

# *The Spirit's Ministry - Tongues and Prophecy*

"The faith which is in Christ, by which He has proclaimed the way of righteousness has sprung up in the desert, and the streams of the Holy Spirit in a dry land, to give water to the elect people of God . . ."

Irenaeus (A.D. 120-202)  
Irenaeus Against Heresies  
Book 5, Chapter 33

Jean (John) Calahan

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“Look carefully into the Scriptures, which are the true utterances of the Holy Spirit. Observe that nothing of an unjust or counterfeit character is written in them.”

Clement (A.D. 30-100)  
First Epistle of Clement To  
The Corinthians, Chap. 45

“But ye, being full of the Holy Spirit, do nothing according to the flesh, but all things according to the Spirit.”

Ignatius (A.D. 30-107)  
First Epistle To The  
Ephesians, Chap. 9

“And the Holy Spirit of prophecy taught us this, telling us by Moses that God spoke thus to the man first created . . . ”

Justin Martyr (A.D. 110-165)  
First Apology of Justin  
Martyr, Chap. 44

# Introduction

**D**wight L. Moody, evangelist and preacher (A.D. 1837-1899), was preaching one day and lifted an empty glass. “Tell me,” he said, “How can I get the air out of this glass?” One man answered, “Suck it out with a pump.” Moody replied, “That would create a vacuum and shatter the glass.” After many suggestions, Moody smiled, picked up a pitcher of water, and filled the glass with water. “There,” he said, “all the air is now removed.” Then he went on to explain that victory in the Christian life is not by “sucking out a sin here and there,” but rather by being filled with the Spirit. Some teach that being filled with the Holy Spirit results in a Christian spontaneously speaking in an unknown language. This is referred to as “tongues” among Christians. Others believe the filling of the Holy Spirit will result in miraculous healings and prophecy.

**Confusion Today.** There is a lot of confusion today about the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Some are not sure what the Holy Spirit does or if we should even have anything to do with the Holy Spirit. Some believe that all of the spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit are occurring today and others do not. That means some believe that all the spiritual gifts are active today. A partial list of the spiritual gifts includes teaching, mercy, giving, administration, tongues, healing, and prophecy. Some advocates present scriptures to “prove” their point, and others refer to an experience. It is common for believers to change their viewpoint and then change churches over the issue. Some are not sure what to believe. What is the truth? What does the Bible teach? Why is there confusion?

Indirectly the apostle Peter told us why there is such confusion about this subject when he said the following about the apostle Paul,

... just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are

some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. 2 Peter 3:15-16 (NASB)

Peter said plainly that there are some truths in scripture which are hard to understand. Even the apostle Peter was struggling to understand some of the truths about which Paul wrote. There are Bible study guidelines that need to be followed to help us understand the Bible. The study “How to Study the Bible” provides an introduction. Some people are not interested in studying the Bible to discover the truth. They want someone to tell them. Others only want to check and see if “that is what I have been taught.” A few are unwilling to ask, “Is it possible that maybe, just maybe scripture does not really teach what I believe?”

**Apostles & Doctrinal Error.** The waters of doctrinal error were flowing while the apostles were still alive. Much of the New Testament was written to combat false teaching. There were false teachings about Jesus, the Holy Spirit, salvation by faith, the church, and the prophetic future, to name a few. After the apostles died, the flood gates opened wider. The apostles were no longer present to counter the errors. False teachings about Jesus, the trinity, salvation, the future and the Holy Spirit washed upon the church in successive waves.

Some of the major errors included Montanism (A.D. 170), followed by Sabellianism (A.D. 215), Arianism (A.D. 325) and Macedonianism (A.D. 381). In A.D. 156, Montanus claimed that the charismatic gifts given by the Holy Spirit had been restored. He claimed that he spoke for the Holy Spirit, and that he was a prophet. He declared that the end of the world was near. His teachings did not conform to the Scriptures according to the early church fathers. He was fanatically legalistic and committed to asceticism. He called his followers the spiritual Christians. The early church

bishops and synods eventually declared him to be a false teacher and rejected his teaching, calling him a heretic.

The early church also denounced Sabellianism because it claimed that God was not a trinity. The followers believed God was like an actor who played the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit on different occasions. This view had a large following within the Christian church; yet they were wrong. The unsettling reality is that thousands of people can believe something is true and still be wrong! How many believe something to be true does not make it true. As a result, they believed heresy and taught heresy.

The teaching of Arianism agreed that the Son of God and God the Holy Spirit were persons, but taught that both were created beings. This is contrary to the teaching of the Bible. The followers also believed the Holy Spirit was created by Christ. They were wrong. The flood waters of doctrinal error were flowing!

Every false teaching has had its followers. Every false doctrine must have a group of followers in order for it to be accepted and proliferate. That occurred in Rev. 2:19-23. In that passage, the Holy Spirit tells us that a false teacher, a prophetess, had a following. God warned both the false teacher and those who willingly followed her that judgment was coming unless they stopped. God held both the teacher and the followers responsible.

**Common Hearts.** Some years ago, a pastor told his friend that he was convinced his friend was a Christian even though he did not speak in tongues. The pastor had observed his friend's life, spent time with the man, and knew that he loved Jesus. The friend did not

know that he was being "evaluated." These two men were wonderful friends. Their two families had been together on many occasions, caring for one another's children, and on occasions discussing their different views. While they disagreed about several theological issues, they spent time together, prayed together, ate many meals together, and supported each other. They were friends. This study is presented in that same spirit.

**THE GOAL.** The goal of this study is to explore the teaching of scripture regarding the ministry of the Holy Spirit. We will focus on the spiritual gifts of tongues and prophecy. Our goal is to be objective, to be balanced and to seek truth. This study started with the author's willingness to reevaluate what he believed and ask, "Have I been wrong?" This study is for those who honestly want to explore the teaching of scripture about the ministry of the Holy Spirit: tongues and prophecy. This study is not for those who are looking for someone to agree with them.

There are many viewpoints among non-pentecostal, Pentecostal, charismatic, and non-charismatic denominations regarding this subject. None of the groups fully agree with each other or among themselves, because as the apostle Peter said, "some things are hard to understand." So some will disagree with the conclusions reached in this study because the conclusions do not agree with what they already believe. Others will agree because they already believe the conclusions. Others, those searching for truth, will explore the study and maybe change their views. Whatever your conclusion or your position is in the end, we hope that you will disagree only after you have studied the scriptures yourself and know for yourself why you disagree.

# *Holy Spirit - Before Pentecost*

**W**ho is the Holy Spirit? Scripture clearly states the Holy Spirit is God. One of the best proofs that He is God is found in the book of Acts. In Acts 5:1-4 we are told that a couple in the early church had sold some land they owned, kept part of the money for themselves, had gone to the church leadership, and claimed that they were donating all of the money. Apparently, they wanted to impress the apostle Peter and the church. But it was a lie, and the apostle Peter knew it. So he said,

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

In this passage we want to notice that 1) Peter told Ananias that he had lied to the Holy Spirit, and that 2) he had lied to God. Peter makes it clear that the Holy Spirit is God.

Jesus also taught that the Holy Spirit is God in Matthew 12:31 when He told the Jewish leaders that they had blasphemed against the Holy Spirit.

Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. Matt. 12:31 (NASB)

Blasphemy could only occur against God. The Jews had claimed that the miracles performed by the Holy Spirit through Jesus were the works of Satan. That was blasphemy. Jesus quickly warned them and in the warning tells us that the Holy Spirit is God. Both Jesus and Peter clearly teach that the Holy Spirit is our eternal God.

**He Is A Person.** The Holy Spirit is our loving God. He is a person and not a thing, not a sterile power, nor a force. This fact was revealed in an incident that occurred during the early church when a man by the name of Simon saw the apostles Peter and John bestowing the Holy Spirit on those who believed or “received the Word of God” (Acts 8:14). Simon had been using magic to impress the crowds and desired another “power,” so he asked the following:

... Give this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit. Acts 8:19 (NASB)

He wanted another magic trick and asked for it. So Peter responded,

... May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you. Acts 8:20-22 (NASB)

He did not understand that the Holy Spirit is not a magical power nor a force. The Holy Spirit is not a mystical magic act. He is God - a person.

