I can relate to what Paul was speaking about. He was saying that during the early Church the prophets were only getting pieces of God’s mind and revelation (pieces of the puzzle) but they never could put the entire puzzle together. But there was coming a time when the entire

puzzle would be pieced together in the Bible, a completed form of Scripture that would be equally shared among the churches.

During the days of the apostles and early church there was piecemeal revelation that was given to the prophets. (here a little – there a little). You could only have a small piece of the pie before the books of the Bible started to be written, completed, circulated, and brought together. Today we have the entire pie! We live in a privileged time since we possess all of God's truth. We should be very grateful for the completion of the Scriptures.



We don't have only one piece (part) of the cherry pie. (1 Cor. 13:9)



We have the entire cherry pie! (1 Cor. 13:10).

Are we appreciative of the great privilege we have today? We have God's entire revelation which is found in the Bible. We have the entire pie. We have the whole puzzle. How much time do we spend in the Bible? How often do we read it? Do we cherish it? Do we allow it to be our guide? Is it our final authority for living?

Martin Luther said:

"I study my Bible as I gather apples. First, I shake the whole tree that the ripest might fall. Then I shake each limb, and when I have shaken each limb, I shake each branch and every twig. Then I look under every leaf."

3. The perfect thing is anticipated (verse 10)

1 Corinthians 13:10

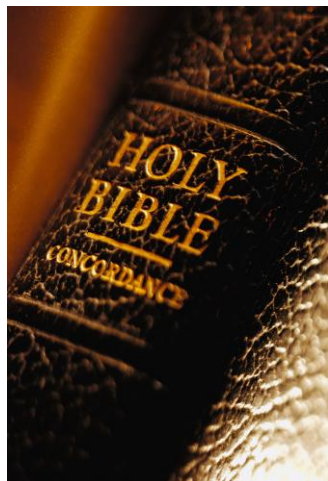
"But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."

Another thing that I hate is ketchup! I saw one T-shirt that read, “I like ketchup on my ketchup.” One of the older TV commercials on ketchup used to say that a person needed to wait in anticipation for the ketchup to run out of the bottle because it was so thick and good. Well, in one sense, Paul was waiting in anticipation for the full revelation of God’s mind (Word of God) to be completed and disseminated among the churches.

The word “perfect” (teleios) carries the idea and connotation of something that is “brought to its end, finished, completed.” We could render this phrase as “that which is completed.” This section of Scripture is teaching that the temporary sign gifts (1 Cor. 12:8-10), representative by the gifts of prophecy, tongues, and knowledge (1 Cor. 13:8-9) would be rendered inoperative (their function and use would be terminated) at the coming of “that which is perfect” (1 Cor. 13:10). If this is true, then what is the meaning of the phrase “that which is perfect?”

The charismatic’s want us to believe that the “perfect thing” refers to Christ’s coming in the Rapture, so the sign gifts do not terminate until the Rapture. They want to play around with their tongues, healing cloths, dreams, visions, and all of their extra-biblical revelation until the Rapture takes place. Charismatics teach that the signs gifts have reoccurred in the church after 1900 years of absence and that we should avidly seek these gifts and experiences until Jesus returns in the Rapture.

This is a rather strange way to understand this phrase. Of course, it is only interpreted this way in order to meet the agenda of the Charismatic Movement – keeping the sign gifts in the church until Jesus comes. Why would Paul need to tell us that the gifts would cease when Jesus returns? Everyone already knows that when Jesus returns the use of our gifts would be finished! This is no surprise. We are going to Heaven to be with Jesus.



The “perfect thing” is NOT a reference to the Rapture but to the completion of God’s revelation which is the New Testament Scriptures, the content of truth found in the New Testament document, “the faith” that Jude was speaking about (Jude vs. 3).

This verse is talking about a thing (“that”) – not a person (Jesus Christ) or an event (the Rapture). The word “perfect” (Greek – teleion) is never used of the

second coming of Christ anywhere in the Bible. However, the word “perfect” is elsewhere used as a descriptive reference of the Bible.

James 1:25 declares:

“But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”

In 1 Corinthians 13:10, “When the perfect comes” (literal reading of vs. 10) is set in contrast to what was “in part” in verse 9 (incomplete knowledge and prophecy or piecemeal revelation). The complete or “perfect thing” should logically be of the same kind as that which is partial. Contextually and exegetically, this expression must therefore refer to the “perfect” or the completed knowledge and prophecy which would one day come, the canon of Scripture (2 Pet. 1:19), which here Paul identifies as the completed prophecy, which was officially closed in Revelation 22:19.

I am now 50 years of age. I need some reading or magnifying glasses to see the little print on soup cans (I need to check for MSG!). I can't read the labels very well anymore. So the reading glasses enable me to take a closer look at what is inside the can. At this point, we need to take a closer look at this text in 1 Corinthians 13:10.

If the text was to teach the coming of Christ it would be masculine and thus read, “When he which is perfect is come.” The phrase “when that which is perfect is come” is a proper translation. If Paul would have meant to describe the coming of Christ he would have been specific about this event, as he was in every other place in Scripture (II Thessalonians 2:1; I John 3:2; Philippians 3:20; 4:5; Titus 2:13).

It's interesting that even some non-charismatic writers think “the perfect thing” refers to the Rapture, our perfect state, or the eternal state of Revelation 21-22. All these conclusions lack any support from the context and how the word “perfect” is used in relationship to the Word of God. Paul is saying that the nine temporary gifts (vv. 8-9), which were needed to reveal God's truth and confirm the truth during the early apostolic days of the Church, would no longer be necessary, when the “perfect thing,” the completed revelation of God's Word, became fixed and final.

Larry Pettegrew concludes:

“Interpreting ‘the completed’ as the New Testament is still the most natural and logical explanation of the passage – far better than trying to introduce the Rapture, Second Coming, death, or eternal state into the interpretation.”

In summary, since “the perfect thing” (teleion) of verse ten is contrasted to incomplete prophecy or revelatory truth (vs. 9), the complete prophecy (vs. 10) would replace the partial prophecy and knowledge (vs. 9). Once the New Testament Scriptures are complete the incomplete revelations and prophecies would no longer be necessary

Myron Houghton concludes:

“If, however, one begins with verse 8, the revelational character of prophecy, tongues, and knowledge will be emphasized and Paul’s comparison between the temporary gifts, which communicated partial revelation, and the full and final revelation found in the completed canon of Scripture will be understood (vv. 9–10). Then the remaining verses in this passage (vv. 11–13) can be interpreted consistently with the understanding of verses 8–10.”

Some people have argued that Paul could not mean this because his readers did not know there was going to be a New Testament and since the Holy Spirit would not have allowed Paul to write something totally incomprehensible to them.

D. A. Carson argues:

“It is difficult to believe that Paul could have expected the Corinthians to think that by “perfection” he was alluding to the cessation of the writing of Scripture.”

This is simply Carson’s own conjecture about Paul’s teaching. My response to Carson’s thoughts is this. How can anyone know for sure that the Corinthians did not know that there would one day be a new covenant document to complement the Old Testament? In addition, how do we know that Paul is not telling them about the New Testament at this point? How else would the apostle explain that one day there would be a completed prophetic volume? Of course, the word “canon” would not to be used for the completed Scriptures for some 200 years later. The best way for Paul to explain the completion of the Bible was to relate it to a Book of

completed prophecy. Partial revelation would be replaced by complete revelation (“the perfect thing”).

Paul goes on to say, “then that which is in part shall be done away” (vs. 10). The ongoing revelatory program that was once “in part” (the piecemeal knowledge of God’s Word - vs. 9) would one day no longer be needed and replaced by something else. The entire process would one day be complete or perfected in the sense that no more revelation would be given other than what God had given in the completion of the Scriptures. A “perfect thing” was coming that would render the old process of piecemeal revelation inoperative.

1 Corinthians 13:13 concludes:

“And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.”

Here is the contrast: “These three” (faith, hope, love) would continue to exist through the ongoing Church Age but the others (tongues, prophecies, knowledge, etc.) do not last through this age. They would become inoperative. Paul is teaching that the nine supernatural gifts with their confirming signs would be “done away” (become inoperative, inactive - vs. 10) and no longer needed in view of the completion of the entire prophetic Word (2 Pet. 1:19). This text clearly teaches the cessation of the supernatural revelatory and confirming sign gifts of the early church.

- While the gift of prophecy has ceased, the right for Christians to speak the truth has not ceased.
- While the gift of tongues has ceased, the need to confirm truth with the Bible has not. Nor has the use of our tongue ceased. We are to praise God with the language we know and give Him all the glory.
- While the gift of knowledge has ceased, the reiterating of the truth has not! We must not stop teaching doctrine!

It’s interesting that Paul does NOT say that all the gifts will cease but only the nine sign gifts. The nine *sign* gifts would pass out of existence with the completed revelation of God’s Word but there were other *servicing* gifts that would continue to manifest themselves among the saints and church life. Do you know what gifts remain in the church today? Do you know what

gifts you have and are you effectively using them in the body of Christ and for the Lord's glory? Below is a little side note.

There are three ways to discover your spiritual gifts.

a. There is the matter of information (education).

We should familiarize ourselves with the gifts and know what they are. We should know which ones are for today and which ones are not. As we have seen, the nine sign gifts are no longer in the church today (1 Corinthians 12:8-11; 13:8). A jeweler who can recognize various gems must be familiar with all the different kinds of gems that are available. In a similar way, you need to be familiar with the different gifts that are still available to the Church today and which ones are not available.

b. There is the matter of inclination (exercise).

What do you enjoy doing? What can you do well? Do you have the ability to teach in some capacity? Do you have a fine singing voice and enjoy singing? Do you enjoy being merciful and helpful toward others? In discovering a spiritual gift many times there will be a gradual and steady improvement as one begins to use their spiritual gift. But do not make premature judgment. No person became a professional figure skater in his first, second, or third attempt. Watch for improvements. Sure and steady progress will be a reliable indicator that you possess a certain gift.

c. There is the matter of investigation (examination).

We must examine, explore, or investigate what our gift might be by praying (Phil. 4:6-7) and asking God for wisdom (James 1:5) concerning which spiritual gifts we possess. Also, we can investigate what our spiritual gift may be by seeking the counsel of older and more experienced and discerning Christians who may be able to detect our gift even before we are aware of it. Remember how Barnabas recognized Mark's gift and never gave up on encouraging him to use that gift (Acts 15:36-39).

The Scripture also says that there is wisdom in the midst of counsel (Prov. 11:14; 15:22; 24:6). Constructive criticism is sometimes helpful when discovering what your spiritual gift might be. Your spiritual gift will eventually be confirmed by your ability. One lady said that she had the gift

of singing but it was strange that no person had the gift of listening to her! The discerning of true spiritual gifts by others is alluded to in 1 Corinthians 14:29. We can also develop our gift by watching and listening to others that possess the same gift. We can see how God uses them in ministry and we can know that God can use us in a similar way, since we possess the same gift or gifts.