Even His names imply that He is a person and is God. He is called the Comforter, the Living God, the Spirit of Holiness, and the Spirit of Counsel and Might, to name a few. The Spirit counsels us. He comforts us. He is living and is not just inanimate material. The Spirit of God has emotion, a will and intelligence. He is known as the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, and by many other

## Names of the Holy Spirit

Spirit of God	<a href="#">Matt. 3:16</a>	Spirit of Jesus	<a href="#">Acts 16:7</a>	Spirit of Holiness	<a href="#">Rom. 1:4</a>
Spirit of the Lord	<a href="#">Luke 4:18</a>	Spirit of Jesus Christ	<a href="#">Phil. 1:19</a>	Spirit of Grace	<a href="#">Heb. 10:29</a>
Spirit of Our God	<a href="#">1 Cor. 6:11</a>	Spirit of His Son	<a href="#">Gal. 4:6</a>	Spirit of Adoption	<a href="#">Rom. 8:15</a>
Spirit	<a href="#">Num. 11:25</a>	Spirit of Counsel and Might	<a href="#">Isa. 11:2</a>	Spirit of Faith	<a href="#">2 Cor. 4:13</a>
Spirit of Glory	<a href="#">1 Peter 4:14</a>	Spirit of the Living God	<a href="#">2 Cor. 3:3</a>	Comforter	<a href="#">John 14:26</a>
Spirit of the Lord God	<a href="#">Isa. 61:1</a>	Spirit of Truth	<a href="#">John 14:17</a>		

names. The Spirit is never referred to as “it” but as “He” or “Him” (John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26). Scripture reveals that He has emotions like us since He can be grieved (Eph. 4:30) and experiences joy (1 Thess 1:6). He gives gifts as He desires (1 Cor. 12:11; Heb. 2:4), and He speaks (Acts 10:19). He is a person! He is Holy.

**Ministry Before Jesus.** The Holy Spirit appears in both the Old and New Testaments. He was active in Genesis, during the life of Jesus, during the times of the apostles, after the apostles, and He is active today.

*HOLY SPIRIT & CREATION.* The Holy Spirit appears in the first two verses of the Bible.

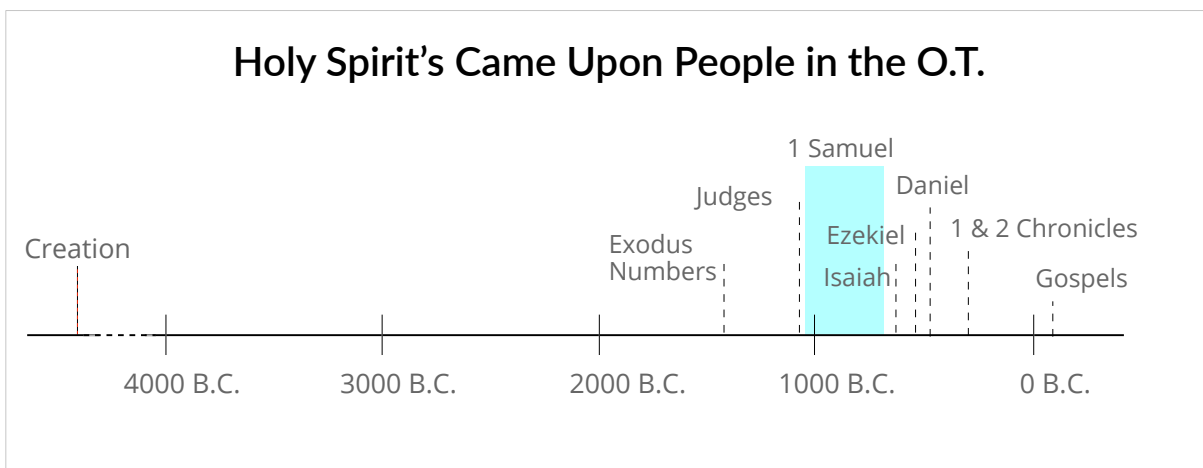
[In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Gen. 1:1-2 \(NASB\)](#)

He was present and active during the creation. Scripture says that Jesus Christ was also involved in the creation (John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2). Both of them were there. After Genesis 1:2, scripture is silent about the Holy Spirit for about 2,500 years. He appears again in Exodus 31:3 when He enables a man, Bezalel, to be a skilled craftsman on the tabernacle. This is the first time in scripture that we are told the Holy Spirit filled anyone. Yet we know that the Holy Spirit has been active since the day of creation, motivating men and women to believe in God. Otherwise, how would they believe (John 16:8-11; 1 Cor. 2:12-14)?

*MOSES’ SEVENTY LEADERS.* Later, Moses complained to God that the burden of caring for the Israelites was too great. So God responded by offering help - seventy men to help him lead the people.

[The LORD therefore said to Moses, “Gather for Me seventy men from the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and their officers and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take](#)

### Holy Spirit’s Came Upon People in the O.T.



their stand there with you. Then I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the Spirit who is upon you, and will put Him upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you shall not bear it all alone.” Num. 11:16-17 (NASB)

God told Moses that He would take a “portion of the Spirit” from Moses and place Him on the seventy men to enable them to help Moses. These men, who believed in God, needed the special empowerment of the Holy Spirit. They were not able to do their task correctly unless the Spirit helped them. It is also clear that the Spirit had been empowering Moses already, even though scripture never records this fact. This suggests that other Old Testament men and women may have been empowered by the Spirit on occasions, but scripture never records those events. It is important to note that we cannot make assumptions when scripture is silent.

So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD. Also, he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people, and stationed them around the tent. Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him; and He took of the Spirit who was upon him and placed Him upon the seventy elders. And it came about that when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do it again. But two men had remained in the camp; the name of one was Eldad and the name of the other Medad. And the Spirit rested upon them . . . and they prophesied in the camp. Num. 11:24-26 (NASB)

This is a remarkable passage because we are told that after God “took some of” the Holy Spirit from Moses and placed Him on these men, they prophesied. The Hebrew word for “prophesied” is NABBA. It means to “act like a prophet.”

## Holy Spirit's Ministry In The Old Testament

Genesis	1:2	Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.
Exodus	31:3	Spirit of God filled a craftsman with wisdom, understanding, & knowledge.
Numbers	11:16-26	Seventy prophesy when the Spirit was put on them.
	24:1-6	Spirit comes on Balaam and he gives a prophet's blessing.
	27:18	Spirit was on Joshua who will replace Moses.
Judges	3:9-10	Spirit of the LORD comes upon Othniel.
	6:34	Spirit of the LORD "clothed" Gideon.
	11:29	Spirit of the LORD caused Jephthah to pass through Gilead and Manasseh.
	13:25	Spirit of the LORD began to stir in Samson.
	14:6	Spirit of the LORD enables Samson to tear apart a lion.
	14:19	Spirit of the LORD helped Samson kill thirty men.
	15:14	Spirit of the LORD came upon Samson so that the ropes dropped off.
1 Samuel	10:6-10	Spirit of the LORD came upon Saul mightily, and he prophesied.
	11:6	Spirit of the LORD came upon Saul mightily.
	16:13-14	Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David and departed from Saul.
	19:20-23	Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied.
Isaiah	59:21	Spirit was upon the prophet Isaiah.
Ezekiel	2:2	Holy Spirit entered Ezekiel.
	3:24	Holy Spirit entered Ezekiel again.
Daniel	5:11	The Chaldeans described the Holy Spirit as a “spirit of the holy gods.”
1 Chronicles	12:18	Spirit of the Lord came upon Amasai and he spoke.
2 Chronicles	20:14	Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel and he spoke.

The Jewish scholar Milgrom says the following about the meaning of this word:

It is not their speech that marked them as prophets but their behaving in recognizable patterns by which true prophets can be distinguished from pretenders. (Milgram, Jacob. Numbers. JPS Torah Commentary. Jewish Publication Society, 1990.)

These men acted like prophets and spoke a word for God. It is important to notice that the seventy men did not continue “prophesying” during their ministry, because scripture simply states, “they did not do it again” (Numbers 11:25). The Holy Spirit was not continually upon these men. The Hebrew is clear, it was a one time event. They had “prophesied” as an indication that God’s blessing was upon them for the ministry He had given them.

*HOLY SPIRIT & AN UNBELIEVER.* The Holy Spirit appears once again in Numbers 24,

When Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he did not go as at other times to seek omens but he set his face toward the wilderness. And Balaam lifted up his eyes and saw Israel camping tribe by tribe; and the Spirit of God came upon him. And he took up his discourse and said, “The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor, And the oracle of the man whose eye is opened; The oracle of him who hears the words of God, Who sees the vision of the Almighty . . . Num. 24:1-4 (NASB)

The literal Hebrew says that as Balaam lifted his eyes to see the Israelites, the Holy Spirit came “upon him,” and then Balaam gave a prophet’s blessing. Yet, the New Testament says that Balaam was a false prophet in 2 Peter 2:15 and Revelation 2:14. This implies that the Spirit briefly came upon or influenced Balaam in order to control the blessing that he gave. The false prophet was not a follower of God. The ministry of the Spirit resulted in prophetic predictions and a blessing upon Israel. Already we can conclude that the Holy Spirit was continually upon some men in the Old

Testament such as Moses; but that was not true for everyone, including Balaam.