Remember that discovering your spiritual gift will function as a signpost directing you into God's will for your life. Your gift was given to you by the Holy Spirit to qualify you for ministry (1 Cor. 12:7). To know your gift will help give you direction in regards to church ministry. If you have the gift of teaching you will look for those opportunities. If you have the gift of evangelism you will look for opportunities to evangelize. If you have the gift of mercy you will look for those specific ways you can express this gift.

The same is true of the gifts of helps and governments or organization skills. Discovering your spiritual gift will also help you in setting priorities in relationship to church life and ministry. Our priority in church ministry must be directed to the area where God has specifically gifted us. When we lose perspective on what God wants us to do and divert our attention to other things we will not effectively use our gift or gifts for the Lord.

Someone asked John Wanamaker: "How do you get time to run a Sunday School for four thousand scholars, in addition to the business of your stores, your work as Postmaster-General, and other obligations?" Instantly Mr. Wanamaker replied: "Why, the Sunday School is my business! All other things are just things" (Matt. 6:33).

4. The picture is presented (verses 11-12)

1 Corinthians 13:11-12 reveals:

"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

One of the ladies at the church was doing Bible school this year. I notice that all the ladies who teach Bible school have pictures along with the Bible stories to help keep the attention of the children. Well, God is going to give us a picture book as we finish out this portion of our study.

1 Corinthians 13:11-12

“When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.”

In these verses, Paul gives several pictures to teach that the early supernatural gifts would no longer be necessary in the future church generations. A picture is worth a thousand words!

Two pictures are given that prove the nine gifts have ceased.

a. Maturity (vs. 11)

Paul uses the illustration of maturity to prove his point about the cessation of the early miraculous sign gifts.



“When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.”

Little children prefer the spectacular, amusing, and showy gifts. This expression in one sense conveys the Corinthians immaturity regarding the use and understanding of spiritual gifts but it also teaches the cessation of the miraculous gifts by using an effective illustration from infancy to adulthood. A child speaks and thinks like a child until that child grows up (“when I became a man”). The speaking and thinking of a child is being compared to the early church during its infancy stage, the time when the people possessed the temporary gifts of knowledge, tongues, and prophecy. In a comparative sense, the early church, while using the miraculous gifts was in an infant stage of development.

Notice the triple analogy of infancy in verse 11 to the previously mentioned gifts: “spoke as a child” (tongues); “understood as a child” (knowledge); and “thought as a child” (prophecy in piecemeal revelation). Just as a child would “put away” the expressions of his physical infancy (pacifiers, baby rattles, and cartoon books) when he becomes an adult, so the church

would eventually render null and void the nine temporary gifts and stop using these gifts, which were needed only during its period of infancy.

We used to have pace programs at school which were different colors. I always had the some of the first colors (red or green) while the smart ones had the gold and silver. The red and green colors were only for the beginners! Well, the early sign gifts were for the beginners! The expression “childish things” (vs. 11) is a reference to the nine supernatural sign gifts (prophecy, tongues, knowledge, miracles, etc.) that were part of infant days of the church life and ministry. The fact that they are alluded to as childish or immature things is that they were only for beginners. The supernatural gifts were for the beginning days of church life when there was a need for direct revelation from God and the confirmation of truth through miraculous signs.

After the Scripture was completed (“the perfect thing” – vs. 10) the “childish things” (vs. 11) would be put away. In other words, the temporary gifts would be put aside for the lasting gifts for church ministry and life.

Some of the saints are still trying to play with the childish things, the teething rings and baby rattles. They need to grow up and mature. They need to realize the purpose for the nine gifts and why they cannot be duplicated today. Why do you want to return to the infancy stage of the church? Just rest in the fact that you can’t have what God has not given to you. You don’t have any of the nine miraculous gifts. If you think that you do, then you are only fooling yourself.

John R. Stott wrote:

“What is described in Scripture as having happened to others is not necessarily intended for us, whereas what is promised to us we are to appropriate, and what is commanded us we are to obey.”

b. Mirror (vs. 12)



1 Corinthians 13:12

“For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.”

Paul next uses the illustration of a mirror to prove his point of the cessation of the early miraculous sign gifts. This was a very applicable illustration since Bible historians tell us that Corinth was famous for its manufacturing of mirrors.

The easiest way to understand this verse is to focus on the words “now” and “then.”

1. The early days (“now”)

Paul says that “now” (during the infant days of the church) “we” (Paul and the early believers who lived during the days of ongoing revelation) were in one sense looking through a “glass darkly” (a mirror which did not provide much reflection of its image). It was a mirror that only provided blurry glimpses and distorted figures.

Paul picture of a blurry mirror looks back to the partial revelation of God’s Word as it was being given out by prophets. The word “see” is often used for mental perception (Rom. 7:23; Heb. 3:19). Thus, a hindrance to one’s vision in this metaphor is a hindrance to a person having God’s full revelation and mind.

It’s interesting that the Bible itself is compared to a mirror in the context of James 1:25.

James 1:22-24 says:

“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass (likened to the Word of God): For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”

In this analogy James likens the Bible to a mirror that reveals a person’s character and true self. Have you looked in the mirror lately? In 1 Corinthians 13:12, Paul says that during his own day (“now”) both him and the early Christians (“we”) are just beginning to “see” or understand the picture. We are just starting to see what God is saying and conveying to us in the piecemeal revelation He is providing for us.

In summary, Paul is saying, “It’s like we are looking into a mirror that does not give very good reflection. We only have part of God’s mind and revelation. The revelatory knowledge does not give the full mind of God. The teaching is in piecemeal format. Since we do not have all of God’s mind and revelation things are somewhat blurry and distorted. However, we are learning and starting to put things together regarding God’s truth and purpose for New Testament Christianity and the Church Age.”

I was at a yard sale one time where they were selling several mirrors. One of the mirrors was foggy and it did not give a really good reflection of oneself. This is the analogy Paul is giving as he related the early church period to a time when partial revelation did not give the full-blown picture of God’s purpose and ways.

2. The later days (“then”)

Paul moves from the “now” stage (during the days he lived – the infant church stage – vs. 12a) to another time and phase which is identified as “then face to face” and “then shall I know” – vs. 12b). The “then” stage (future stage) that Paul was referencing correlates to the time when “the perfect thing” of God’s revelation was finished and final and the churches would possess God’s entire mind in the completed book that we know today known as the New Testament document. Paul knew that God was doing something like He had done in the previous days of the Old Testament era. He was forming or bringing together sacred writings that would eventually be finalized and complete.

Paul also uses (“face to face”) as a metaphor (figure of speech or comparison) just as he used the dark mirror. Therefore, the phrase “then face to face” is NOT referring to seeing Christ in the Rapture as so many try and force upon this text. This is not the illustration that is given. It refers to a person seeing his reflection in a highly polished mirror, which illustrates the time when God’s saints would have a full picture and reflection of God’s mind in the completed sacred Scriptures. In other words, a time was coming when the hazy, partial revelation would be replaced by the clear, complete revelation. *The two types of mirrors graphically illustrated the understanding of God’s revelation.*

Once again, the illustration of a person looking into two different types of mirrors pictures two types of revelation – incomplete and complete. The

cloudy mirror = partial revelation and the *clear* mirror = complete revelation. During the early phase of New Testament Christianity one would “see darkly” as if they were looking into a hazy mirror (illustrating incomplete prophetic revelation) but there would come a later time when one would see their reflection “face to face” as looking in a clear mirror (illustrating the completed revelation).

The issue here is dealing with revelation from God, not fellowship with God in the future, as some suggest by the expression “face to face.” 1 Corinthians 13:12 is not referring to a believer’s future *fellowship* with God but to *revelation* from God. Paul is teaching that cloudy and imprecise knowledge would be replaced by clear and precise knowledge when Christians had access to completed revelation – our New Testament Scriptures.

Myron Houghton observed:

“Paul, who knew partial revelation and who had an incomplete canon of Scripture, saw what he was like “dimly” (v. 12a) or he knew himself “in part” (v. 12b). Believers today, on the other hand, possess the full biblical canon and see themselves “face to face,” that is, clearly and directly, God’s revelation about themselves is completed (v. 12a), and they fully know themselves just as they are fully known by Him (v. 12b).”

Paul looked forward to the day when he would know everything that God wanted to reveal about himself and possess the entire content of spiritual truth that would be able to direct his life (“then shall I know”).

Myron Houghton comments on the phrase “then shall I know” in this way: “Because believers today possess complete revelation, they are able to understand what God’s Word teaches about themselves, their potential, their limitations, and the means God has made available for them to obtain victory over sin in a clear and detailed manner that was not possible before the completion of the canon. The Scriptures equip a believer for every good work by being profitable for teaching, reproving, correcting, and training (2 Tim 3:16–17).”

Again, the future time element expressed in the word “then” references the time of the “perfect thing” or the completion of God’s entire revelation which the church gradually possessed and which was “once delivered!” Beloved,

we don't have to wait until the Rapture to know God's full teaching and revelation. We have it today in the Bible!

“Holy Bible, Book divine,
Precious treasure, thou art mine;
Mine to tell me whence I came;
Mine to teach me what I am.”

When was the last time you looked in the mirror? What are you finding out about yourself? What lessons and guidance have you been receiving? The Bible has the answer on how to live and grow.

Contemplate this. The church members in the apostolic era always had to evaluate the prophecies and always had to operate under the knowledge that their information was partial. Who would want this situation today? 1 Corinthians 13:10 reveals a startling fact which is this. Christians, after the Scriptures were completed, have access to more truth than any individual apostle or prophet knew before the Scriptures were finished. We live in a time of great privilege when it comes to revelation. God has finished His revelation in the New Testament Scriptures and we have God's full or complete mind today.

This Bible passage before us (1 Cor. 13:10), among others (Hebrews 2:3-4), is teaching us that there would be no continuing revelation or spectacular gifts after the times of the apostles. This means the gift of tongues would be done away with when it was no longer needed to reveal or confirm new revelation. Ephesians 2:20 once again tells us that the church was “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets” The foundation which the apostles laid for us was the apostolic writings found in the Bible.

Paul Van. Gorder aptly remarks:

“The gift of the apostles was the laying of the foundation. That gift was exercised in the first century of the church. A foundation is laid once, and the foundation was completed and the Scriptures were given to the church, the apostles were removed. No claim of apostleship is valid today, for they have served their purpose. The gift was temporary. The New Testament is silent on any attempt to choose successors for the apostles With the death of the last apostle, the gift ceased.”