*HOLY SPIRIT & JOSHUA.* A few chapters later we discover that God commands Moses to commission Joshua as his replacement.

So the LORD said to Moses, “Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; and have him stand before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and commission him in their sight. Num. 27:18-19 (NASB)

The character of Joshua was extraordinary. The Spirit is described as being “in” him. The Hebrew word translated as “in” can also mean “at” or “with.” Therefore, we do not know the nature of the empowerment of the Spirit in Joshua’s life. It is an error to conclude anything from the English translation. But again we discover that the Spirit is ministering through men in the Old Testament.

*HOLY SPIRIT & JUDGES.* Throughout the book of Judges, we find the Holy Spirit is very active. He came upon Othniel (Judges 3:9-10), Gideon (Judges 6:34), Jephthah (Judges 11:29) and Samson (Judges 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14) to enable each one to do something different and uniquely beyond his capability. Othniel was enabled to lead Israel. Gideon was “clothed” by the Spirit to lead the Abiezrites into battle. This implies a special empowerment. The Holy Spirit guided Jephthah and Samson for a variety of activities. The ministry of the Holy Spirit to each one was different. It is important to note that scripture does not indicate that they prophesied or were filled with the Spirit. Scripture is silent. In the book of Judges, the ministry of the Spirit took the form of giving supernatural abilities to judge, to provide wisdom, to exercise great leadership, and to perform exceptional feats. That was all.

*HOLY SPIRIT & SAUL AND DAVID.* In the book of 1 Samuel, we discover that when the Holy Spirit came on Samuel (1 Sam. 10:6-10; 16:13-14), He also came upon some messengers of Saul (1 Sam. 19:20-23), as well as David (1 Sam. 23:1). The Spirit came upon Saul in 1 Samuel 10:6



when he was made king and departed from him in 1 Sam. 16:14 after he was rejected from being king.

King David begged God in Psalm 51:11 not to take the Holy Spirit from him after he had sinned against God by committing adultery with Bathsheba. King David understood that God could remove the Holy Spirit from him. The Holy Spirit did not come upon Old Testament believers and remain. So David begged God to not remove the Holy Spirit from him. The Holy Spirit came “upon” people, but He did not remain with them in the Old Testament era.

Once again we discover that the Holy Spirit was sometimes upon a person in the Old Testament era for a period of time, and He was upon other individuals only briefly. What is the message? The Holy Spirit was active in the lives of men; as one result, some of these men are highly honored today.

*HOLY SPIRIT & PROPHETS.* The Holy Spirit was also upon the prophets: Isaiah (Isa. 59:21), Ezekiel (Ezek. 2:2; 3:24), and Daniel (Dan. 5:11). In each passage we discover that the Holy Spirit spoke through each prophet.

“As for Me, this is My covenant with them,” says the LORD: “My Spirit which is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth shall not depart from your mouth . . . Isa. 59:21 (NASB)

As He spoke to me the Spirit entered me and set me on my feet; and I heard Him speaking to me. Ezek. 2:2 (NASB)

There is a man in your kingdom in whom is a spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of your father, illumination, insight and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him. And King Nebuchadnezzar, your father, your father the king, appointed him chief of the magicians, conjurers, Chaldeans and diviners. Daniel 5:11 (NASB)

In the book of Daniel, we discover that the Chaldeans described Daniel as having “a spirit of the gods” upon him. This does not appear to be Daniel’s spirit but the Holy Spirit of God empowering and enabling him.

*HOLY SPIRIT & CHRONICLES.* When we come to 1 and 2 Chronicles, we arrive at the last book in the Jewish Bible - the Tanakh - that mentions the Spirit “coming upon” or anointing anyone. The person mentioned in the Jewish scriptures upon whom the Spirit came was Jahaziel.

Then in the midst of the assembly the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah . . . and he said, “Listen, all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: thus says the LORD to you, ‘Do not fear or be dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God’s.’” 2 Chronicles 20:14-15 (NASB)

*SUMMARY.* We have covered several thousand years since the ministry of the Holy Spirit started at the beginning of creation. We have discovered that gaps exist between the recorded events of the Holy Spirit’s special empowerment of people. Countless centuries occurred between the creation and the first recorded empowerment of a craftsman (Ex. 31:3), Moses, and Moses’ seventy men, Balaam, and Joshua. Then approximately 400 years occurred before scripture records that the Holy Spirit empowered Othniel, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson in the book of Judges. About 100 years elapsed before we are told that the Holy Spirit came upon King Saul and King David. The next recorded empowerment by the Spirit is written in Isaiah about 50 to 100 years later. Another 100 years occurs before we are told that Ezekiel and Daniel are empowered. The next recorded empowerment, in Chronicles, is another 100 years later. Then a 400 year gap occurs before the New Testament tells us that the Holy Spirit empowers Zacharius (Luke 1:67), Elizabeth (Luke 1:41), Mary (Luke 1:35), John the Baptist (Luke 1:15), Simeon (Luke 2:25-26), and Jesus. The message here is that the special empowerment of the Holy Spirit occurred only occasionally. It was not an every day event.

Yet, we know that the Holy Spirit was actively helping

## Holy Spirit's Ministry to Jesus Christ

Born by the Holy Spirit	<a href="#">Matt. 1:18; Luke 1:35</a>
Holy Spirit descended on Jesus at His baptism.	<a href="#">Luke 3:22</a>
Led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted	<a href="#">Luke 4:1</a>
Returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit	<a href="#">Luke 4:14</a>
"The Spirit of the Lord is upon ME . . ."	<a href="#">Luke 4:18</a>
He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit.	<a href="#">Luke 10:21</a>
Gave orders to the disciples by the Holy Spirit	<a href="#">Acts 1:2</a>
Ministry performed in the power of the Spirit.	<a href="#">Acts 2:22</a>
Anointed with the Holy Spirit	<a href="#">Acts 10:38</a>
Offered Himself - died - by the Spirit.	<a href="#">Heb. 9:14</a>
Returned to life by the Holy Spirit	<a href="#">1 Pet. 3:18</a>

people believe in God and understand (Neh. 9:20; Prov 1:23). Romans 1:17 and Romans 4:1-4 tell us that Abraham believed in God and as a result obtained eternal life. John 16:8-11 and 1 Corinthians 2:11-14 remind us that even the Old Testament saints needed the Holy Spirit to convict them of sin, help them understand divine truth, and believe in God.

2 Peter 1:21 tells us that the prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit to write scripture. Yet, we are not told in each book of the Old Testament that the Holy Spirit was an author in addition to the human author. It becomes clear that the Holy Spirit has always been active. The following passage is one reminder that all sixty-six books of the Old Testament scriptures were written by the Holy Spirit.

*As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through*

*those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look. 1 Peter 1:10-12 (NASB)*

The Holy Spirit was active in the life of each author of the Old Testament scriptures, since every part of scripture is inspired by God (2 Tim. 3:16).

In summary, the Holy Spirit was active throughout the Old Testament, giving people faith in order to believe in God. The Holy Spirit also wrote the Old Testament through the prophets over a period of 1,100 years. But it is the special empowerment of the Holy Spirit that is recorded in the Old Testament scriptures. It was not an every day event.

Before we move on, it is important to remember that the Holy Spirit empowered those who followed God, such as Moses, and those who did not follow God, such as Balaam the false prophet. We discovered that the Holy Spirit ministers in a variety of ways: guiding, empowering, and giving wisdom. Prophesying was mentioned only once. Not everyone the Spirit came upon prophesied.

**Ministry To Jesus.** When we come to the New Testament, we find that the Holy Spirit was very active during Jesus' ministry helping Him perform miracles and cast out demons. In fact, Jesus' entire ministry was

empowered by the Spirit starting with His birth. We are told in Luke 4:1 that the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. When Satan had finished, He led Jesus back to Galilee. Then Jesus went to a synagogue in Nazareth where He read from Isaiah 61:1-2 which said that the Holy Spirit would be upon Jesus. When He had finished reading the passage, Jesus declared that the prophecy had been fulfilled. The Holy Spirit empowered Jesus throughout His ministry. Jesus died and returned to life by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is amazing to discover that Jesus also had joy by the Holy Spirit (Luke 10:21). The Holy Spirit empowered Jesus because Jesus lived His life and died as a human being even though He was God and did not sin.