Here is the obvious point; the foundation has been laid and the building of the church is now in progress. Once you start building you don't go back to the foundation! Jude says, "once delivered unto the saints" (Jude vs. 3). Once! Now you might say, "I had a dream," but I say, "I've got the Bible." People say today, "But it was real! Jesus was standing at the foot of my bed at 2:30 in the morning." No it was not real! It was either a *deception*, a *diversion*, or a *demon*. The Bible is real. The Bible stands above your dreams and all your experiences. The Bible is the divine plumbline to be dropped beside every experience in order to determine its validity. You might say, "I had a vision last night" but I will tell you, "I read the Bible last night." God's Word is a fixed revelation (Jude 3; Rev. 22:18). The days of ongoing revelation are finished. If you are looking for revelation outside the Bible, you are going to be misled into error and many other mystical or esoteric experiences, which have no Scriptural basis.

God is speaking today ONLY through His Word. What we need today is "the perfect thing." If something is perfect, why would you need something else? When we truly believe that the Bible is sufficient to meet all of our needs in life (2 Pet. 1:4), as it gives us direction and divine promises to claim and follow, then we will no longer need to try and resurrected the "childish things" (the supernatural gifts) which were for the infant days of the church. Grow up! Experience the sufficiency of the Scriptures in and through your life. The Bible is a complete Book and it will complete you (Eph. 4:11-15; 2 Timothy 3:16).

I'm thankful for this mirror today! It's the mirror of God's Word, which shows me what I am, and where I need to improve. When was the last time you looked in the mirror? What are you finding out about yourself? What lessons and guidance have you been receiving? The Bible has the answer on how to live and grow - not dreams, visions, or other experiences that are never promised to Christians today. Our present day era of living is similar to the days of Samuel when God chose to no longer speak through extra-Biblical revelation.

1 Samuel 3:1 reveals:

"And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision."

Margaret Sangster wrote:

“A bit of the Book in the morning, to order my onward way. A bit of the Book in the evening, to hallow the end of the day.”

Remember that the devil is not afraid of a Bible that has dust on it. But when you blow off the dust and start reading and obeying it, you will find completeness and fulfillment in life.

As we finish out this rather large study, I’ve given you a chart which appears in its entirety on the next page. The chart is then followed by some summary and concluding statements.

The chart may help you visibly see the cessation and disappearance of the nine sign gifts. As the first century ended, so did the miraculous sign gifts. The Scriptures and absence of the gifts in the later epistles bear this out.

First Corinthians 12:8-10	First Corinthians 12:28-30	Romans 12:3-8	Ephesians 4: 7-11	Second Peter 2:1	Rev. 22:18-19
(A.D. 59)	(A.D. 59)	(A.D. 60)	(A.D. 64)	(A.D. 66)	(A.D. 96)
Wisdom	Apostles	Prophecy	Apostles (foundational)	False Teachers	No more adding to the final prophetic revelation
Knowledge	Prophets	Teachers	Prophets (foundational)	“But there <i>were</i> false prophets also among the people, even as <i>there shall be</i> false teachers among you ...”	The New Testament is a fixed revelation
Faith	Teachers	Ministry	Evangelists (permanent)	...”	(Revelation 22:18-19)
Healings	Miracles	Exhortation	Pastor-Teachers (permanent)	Note: The absence of any temporary gifts (prophets) in this later epistle	The apostles have died along with their foundational ministry (Eph. 2:20)
Miracles	Healings	Giving	Apostles and prophets were foundational to the church (Eph. 2:20)		
Prophecy	Helps	Ruling	Evangelists and pastor-teachers would continue to	The apostolic miraculous gifts and their revelation	The canon is officially closed
Discerning of spirits	Governments	Mercy			
Tongues	Note: Some permanent gifts are added in this column.	Note: No wisdom, knowledge, faith, healings, miracles, discerning of Spirits,			
Interpretation of tongues	1 Cor. 13:10 concludes: “But when that which is perfect				
Note: All the nine early sign gifts and					

<p>temporary gifts are mentioned during the early stages of church life</p> <p>1 Thess. 5:20 “Despise not prophesyings.”</p> <p>(A.D. 54)</p> <p>The prophetic gift was in full bloom during the infant days of the church life.</p>	<p>is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.”</p> <p>When the perfect revelation is complete (the canonized Scripture) then the imperfect piecemeal revelation (<i>prophecy and knowledge</i>) – along with the other temporary gifts – (“childish things” – vs. 11) will pass away and no longer be needed. A total of 9 temporary gifts would cease.</p>	<p>tongues, Interpret. of tongues are found in this column.</p> <p>Not mentioning these gifts would indicate their lesser use among the saints as the church progressed and the Scriptures began to be circulated and used.</p>	<p>be used in the church ministry.</p> <p>Note Once Again: No wisdom, knowledge, faith, healings, miracles, discerning of Spirits, tongues, Interpret. of tongues are found in this column.</p>	<p>“was confirmed” (Heb.2:3) when the <i>first</i> and only generation of apostles were living among the people.</p> <p>Hebrews was written in A.D. 66 or 67</p> <p>By this time the second generation sees the temporary gifts/apostles already disappearing</p>	<p>“Once delivered unto the saints”</p> <p>(Jude 3)</p> <p>Bible officially brought into a canon during the first and second centuries.</p> <p>“a more sure word of prophecy” (2 Pet. 1:19)</p> <p>By Pastor K. Sensenig</p>
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Added Notes and Summaries

a. Baptism of the Spirit

Every Christian at the moment of salvation receives the baptism of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13) and there is no mention of speaking in tongues as a sign of this baptizing work. There is no post-conversion experience related to the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is NOT an experience but a theological saving transaction that places a believer in the body of Christ. We read that “all” the Corinthians had been baptized by the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13) but not “all” of them spoke in tongues (1 Cor. 12:30). How could tongues be the sign of the baptism of the Spirit? This question is unanswerable by those of the charismatic persuasion. Therefore, it would be unscriptural to conclude that God intended the baptism of the Holy Spirit to always include the speaking in tongues.

To be baptized by the Spirit means that we *belong to Christ’s Body* – the Church (1 Cor. 12:13); however, to be filled with the Spirit means that *our bodies* belong to Christ (Eph. 5:18). *There is one baptism but many fillings.* Scripture mentions no specific signs for those who have been baptized by

the Holy Spirit but does mention various signs associated with the filling of the Spirit (Eph. 5:18-25).

We must base our theology on unchanging truth; not transitional experiences that occur in the Book of Acts. This is because the epistles clearly reveal that every Christian does possess the Holy Spirit's presence and baptizing saving work at the very moment of his conversion (Rom. 8:9; Gal. 3:27; 4:6; 1 Cor. 6:19; 12:13). Nor do we "wait" for the Holy Spirit as the original disciples did (Acts 1:4) or experience the miraculous signs that accompanied the initial arrival of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:2-4). These were miraculous signs to authenticate Peter's message and demonstrate what had occurred for the very first time in history (Acts 2:33).

The signs (Acts 2:2-4) which included speaking in tongues were NEVER revealed to be LASTING signs that would be included or present in the saving/baptizing ministry of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13). These signs in relationship to the baptism of the Holy Spirit (entrance into the body of Christ) are conspicuously absent in the doctrinal section of the epistles. Therefore, to conclude that every Christian must experience these same miraculous signs, in connection with the baptism of the Holy Spirit, becomes a gross misunderstanding of what was occurring on the Day of Pentecost.

The Pentecostal signs of the Spirit's ministry such as speaking in tongues, along with the other early apostolic sign gifts (1 Cor. 12:8-10), were primarily practiced by the apostles ("by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought" – Acts 5:12 and "wonders and signs were done by the apostles" – Acts 2:43). These miraculous signs were also practiced by their secondary associates (Acts 6:8; 8:5-7; Acts 14:1-3) during the infant days of the Church. The signs were intended to teach that God was starting a new program (the Church).

b. Tongues

As far as tongues is concerned, this supernatural phenomenon was the linguistic ability to speak in different kinds of literal human languages in order to confirm new revelation and apostolic authority to the Jewish people (Mark 16:20; 2 Cor. 12:12). In other words, the tongue speaking and other supernatural sign gifts (healings, miracles, interpretation of tongues) were used as a token to prove to Israel that a messenger and his message was

genuine and could be trusted (Heb. 2:3-4). *Tongues had a specific purpose for a specific time period.*

Tongues were actual foreign languages which the Christians had not previously known. Tongues were languages that were spoken by first century Christians which functioned as a credential sign for the unbelieving Jews who always required a sign (1 Cor. 1:22). They were God's sign nation. For the Jewish people, tongues became a sign or token of God's approval upon a certain man, new revelation of truth being presented, and some new event that was occurring. In the three Biblical accounts in the book of Acts (Acts 2, 10, 19) and 1 Corinthians 12-14 where tongues are used *there were always Jews present* (Acts 2:22 - 36 – "Ye men of Israel" and Acts 10:45-46 – "they of the circumcision" and Acts 19:1-6 – Jewish disciples of John the Baptizer and Acts 18:1-11 – "whose house joined hard to the synagogue"). This is very important to understand. Jews were always present when tongues or different languages were spoken.

When the gift of tongues (languages) was used there was always a new man speaking (Peter or Paul or some other person who had the early gift), and a new message being taught by these men that was in some way connected with the new dispensational work of the Spirit's ministry and the formation of the church. There was also a new movement or event that had occurred such as Pentecost and the formation of the church (Acts 2), the breaking down of Gentile distinction and their acceptance into the body of Christ (Acts 10), the Jewish disciples of John the Baptizer being baptized in Jesus' name (Acts 19) and the teaching about the New Testament sacred secrets about the church, Gentiles and the indwelling Christ that God wanted the Jews to know about (1 Cor. 13:2).

From the tongues mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12-14 we gather that Jews were also present since the Corinthian church was right next to the local synagogue (Acts 18:1-11). The church at Corinth evidently had a unique and widespread witness to the Jews. Perhaps no other church in Bible times was so closely watched, observed, and attended by Jews like the Corinthian church. The unbelieving Jews had their eyes and ears on this church, which was next door to the synagogue. In this setting the Bible once again specifically says that tongues were given as a sign to the unbelieving Jews (1 Cor. 14:22). The Jews in the past heard the unfamiliar dialect of the Assyrians and they knew that God was judging them for not listening to His servant Isaiah. The foreign tongue being spoken during the

Assyrian invasion symbolized God's judgment upon them. The presence of this "tongue" was evidence of God's judgment on the nation. As they (the Jews) heard this foreign tongue, they knew God had judged them or that God had spoken (in judgment) "to this people."