**Summary.** This is an exciting truth because it reveals that Jesus took on human flesh and became a human, He lived His life as you and I would, except that He was God and did not sin. He could not sin. While He lived on this earth, He depended on the power of the Holy Spirit to do the ministry. This is a glimpse of how a Christian can live his/her life now. Every Christian should live in total dependence on the Holy Spirit. We will see later in the study that the result will be empowerment by the Holy Spirit for daily living. Jesus is our example of how to walk in the Holy Spirit (or to be filled with the Spirit).

# Holy Spirit - After Pentecost

**H**oly Spirit Arrives. We have already discovered that the Holy Spirit was active on this earth from the creation to the time of Jesus' ministry. Yet in John 14:26, Jesus told His disciples that the Holy Spirit, the Helper, would not come until after He returned to heaven.

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. John 14:26 (NASB)

Jesus reminded them the Holy Spirit would come on at least three other occasions in John 15:26 and 16:7 and in Luke 24:49.

When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me, John 15:26 (NASB)

But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. John 16:7 (NASB)

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

Jesus told the disciples that both He and the Father would

send the Helper, the Holy Spirit, but only after He returned to heaven. The book of Ephesians helps us understand that when Jesus spoke of the "promise of My Father," He was referring to the Holy Spirit.

... In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation - having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance ... Ephesians 1:13-14 (NASB)



Acts 2:33; Galatians 3:14; and Ephesians 1:13 also refer to the Holy Spirit - "the promise." In fact, Ephesians calls Him the Holy Spirit of Promise. The Holy Spirit was the Promised One!

Jesus and the Father had made a promise of something that would occur in the future. This great promise is recorded in Jeremiah 31:31-34 (Heb. 8:7-13). The promise

is also predicted in Joel 2:28-32, and Peter reminds his audience of the promise on the day of Pentecost (Acts. 2:33) after he was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues (Acts 2:1-13).

But what did Jesus mean that the Holy Spirit would be coming, if in fact, He had already been here since the creation? We discovered in our overview of the Holy Spirit's activity in the Old Testament that the Holy Spirit did not live within a man or woman continuously after they believed in God. We discovered that the Holy Spirit left King Saul, and King David begged that the Holy Spirit would not leave.

Before Pentecost, the Holy Spirit never remained within a

believer, a saint, until he physically died.

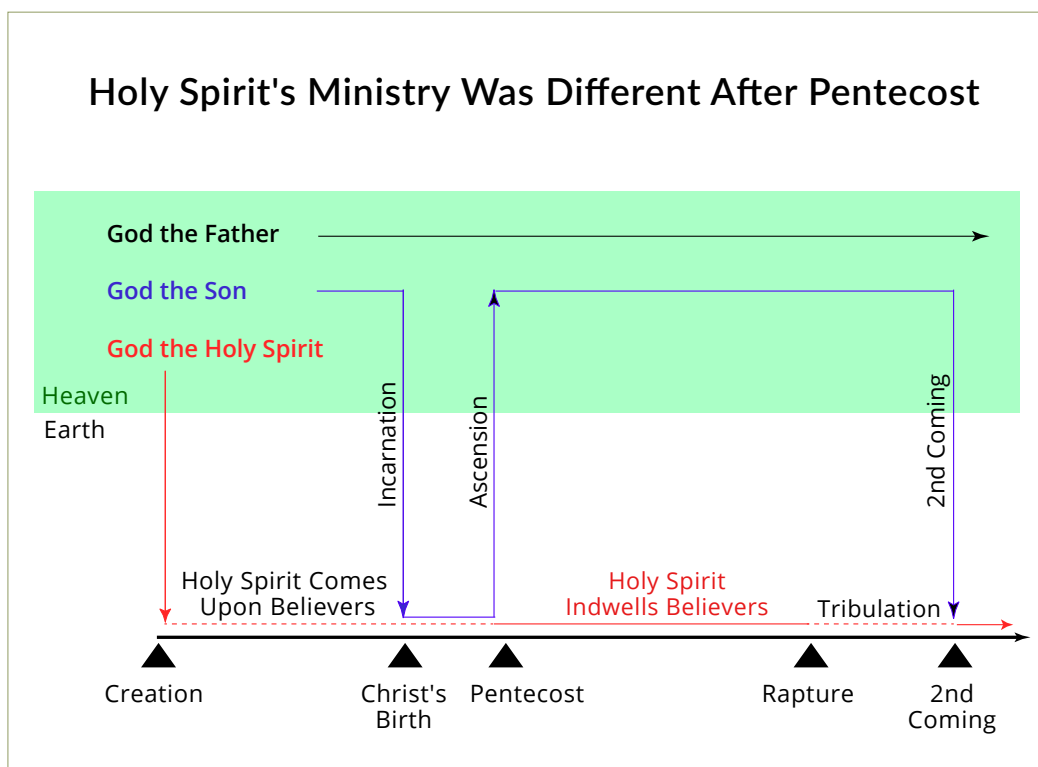
But after Pentecost the Holy Spirit would enter a believer at the point of salvation and remain. During a Passover Feast in Jerusalem, Jesus explained that the Holy Spirit would only enter those who believed in Him. Then Jesus added that the Spirit had not yet come.

Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, "From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke of the

unique and unusual way. He came and started living inside those who believe in Jesus Christ. At this time the apostles experienced the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Pentecost.** After Jesus ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9-11), the promised Holy Spirit arrived,

And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent, rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And



Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. John 7:37-39 (NASB)

they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. Acts 2:1-4 (NASB)

So what did Jesus mean that the Holy Spirit had not yet come if He had already been here since the creation?

Jesus was telling His audience that the Holy Spirit would live permanently in a person. That is why "rivers of living water" would flow from their insides. They would never thirst again! At Pentecost the Holy Spirit came in a

The Holy Spirit came like a wind and they were "filled with the Holy Spirit" and they "began to speak with other tongues "as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance." The Greek words used for "other tongues" are HETERAIS GLOSSAIS. The actual English meaning is "different languages;" that is, they spoke in different tongues. The

meaning of HETERAIS is “other of a different kind.” We should note that another Greek word, “ALLOS,” means “other of the same kind.” The word GLOSSAIS can refer to the physical “tongue,” but it usually refers to “language or speech.” Therefore, the phrase “other tongues” literally means “different languages” or “foreign languages.” The reaction of the crowd in Acts 2:6 indicates that the apostles were speaking multiple foreign languages all at the same time when a multitude of folks from Parthia, Media, Elam, and Mesopotamia heard the message in their own language.

[And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were bewildered, because they were each one hearing them speak in his own language, Acts 2:6 \(NASB\)](#)

What is really amazing is that all of the apostles were talking. It is described as “sound,” yet they each heard the message in his/her own language. It is an error to emphasize “sound”

and dismiss “hearing them speak in his own language.” The point is that they understood the apostles.

Then Peter preached a sermon (Acts 2:14-36) During his sermon, he told the crowd that the promise of the Father had arrived.

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

Peter added that the presence of the Holy Spirit was obvious by the fact the apostles were speaking in tongues. Five verses later he promised that anyone who had believed could receive the Holy Spirit by repenting and being baptized (Acts 2:38).

[Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38 \(NASB\)](#)

Please note that some teach that this verse implies one must have water baptism in order to be saved. But we will discover later in the section titled, “Paul Lays Hands - Acts 10:44”

that water baptism does not save anyone. Acts 2:37 reveals that those to whom Peter made this promise had believed already. “The article, “[Baptism and Salvation](#)” will provide further information.

**Spirit’s New Ministry.** The Holy Spirit had finally arrived and His ministry to those who believed in God



**Coming Of The Holy Spirit**

began a new era. He started living inside of believers until they physically died. This starts when the Holy Spirit places us into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). Scripture calls it the baptism of the Spirit,

[For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. 1 Cor. 12:13 \(NASB\)](#)

2 Corinthians 1:22 indicates that the Spirit lives within



Christians as the proof that each believer will spend eternity with Him.

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

Ephesians 1:13 indicates that the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives also indicates that God owns us and has secured us for eternity.

. . . listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation - having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise . . . Eph. 1:13 (NASB)

Ephesians 4:30 repeats the thought that the Holy Spirit will live inside us until we go to heaven. This did not happen before Pentecost.

Now the Holy Spirit teaches us (1 Corinthians 2:11-14), helps us to pray (Romans 8:23), and convicts us of sin (John 16:8). The Holy Spirit also empowers us to live the Christian life, to follow Him, and serve others.

. . . to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man . . . Eph. 3:16 (NASB)

How does the Spirit do this? This is the focus of the rest of this study.

**Acts - "Being Filled."** The empowerment ministry of the Holy Spirit is described in several ways in the book of Acts by four key words "filled," "receive," "baptized," and "fell upon." We will start with the concept of the Holy Spirit "filling" a follower of Jesus Christ.