The situation was similar to the Corinthian days. If the Jews would reject the Gospel message of the prophets, concerning whom the Messiah was and what He did for them, then they too would experience God's judgment. The tongue speaking that is going on in Corinth, next to the synagogue, would serve as a sign of coming judgment upon them. In Isaiah's day the people knew they were being judged when they heard the Assyrian invaders speaking among them. And during the days of the early church, the Jews would also hear the tongue speaking by the apostles and in Corinth, so it could serve as sign of coming judgment upon the nation, if they refuse to accept the Gospel message. History tells us that in A.D. 70 Titus the Roman general came down and ransacked the city and killed over one million Jews. The foreign languages or tongues that the Corinthians were speaking were but a foretaste of what they would hear when the Romans come down and destroy them. So the Jews in Corinth needed to stand up and take notice.

In summary, tongues were always a sign to the Jewish nation to confirm a new man, new message and new event that was taking place (1 Cor. 1:22; John 2:18; 6:30; Mark 16:20). This was true in the book of Acts when tongues were used (Acts 2, 10, 19) and in Corinth as the prophets spoke about the New Testament mystery program of God (1 Cor. 13:2) and were revealing new truth about the Church and God's New Testament workings. But in this setting tongues also served as a sign of coming judgment to the Jewish nation (1 Cor. 14:22). Since Israel was already judged historically and God has temporarily set aside national Israel (Rom. 11:15; Matt. 21:43; Luke 13:35) the purpose of tongues is no longer needed as a sign of coming judgment upon the Jewish nation.

Once God's judgment had fallen upon Israel the gift of tongues would have no significance at all. Therefore, the gift would cease in and of itself during the first century when the Jewish nation was scattered in A. D. 70 (1 Cor. 13:8 – where the word "cease" means to stop or come to an end). The Greek verb form (middle voice) indicates a self-causing action which means that the gift will stop by itself (self-cessation). The activity of tongues would automatically end by itself because it has a built-in stopping place.

In other words, the purpose of speaking in different languages would come to an end with Israel's judgment and the temporary setting aside of national Israel. *Tongues had a specific purpose for a specific time period.* It's also true that tongues would cease when the Scriptures would be completed, canonized, and no further confirmation of them would be needed (1 Cor. 13:10). In addition, speaking in tongues, which was primarily granted to the apostles to authenticate their messages (Mark 16:17, 20), and to a few other believers living during the transition period to confirm new truth to Jewish brethren (Acts 10:44-46; 19:6), would no longer be needed.

Tongues were viewed as having a purpose which was already fulfilled. The second generation of Christians were looking back to this short period of time, which served its purpose and had faded off the scene, even during the first century when they were living ("was conformed unto us by them" - Heb. 2:3-4). The purpose of tongues would run its course with the completion of Scripture (Jude 3) and the judgment of Israel (1 Cor. 14:22). For all these reasons tongues would cease or stop. Their design and purpose would no longer be needed. God has chosen to use tongues for a specific purpose and time and then end the use of this miraculous gift.

Concerning the use of tongues (speaking in foreign languages), we know that the house of Cornelius spoke in tongues (Acts 10:44-48), the disciples of John the Baptist (Acts 19:1-7) and certain members within the church at Corinth (I Corinthians 12-14). Besides the original apostles (Acts 2:1-4) and later the apostle Paul (I Corinthians 14:18), we find no other people using this miraculous sign gift. The Scripture never once teaches that there would be some kind of generic practice of speaking in tongues by all the Christians following the days of the apostles and early New Testament revelation. In fact, we do not read of any first century churches speaking in tongues other than the Church of Corinth.

c. Introductory Signs

God has always given *temporary signs* when He started new Dispensations such as the Law (Exodus 3:1-8; 7; Acts 7:36), the Church age (signs in the book of Acts), and the future Kingdom age (Joel 2:28-29). The same was true regarding the Dispensation of the Church and the new baptizing work of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5; 2:33). The miracles would serve as signs to the Jewish nation that God was changing His program and ways.

The Church was a new program that dealt with the promised Spirit's arrival to form the new body of believers welded together by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13) and therefore this teaching might be accompanied with the sign of speaking in tongues (Acts 2:33 – “which ye now see and hear”). All of the miraculous signs during the early days of the infant Church would confirm the messengers who were bringing forth new teaching or revelation regarding Church truth (2 Cor. 12:12 – “the signs of an apostle”) prior to the completion of the canon of Scripture (1 Cor. 13:10 – “when that which is perfect is come”).

Following the completion of “the faith” (Jude 3) or the body of revealed truth that all Christians believe, there would be no more need for sign gifts, revelatory dreams, and visions, which all had to do with revealing new truth prior to the finalization of the canon of Scripture. When the Scriptures would be completed and “once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3) truth would be clearly seen and known without all of the revelatory and confirming signs gifts (“then shall I know even as also I am known” – 1 Cor. 13:10).

It is important to reiterate that the miraculous signs were introductory to the new Church Dispensation (Acts 2:33; 1 Cor. 13:8-10) as in other dispensations that were and will be inaugurated (Exodus 3:1-8; Joel 2:28-29). The miraculous signs were primarily performed by the apostles (Acts 2:43; 5:12), which were foundational to the early days of the Church (Eph. 2:20), and these signs were temporary in nature (1 Cor. 13:10; Heb. 2:3; 2 Pet. 2:1). They were designed to confirm the message and messengers of the new dispensation as being genuine.

Mark 16:17

“And these signs shall follow them (not be performed by them) that believe (new converts); In my name shall they (apostles) cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues.”

Mark 16:20

“And they (the apostles) went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them (the apostles), and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.”

Zodhiates once again states:

“These signs, then, are apostolic and not intended for any other believers except those who were converted as a direct result of the personal preaching of the apostles.”