*APOSTLES WERE FILLED - ACTS 2:4.* The first time the Holy Spirit filled anyone in the New Testament occurred in Acts 2:4 and the apostles spoke in tongues.

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. Acts 2:4 (NASB)

The Greek word for "filled" is the aorist form of *PIMPLEMI* which means "to cause something to be completely full." This means that the Holy Spirit completely filled them. It is important to notice the Holy Spirit was in absolute control of the words they spoke. The Holy Spirit took complete control of them and spoke through them. This filling of the Spirit resulted in the ministry of the Word of God to the crowd, just as it apparently occurred with Moses' seventy leaders. Tongues were used to communicate the message to those speaking various languages.

*PETER PREACHES A SERMON - ACTS 4:8.* The next time the Holy Spirit filled someone occurred in Acts 4:8 when the apostle Peter preached a sermon (Acts 4:8-12). On the previous day before preaching a sermon, Peter had healed a man who could not walk. The Jewish religious leaders did not like the ministry of Peter and John, and consequently had them brought to the Sanhedrin Council (Acts 4:15). Peter responded by preaching a message under the influence of the Holy Spirit. He was filled with the Holy Spirit.

The Bible does not state whether Peter spoke in tongues or not, but it is clear that the Holy Spirit supernaturally enabled him to preach. After a brief discussion by the members of the Sanhedrin Council, Peter and John were ordered not to speak about Jesus; but they refused to obey. Consequently, they were threatened and released. In response, the early Christians prayed for boldness to continue speaking the Word of God.

And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness. Acts 4:3 (NASB)

Once again the filling of the Holy Spirit resulted in Christians speaking the Word of God, this time with boldness.

*STEPHEN, THE MARTYR - ACTS 7:55.* Stephen was the first martyr recorded in the New Testament. His martyrdom started when some men of the Synagogue of the Freedmen, including both Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and some from

Cilicia and Asia, started arguing with Stephen (Acts 6:9). We are told that Stephen was speaking under the influence of the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:10), and the men could not win the discussion. As a result, they plotted his murder and succeeded (Acts 6:11-7:1). When Stephen was asked by the High Priest if the slanderous reports were true, Stephen preached a sermon while filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:55).

#### **But being full of the Holy Spirit . . . Acts 7:55 (NASB)**

Once again we see that the filling of the Spirit resulted in individuals speaking the Word of God and speaking it with boldness.

*PAUL'S CONVERSION - ACTS 9:17.* The third time the book of Acts records that the Holy Spirit filled someone is in Acts 9:17 when,

**. . . Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized . . ." Acts 9:17-18 (NASB)**

Notice that even though Paul had already believed in Jesus Christ, he had not been filled with the Holy Spirit. Acts 26:18 indicates that Paul already knew that the forgiveness of sins was by faith and only faith - Jesus had told him already. Yet, Paul was not filled with the Holy Spirit until Ananias arrived. The filling of the Holy Spirit occurred after he was saved, that is, forgiven his sins. This is called salvation.

*PAUL & BAR-JESUS - ACTS 13:9.* Several chapters later we are told that the apostle Paul had to confront a man called Bar-Jesus. Bar-Jesus was a magician and false prophet who was trying to prevent Paul from telling a politician, Sergius Paulus, the good news about Jesus Christ. News in those days was most often communicated orally and not by the New York Times. Sergius Paulus was a Roman

proconsul - an important Roman official. Consequently, Paul confronted Bar-Jesus. Here is the account,

**But Saul, who was also known as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fixed his gaze on him, and said, "You who are full of all deceit and fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to make crooked the straight ways of the Lord? . . ." Acts 13:9-10 (NASB)**

When Paul spoke, he was filled with the Holy Spirit. Each time that Paul has spoken by the Spirit, tongues are never mentioned. Yet Paul did speak in tongues, according to 1 Corinthians 14:18. This is a reminder that scripture does not reveal everything that occurred in one place.

*PAUL'S & BARNABAS' LIVES - ACTS 13:52.* The last time that the filling of the Holy Spirit is mentioned in the book of Acts occurs in chapter thirteen. It occurs after a confrontation between Paul and Barnabas and some Jewish leaders. After Paul and Barnabas left the city of Antioch, we are told that Paul and Barnabas were filled with the Holy Spirit.

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

What does it mean that they were continually filled with the Holy Spirit? The Greek word for "continually filled" is the imperfect tense of *PLEROO*. This implies an ongoing condition. They were constantly joyful and the Holy Spirit was constantly empowering them.

*SUMMARY.* So far we have discovered that the filling of the Holy Spirit resulted in the apostles speaking in tongues on one occasion and preaching of the good news about Jesus on multiple occasions by the apostles Peter and Paul and the martyr Stephen. When these men were filled, the Holy Spirit empowered them with words and boldness. The empowerment to speak in tongues is never mentioned in the Old Testament, but empowerment for the ministry of the Word of God occurred with the seventy elders of Moses.

**Acts - Other Empowerments.** We have skipped



some other events in the book of Acts in order to discover what scripture was referring to when it said that a person was filled with the Holy Spirit. Now we need to explore what scripture means by “receiving the Holy Spirit,” “falling upon,” and “speaking in tongues.”

*APOSTLES SPOKE IN TONGUES - ACTS 2:4.* We have already discovered that the apostles spoke in tongues when they were filled with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:4.

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. Acts 2:4 (NASB)

This is the only time the New Testament records that the filling of the Holy Spirit included the speaking in tongues. On every other occasion, the New Testament refers to the filling of the Spirit and tongues separately.

*PETER LAYS HANDS - ACTS 8:18.* Our first stop occurs in Acts 8:18 where we discover that Peter and John had been sent to the believers in Samaria (Acts 8:14) so that they might receive the Holy Spirit. That is, the Samaritan believers had believed in Jesus Christ already (Acts 8:14), had been baptized in water already (Acts 8:16), but they had not yet received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:17). When Peter and John arrived, they laid hands on these believers.

Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, saying, "Give this authority to me as well . . . Acts 8:17-19 (NASB)

A curious magician, Simon, saw this event and wanting another magic trick asked to purchase the “trick.” It is obvious from the passage that something visible happened when the apostles laid hands on the new Christians; otherwise, Simon would not have noticed anything. He would not have offered money for “the trick.” Did the new believers speak in tongues when they received the Holy Spirit or did they prophesy as Moses’ seventy leaders did? The answer to the

question is unknown.

*PETER LAYS HANDS - ACTS 10:44.* In Acts 10:44 we are told that Peter went to Caesarea and shared the good news about Jesus to Cornelius, a God-fearing man, and his family, who were Gentiles. He told them that “everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.” While presenting this good news, Peter was surprised when the Holy Spirit was “poured out” upon them.

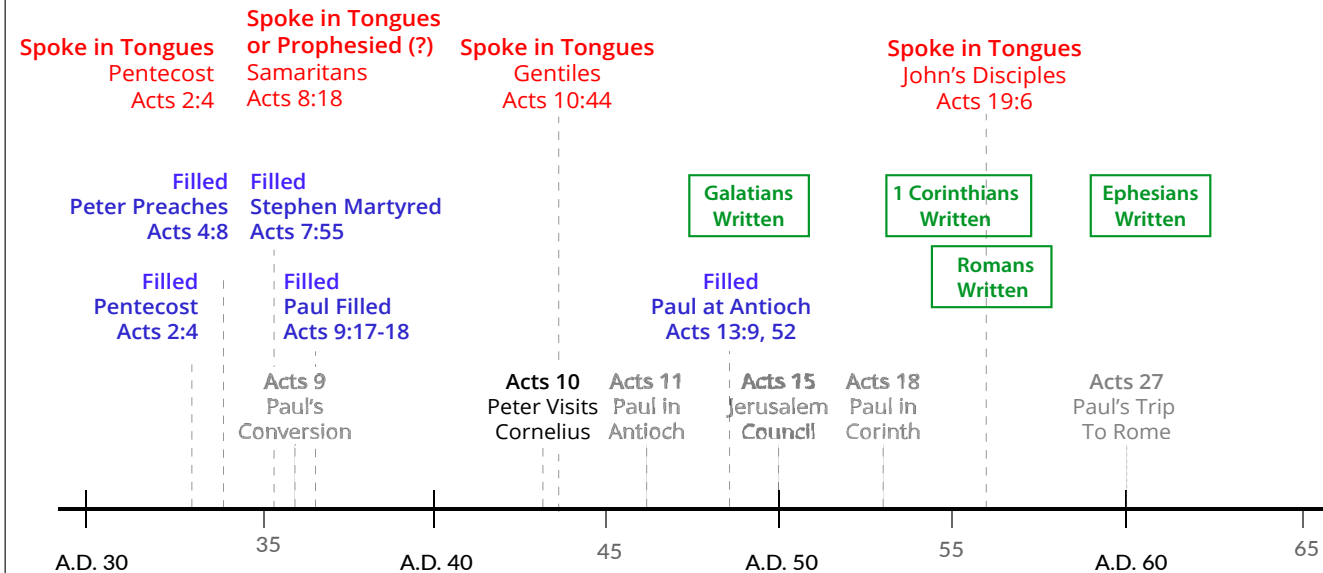
While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God . . . Acts 10:44-46 (NASB)

This was an amazing event. The Jewish believers who were with Peter did not expect the Holy Spirit to be poured out on the Gentiles. They thought that the Holy Spirit was only for the Jews. The proof that the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Gentiles was that they spoke in tongues. The next two verses are also important, because they indicate that water baptism is not necessary for salvation or to have one’s sins forgiven.

Then Peter answered, “Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?” And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days. Acts 10:47-48 (NASB)

Later Peter will explain in Acts 11:17 that these Gentiles had already believed in Jesus Christ before they spoke in tongues. This means that they were saved before they spoke in tongues and before they were baptized in water. Peter is clear and logical. If the Holy Spirit had already been poured out on the Gentiles, then that is proof they are Christians already (1 Cor. 12:3, 13; Eph. 1:13). Acts 11:16-17 tells us that the tongues the Gentiles experienced was identical to what the apostles received.

## Timeline of the Spirit's Filling and Tongues



It is important to notice that speaking in tongues does not prove that a man or woman believes in Jesus Christ. These Gentile believers believed in Jesus Christ, but they did not immediately speak in tongues. That occurred after they believed.

*JOHN THE BAPTIST'S DISCIPLES - ACTS 19:6.* The last time in the book of Acts that we are told the Holy Spirit came “upon” or “on” someone occurs in Acts 19:6. In Acts 19:1-10 we are told that Paul found about twelve disciples of John the Baptist and asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed (Acts 19:2). They answered, “No.” So Paul asked, “Into what then were you baptized?” They answered “Into John’s baptism.” Then Paul said,

... “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus.” Acts 19:4 (NASB)

When the men heard this, they were baptized in water, Paul laid hands on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying. Acts 19:5-6 (NASB)

Notice that these men believed, were baptized in water, and then spoke in tongues. Faith came first. This is the second time that we have seen water baptism and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit follow faith. Faith always comes first.

*SUMMARY.* It is important to note that the filling of the Holy Spirit resulted in men speaking in tongues on only three recorded occasions in the book of Acts: at Pentecost, when some Gentiles believed, and when twelve disciples of John the Baptist believed. The Samaritans may have prophesied as Moses’ seventy leaders did.

Tongues occurred at key transition points. The apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues at the inception of their ministry in order to obtain power for ministry. That is why Jesus encouraged them to wait until the Helper came. The Holy Spirit helped them in their ministry. This occurred among the Jews and a number of

visitors in Jerusalem.

The book of Acts states that after the apostles had learned that some Samaritans had already believed in Jesus Christ, they sent Peter and John to visit them and to lay hands on them. History tells us that the ancient Jews and Samaritans were not very friendly to one another. The Samaritans lived north of Judea and south of Galilee. This is the region in which “the woman at the well” lived (John 4:7-38). If the Samaritans spoke in tongues after hands were laid on them, it would have been a sign to the apostles that salvation was offered to them too! (It is possible they prophesied as Moses’ seventy elders did.)

Tongues occurs a third time in the book of Acts after some Gentiles believed in Jesus. The apostles were surprised. Consequently, a council was convened in Jerusalem to discuss this important news (Acts 15). Why did the Gentiles speak in tongues? The answer is provided in the book of Romans.

For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed, in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit . . . Rom. 15:18-19 (NASB)

The empowerment of the Holy Spirit confirmed the apostle’s good news about Jesus and their character.

The last time that tongues occurs in Acts is recorded in Acts 19 when some wandering disciples of John the Baptist believed in Jesus Christ. The disciples had heard about the coming Messiah from John the Baptist, but they did not know that Jesus was the Messiah.

We know that speaking in tongues occurred on only three recorded occasions in the book of Acts: at the beginning of the new ministry of the Holy Spirit, after some Gentiles believed in Jesus, and after some wandering disciples of John the Baptist believed. Each time tongues confirmed the message of the apostle, and the salvation of the believer.

Tongues also occurred in the church in the city of Corinth, as indicated throughout 1 Corinthians 14. In that passage, Paul reveals that he also spoke in tongues (1 Cor.

14:18). The apostle tells us that tongues are a sign to the unbelievers,

So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophecy is for a sign, not to unbelievers but to those who believe. 1 Cor. 14:22 (NASB)

Tongues are a sign that the messenger and the message are true and are from God. Hebrews 2:3-4, Acts 4:33, and 2 Corinthians 12:12 tell us that the power of the apostles (see Acts 4:30), confirmed the ministry of the apostles.

After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will. Heb. 2:3-4 (NASB)

And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. Acts 4:33 (NASB)

The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles. 2 Cor. 12:12 (NASB)

God has used miracles since the Old Testament to authenticate His message through His prophets. One Old Testament event occurred when Elijah raised a widow’s son (1 Kings 17:24). In the New Testament, a crowd was amazed when Jesus healed a demon-possessed man (Matt. 12:22-23). The people began to wonder if Jesus was the Son of David. In Luke 7:22, Jesus’ proof to John the Baptist and his disciples that He was the promised One were His miracles. Peter repeated that same message in Acts 2:22. John 20:30-31 is probably the most familiar statement in the gospels that God uses the miraculous to authenticate His messenger and message.

Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in

this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name. John 20:30-31 (NASB)

Once again God used the Holy Spirit to authenticate the apostles as messengers and their message as divine.

**Summary.** Before Pentecost the Holy Spirit did not live within a believer. He helped men and women believe in God, but empowerment for ministry appears to have been isolated to individuals and was sometimes temporary. The ministry of the Holy Spirit at and after Pentecost was unique and different from His ministry before Pentecost.

God the Father had promised that the Holy Spirit would come in a new way to give believers new life, to satisfy our thirst for Him like rivers of living water, and to empower us for spiritual living and ministry. The visible result of the empowerment of the Holy Spirit was the spread of the good news about Jesus Christ through the ancient world and the conversion of many resulting in their believing in Jesus Christ.

At Pentecost the first display of the power of the Holy Spirit occurred when the apostles were filled and spoke in tongues. Tongues were recorded two more times in the book of Acts (Acts 10:44; 19:6) for a total of three times, and possibly a fourth in Acts 8:18. Those are the only occurrences of tongues in the New Testament, except for 1 Corinthians 14. From a historical point of view the last recorded event of tongues in the New Testament occurred about one year after 1 Corinthians was written in about A.D. 56. The Holy Spirit had authenticated the ministry of the apostles and the acceptance of the Samaritans (they may have spoken in tongues or prophesied), the Gentiles, and anyone else who believed in Jesus.

Scripture teaches that when a person becomes a Christian, the Holy Spirit starts living within the believer. The book of Acts has recorded occasions when believers were filled with the Holy Spirit and did not speak in tongues. Acts 7:55 and Acts 13:52 indicated that Stephen and Barnabas were filled with the Holy Spirit. This implies that the filling of the Holy Spirit was not limited to apostles. It was for every

believer. Each time the book of Acts refers to the filling of the Spirit, the result is that the good news about Jesus is shared and spread, except for Acts 13:52. We will discover in the next section of this study that the Holy Spirit empowers believers in other ways. The Holy Spirit is a Helper. That is why He came!

# Holy Spirit's Ministry Today

**M**oment of Salvation. At the moment a man or woman believes in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit instantly performs miraculous events in that person's life. One of the most important events is that He regenerates us or gives us new life.

*He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life Titus 3:5-7 (NASB)*

This passage captures a lot of truth. Here we are told that the Holy Spirit not only regenerates us (gives us new life), but also justifies us, (declares us to be just), and ready for eternal life. We are also told that the Holy Spirit is "poured out upon" us richly. If that is true, then every believer has the Holy Spirit at the very moment of believing in Jesus Christ. There is no condition in this verse. This is a statement of fact.

As we have already discovered, the Holy Spirit also secures us for eternity. He places a seal of ownership upon us.

*... listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation - having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise ... Eph. 1:13*

He also places us into the body of Jesus Christ according to 1 Corinthians 12:13.