Later, he writes:

“Through the record of the Word, the evidence once given always accompanies believers as a matter of record.”

In other words, the apostolic miraculous signs attended those who believed as a direct result of the preaching of the apostles themselves. It was the people who heard them that witnessed these miraculous signs. The miraculous signs came at the beginning of the Church Age and were signs to confirm the apostles, the Gospel, and their new messages regarding the Gentiles and Church. You will note that none of these signs are mentioned as being necessary and lasting for the perfecting and edifying of the saints in the later church period as the apostles and prophets would be replaced by pastors and teachers (Eph. 4:11-12).

The expression “signs and wonders” is a commonly occurring phrase in regard to the infant days of the church (Acts 2:43; 4:30; 5:12; 6:8; 8:6, 13; 14:3; 15:12; 2 Cor. 12:12). The miracles were called “signs” (Heb. 2:4) because they were miraculous gifts that served as special outward markers or tokens to verify that these men were true apostles and that the word which they spoke was true (Mark 16:20 – “confirming the word with signs” and “God also bearing them witness” – Heb. 2:4). The apostles have *already been confirmed* in the past when the Church initially began and was receiving new revelation from God in order to establish the New Testament Scriptures.

d. The Book of Acts

The Book of Acts must be viewed as a BRIDGE or time of TRANSITION from Old Testament ground (Jewish Law) to New Testament ground (the new working of God – the Church Dispensation). On the bridge, or during the transition zone, many things would occur like dreams, visions, trances, angelic visitors, speaking in different languages, early apostolic sign gifts of dramatic healings, waiting to receive the Holy Spirit, and laying hands on people to receive the Holy Spirit. These events could ONLY occur on the bridge, or during the time of transition, when the Holy Spirit was initially

arriving to form the Church and validate the new men and messages (Mark, 16:20; 2 Cor. 12:12; Acts 2:32-33) that were being given out regarding the Gospel, Messiah, reaching out to Gentiles, advent of the Holy Spirit and the formation of the Church.

Once the Church would get on the other side of the bridge, she would be living on solid New Testament ground. This means there would be no more need for the transitional experiences found in the Book of Acts but only those teachings mentioned in the later epistles. The purpose of these various means of miraculous communication during the Book of Acts was to confirm new truth prior to the formation of the canon of Scripture. However, today they are no longer necessary since we have God's truth in the completed New Testament revelation (1 Cor. 13:8-12; Heb. 2:3-4; Jude 3, Rev. 22:18-19).

e. Apostles

Today there can be no apostles since they were to be an eyewitness of the resurrection of Christ (Acts 1:22; 1 Cor. 15:8), since they healed everyone of every disease one hundred percent of the time (Acts 5:15-16), and since they raised the dead (Acts 9:40; Acts 20:9-11). Furthermore, they were only designed for the foundation of the Church (Eph. 2:20), since they preached truth, prior to its canonization, and paved the way for the Scriptures to be finalized. Today, no confirmation of truth is necessary by apostles, since the Scriptures are completed (Rev. 22:18; Jude 3) and since God is no longer confirming truth to the Jews through miraculous signs (1 Cor. 14:22; Rom. 11:15). God has already judged Israel and temporarily set her aside until a future time.

In addition, the supernatural gifts of receiving revelatory truth through gifts of knowledge and wisdom, along with apostolic trances and visions, are no longer necessary, since the Bible is now completed and canonized (1 Cor. 13:10). All the historic purposes of the supernatural and sign gifts have run their course and for this reason they have "ceased" (1 Cor. 13:8-10). This is the unmistakable teaching of Scripture.

Conclusion

Beloved, this ends a rather long and important study on the subject of tongues. My prayer is that you will look at the Scriptural facts, purposes, and evidence regarding this practice and then make a Biblically informed decision. Has God restarted the early sign gifts after 1,900 years of silence in church history? If so, what is the basis for your answer in the context of Biblical revelation? What Biblical proof (not experiences) can you give to substantiate your answer? Are you more spiritual than Jesus or John the Baptist and many other early New Testament saints who never spoke in tongues? The reformers like Calvin and Luther never claimed to speak in tongues or possess any of the supernatural sign gifts. The Puritan writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have never claimed to have these gifts in all their writings. Millions of godly and spiritual saints of the 18th-20th centuries have never spoken in tongues but they have loved God, lived Spirit-filled and spiritual lives, and were victorious in their Christian living.

Many great Bible teachers of the past taught such things as the Rapture of the Church, Dispensationalism, and a literal hermeneutic of interpreting future Bible prophecies. The Charismatic's have learned from these teachers and to this day follow many of their teachings. But millions of believers have not embraced the "sign gift" theology knowing that it was *temporary* and it had its purpose in the historic past, the *infant* days of the church. They know that trying to reproduce it would be a fallacy and not benefit their spiritual growth in grace (2 Pet. 3:18-19).

Every Christian should be willing to bring his experience and life into conformity with the Word of God. Beloved, do not seek the spectacular but find your fulfillment in Jesus Christ (John 10:10). Christ is enough! The sufficiency of Jesus Christ and your relationship with Him is what will bring lasting satisfaction to your life (Col. 2:10). Dear Christian brother and sister, always remember that God has called us to an intimate relationship with His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:21; 3:10). Anything that distracts from this daily, loving, and abiding relationship (John 15) cannot be from God. There are no artificial replacements for Jesus Christ living within our hearts and experiencing the wonder of His personal presence, power, and promises. We need the Son and not the spectacular.