*For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we*

*were all made to drink of one Spirit. 1 Cor. 12:13 (NASB)*

This is not water baptism, since the Holy Spirit is the one performing the action. Some have stated that this passage refers to an event that occurs after one becomes a Christian, and one must ask for it. But this passage says that "all" are baptized. The Greek word is PANTES which means "all, every, whole." That is, no one is left out. The Holy Spirit enters the life of each Christian at the moment he/she believes. That was Jesus' promise in John 7:38-39. That is also the apostle Paul's teaching in Titus 3:5-7. Paul repeats this truth in Galatians when he says,

*For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. Gal. 3:26-27 (NASB)*

Notice that every one who believes in Jesus is baptized into Jesus. 1 Cor. 12:13 says that every believer in Jesus Christ is baptized into one body, and Galatians 3:26-27 and 1 Cor. 12:27 make it clear that that body is Christ's body.

*Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it. 1 Cor. 12:27 (NASB)*

Any man or woman who believes in Jesus Christ is spiritually baptized into Christ's body (1 Cor. 12). This occurs when the Holy Spirit is poured out upon us when we believe (Titus 3:5-7) and not later.

**His Ministry Is Needed.** Yet we need something more. Yes, the Holy Spirit is living inside each genuine believer, but Ephesians 3:16 tells us that we need something more in order to be strengthened.



... that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man ... Eph. 3:16 (NASB)

That is, we need the Holy Spirit to strengthen and empower every person who believes in Jesus Christ to live as God desires.

Many years ago, a man was standing next to an English gentleman looking at the Niagara whirlpool rapids when he turned to his friend and said, "Come and I will show you the greatest unused power in the world." Taking the English gentleman to the foot of Niagara Falls, a tremendously large waterfall, he said, "There is the greatest unused power in the world!" "Not so!" was the reply. "The greatest unused power in the world is the Holy Spirit of the living God!" That is the truth. Some Christians are attempting to live the Christian life without the power of the Spirit.

So how can we be empowered to live as God would want us to live? The answer is found in Galatians 5:16-23 and Ephesians 5:17-6:5. Galatians calls it "walking in the Spirit," and Ephesians calls it "being filled with the Spirit."

**Walking In The Spirit.** God tells us that there is a great benefit to walking in the Spirit, and there is a great problem when we do not.

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out

the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. Gal. 5:16-17 (NASB)

God says that when we walk in the Spirit, we will not fulfill the desire of the flesh. Gal. 5:19-21 tells us that the result is sin if we do not walk in the Spirit.

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. Gal. 5:19-21 (NASB)

The deeds of the flesh are evil. But the result of walking in the Spirit is the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Gal. 5:22-33 (NASB)



The fruit of the Holy Spirit in the life of one who follows Jesus is spiritual growth towards holiness, but the deeds of the flesh are evil. Therefore, we should not be surprised that there is a war between the flesh and the Holy Spirit.

**Filled With The Spirit.** But how do we walk in the Spirit? Walking in the Spirit involves a constant filling of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Ephesians 5:17-18 tells us how that occurs.

... but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit . . . Eph. 5:17-18 (NASB)

To be filled with the Holy Spirit means that the Holy Spirit has complete control of us. Notice God's illustration in Eph. 5:17-18. He commands us to not become drunk with wine but to be drunk with the Holy Spirit. To be drunk means that wine has taken control of our senses. That illustrates the meaning of the Greek word "filled." It means "to make full, complete." It was also used to refer to someone who was filled full of food. The will of God is that we be filled full of the Holy Spirit or controlled by Him. When we allow this to happen, we will be . . .

... speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. Eph. 5:19-21 (NASB)

A Spirit-filled Christian will have joy in the heart, thankfulness, and humility towards others, or submission. These are the marks of a Spirit-filled Christian. The passage does not talk about any other spiritual experiences.

**Constant Filling Is Walking.** To be filled is God's will and to walk in the Spirit has a great spiritual benefit - a life increasingly filled with holiness. To be constantly filled with the Spirit results in victory over sin, peace and joy in the heart, and submission/humility towards others. But in

order to be filled with the Spirit, we must ask God to have the Holy Spirit take control of us - "to fill us" - just as the apostle Paul prayed for the Ephesians. One must want Him to take over his/her life. It is also important to remember that in order to continue being "filled with" or "walking in" the Spirit, you must confess your sins to God the Father every time you realize that you have sinned and ask the Holy Spirit to take control of your life again. One should also spend as much time reading, studying, and meditating upon the Bible as he/she can. This is what it means to live our life in the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit changes lives gradually, gives us increasing victory over sin, provides peace and joy in our hearts and gives us a tremendous longing to know Him. We will never be perfect. Even though you will still sin, you will see God at work.

It is important to notice that neither Galatians 5:16-23 nor Ephesians 5:17-6:5 describes anything out of the ordinary. What happens when the Holy Spirit takes control is described in Eph. 5:19-21.

... speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. Eph. 5:19-21 (NASB)

The last part of the passage refers to submission, and the Holy Spirit provides an example in verse 22 - wives submitting to husbands. Husbands will also love their wives (Eph. 5:22), children will obey their parents (Eph. 6:1), and servants will cooperate with their employers (Eph. 6:5). These are the deeds that result from the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). Galatians 5:22-23 describes the result of a day-by-day filling of the Spirit, that is, walking in the Spirit, in verses 22-23, and Eph. 5:17-6:5 describes the deeds of the Spirit.

**Evidence of the Spirit.** Some years, a Calvary Chapel pastor told his congregation that he had been asked, "What is the evidence that I have the Holy Spirit?" He responded that the fruit of the Spirit described in Gal.

5:22-23 was the most important evidence - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Ephesians 5:19-21 gives us a second list.

Spiritual gifts are supernatural abilities that the Holy Spirit gives to each person who believes in and follows Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 12:11). The supernatural abilities include such things as teaching, leading, financial giving, speaking in tongues, healing, and mercy, for example. Two lists of them can be found in 1 Corinthians 12:7-10, 28 and Romans 12:6-8. Some have said that these spiritual gifts are a sign or an indication that a person belongs to God. If so, how does one determine if a person has a spiritual gift or just a natural ability? How do we know that a gifted teacher is spirit filled or anointed (1 John 2:20), a highly trained professional, or someone with natural ability? The answer is found in their personal walks with God and the spiritual growth of those who interact with them. The answer is not found in how many follow them.

Some claim that the gift of tongues - speaking in tongues - is a sign that a person belongs to God. Ecstatic speech has been identified in many parts of world in various religions. Others in the world display ecstatic speech and they do not belong to God. So how do we know the genuine signs from the false? It is important to note that the Bible never tells us in specific words that tongues or another spiritual gift is a proof that someone belongs to God. In fact, we are given other signs or indicators to look for.

Listen to the Apostle John who wrote these words,

[These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. 1 John 5:13 \(NASB\)](#)

What did he write or record for us? What were the “things” or “the signs” that a person belongs to God? What did he record? Here is a series of evidences that a person belongs to God: 1) he or she believes that Jesus was God (1 John 4:2 ), 2) he or she obeys God (1 John 3:24), 3) he or she loves others (1 John 4:8 ), 4) he or she confesses their sins to God (1 John 1:9), and 5) he or she seeks to be holy (1 John 3:10). The entire book of 1 John was written with a series of evidences, marks, or signs that a person is a Christian.

[We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us. 1 John 3:24 \(NASB\)](#)

It is extremely interesting to note that while spiritual gifts, such as teaching, tongues, or mercy are not mentioned as evidence that a person is a Christian, the evidences of the fruit of the Spirit are listed - most notably love. Why did the Apostle John not mention spiritual gifts and instead list other criteria?

When Jesus told the parable of the sower of the seed in Matthew 13:18-23, He described four different kinds of seed. Some fell beside the road, on rocky places, among thorns, and on good soil. The seed that fell on good soil represented those who hear the good news from the Bible about Jesus Christ, believe in Him and follow. This seed produces a lot of fruit, “some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.” To what type of fruit was Jesus referring? A quick word study of the New Testament reveals that fruit refers to the fruit of the Spirit (Rom. 7:4-6; 15:28; Eph. 5:9; Phil. 1:11; Heb. 12:11; 13:15; James 3:18). Once again none of the spiritual gifts are referred to or used as a proof that a person is a Christian outside of the book of Acts. In Acts it is clear on two occasions that tongues were used to prove that salvation had been offered to two groups of people the Jews hated: Samaritans (Acts 8:18) and the Gentiles (Acts 10:44). But the gift of tongues was not automatically displayed when the Samaritans believed. It occurred only after the apostle Paul appeared. This indicates that a person could believe in Jesus Christ and not necessarily speak in tongues.

These are important points because they indicate that the apostles looked to other signs or indications that a person was a Christian and not to spiritual gifts. They looked to the signs of the fruit or the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a person.

**Summary.** We need the Holy Spirit to help us understand that we are sinners, lead us to God, give us faith to believe, place us into the family of God, seal us, regenerates us, help us pray, help us understand the Bible, empower us for ministry, change our lives, help us minister



to others through His spiritual gifts, and display the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. The Holy Spirit is essential to every Christian. That is why we are commanded to walk in the Spirit and to be filled with the Spirit. The result of both of these is victory over sin, submission, peace, joy, singing, time in the Word of God and love. We can thank the Holy Spirit for His ministry in our lives.

# Tongues, Prophecy & Knowledge

**R**ole of Spiritual Gifts Today. We have already discovered that the Holy Spirit gives various types of spiritual gifts, or supernatural abilities, to help the followers of Jesus Christ minister to one another. 1 Corinthians 12:11 says that the Holy Spirit is the one who decides which gifts are given to each believer.

*But one and the same Spirit works all these things,  
distributing to each one individually just as He wills. 1  
Cor. 12:11 (NASB)*

1 Corinthians 12:7-10, 28 and Romans 12:6-8 list the different known gifts. It is possible that other spiritual gifts are given for the edification of the saints, but the Bible does not mention any others. The lists include: exhortation, giving, helps or serving, prophecy, ruling or leading, mercy, teaching, administration, discerning of the spirits, faith, knowledge, prophecy, healing, miracles, tongues, and the interpretation of tongues.

Each Christian is given a spiritual gift. God sometimes gives Christians a combination of these gifts. For example, one Christian might have the gift of teaching and knowledge while another believer might have the gifts of faith, giving, and ruling. Another might have the spiritual gift of leading and mercy. When the Holy Spirit gives these gifts, He

might give one Christian a “stronger” gift of teaching than another. In other words, the messages from one person may have a greater impact than those from another speaker. God gives spiritual gifts so that we can help other Christians grow spiritually and express our love to them.

Ephesians 4:7 amazingly indicates that these spiritual gifts are also Christ’s gifts.

*But to each one of us grace was given according to the  
measure of Christ’s gift. Eph. 4:7 (NASB)*

In the verses that follow we are told that the gifts also include apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.

*And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets,  
and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and  
teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work  
of service, to the building up of the body of Christ . .  
Eph. 4:11-12 (NASB)*

This passage indicates that the purpose of the gifts is the edification, equipping, and building up of the saints.

**Discovering Your Spiritual Gift.** How does one discover his or her unique combination of spiritual

## Spiritual Gifts

### Romans 12:6-8

Exhortation	Ruling
Giving	Leading
Helps or serving	Mercy
Prophecy	Teaching

### 1 Corinthians 12:7-10, 28

Administration	Interpretation of tongues
Discerning of spirits	Knowledge
Faith	Miracles
Healing	Prophecy
Helps or serving	Tongues

gifts? The best way is to follow your heart's desire and start ministering to others. If God has given you a spiritual gift, He most likely has placed a desire in your heart to use it. If you ask God for guidance, follow your heart's desire and then attempt to objectively determine if others are being encouraged and motivated by your ministry. If this occurs, then it is an encouraging sign you have discovered one of your spiritual gifts. It is possible for Christians to have a mix of supernatural abilities or spiritual gifts. So the treasure hunt will continue.

Some Christians who have the gift of giving just love to give money to others. Some men and women have the gift of mercy and love to care for others. The best way to discover our gifts is by attempting to use them. Today, churches and groups use surveys and questionnaires in an attempt to help Christians discover their spiritual gifts. Unfortunately, this method has serious problems. A survey can never determine the difference between a natural ability, a natural desire, and a spiritual gift. Only by using one's spiritual gift and sensing the Lord's blessing on the use of that gift can one determine the Holy Spirit's supernatural gift. Surveys and questionnaires are flawed for that purpose.

**Which Gifts Are Active Today?** Are the gifts of tongues and prophecy still active today? Could you have one these spiritual gifts? Some in the Christian community say that some of the gifts are no longer active. Some of the spiritual gifts that are in question include the speaking in tongues, the interpretation of tongues, and prophecy. Healing and miracles are also questioned.

*ANOTHER STUDY.* God has always healed both the Christian and non-Christian. Jesus' example illustrates the truth of that statement. The gift of healing was illustrated in Jesus' life. He was a healer. The gift of healing results in God healing a person through someone. The gift of miracles is a mystery, but it is possible that it was illustrated by Jesus when He calmed the waves on the Sea of Galilee.

*OUR FOCUS.* The focus of this document has been the first three spiritual gifts in question. We will study the gifts of healing and miracles on another occasion. Therefore, the question before us is, "Are tongues and prophecy for today?" We have already discovered that the Holy Spirit has been

active on this earth since the creation, down through the Old Testament period, at Pentecost, and during the lives of the apostles. We have discovered that the Holy Spirit came upon the Old Testament saints and lived within and filled New Testament Christians. The New Testament specifically says that the Holy Spirit filled some who spoke in tongues as part of that filling. The book of Galatians and Ephesians describe the result of a Christian being filled with the Holy Spirit. The descriptions did not include speaking in tongues or prophesying. These discoveries indicate that tongues and prophecy are not necessary to prove that the Holy Spirit is ministering through a Christian. A person can believe in Jesus and follow Him and not speak in tongues or prophecy. The Samaritans are proof of this statement. They believed in Jesus. They had entered into eternal life but were not filled with the Holy Spirit until the apostles came later (Acts 8:14).

The Bible refers to the gift of tongues only in the New Testament and nowhere else: the books of Mark, Acts and 1 Corinthians. This occurred in fulfillment of Acts 2:17. So we must ask, "Did tongues cease after A.D. 56?"

**Ministry of Tongues and Prophecy.** Tongues are mentioned one time in the book of Mark, five times in Acts, and fifteen times in 1 Corinthians. The passage in Mark occurs in a questionable section of scripture that is not included in the better manuscripts. Acts gives us the history of tongues which we have already covered. 1 Corinthians presents the theology of tongues in chapters 12-14.

*1 CORINTHIANS 12.* Chapter twelve discusses spiritual gifts in general and includes tongues. However, at the end of chapter twelve, the Holy Spirit reminds us through the apostle Paul that no spiritual gift is given to every Christian.

*All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they? All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they? 1 Cor. 12:29-30 (NASB)*

Notice the comment that, "All do not speak with tongues, do they?" The expected answer is, "No!" Throughout 1

Corinthians the Holy Spirit has been discussing their sins and sometimes rebuking them for their tolerance of sin. This passage is the first clue that the Corinthians are abusing the spiritual gift of tongues in some way.

*1 CORINTHIANS 13.* The second clue to the existence of a problem comes in 1 Cor. 13:1 when the Holy Spirit says that tongues without love is just like noise.

*If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 1 Cor. 13:1 (NASB)*

The third clue that a problem exists comes in verses 8-10 when the Holy Spirit tells them that tongues will cease but prophecy will continue until the second coming of Jesus Christ. We will investigate this passage later.

*1 CORINTHIANS 14.* The fourth clue that the Corinthians have a problem in the area of tongues is the discovery that chapter 14 is devoted to the topic of tongues. This has been the Holy Spirit's pattern throughout the book.

In chapter 14 we discover that the Holy Spirit repeatedly compares the spiritual gift of tongues to the gift of prophecy. Each time He encourages them to seek the spiritual gift of prophecy instead of tongues. For example,

*Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. 1 Cor. 14:1 (NASB)*

*Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy . . . 1 Cor. 14:5 (NASB)*

*Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature. 1 Cor. 14:20 (NASB)*

*Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues. 1 Cor. 14:39 (NASB)*

Why does He encourage them to seek prophecy over tongues? Everyone can understand prophecy, but tongues requires interpretation. The spiritual gift of prophecy edifies, but tongues without interpretation does not (1 Cor. 14:3-5). From verses 6-19 the apostle Paul repeatedly reminds the Corinthians that tongues does not edify without an interpretation.

Three verses later (1 Cor. 14:22-24) the Holy Spirit says that tongues are a sign to unbelievers and prophecy is a sign to believers. Prophecy edifies both the unbelievers and believers. Tongues without interpretation in the church was prohibited by Paul.

The Corinthians desired a more visible gift - tongues. Apparently, they minimized the other gifts, especially prophecy. In response, the Holy Spirit through the apostle rebuked them for their preference for tongues with this comment,

*I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all; however, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind so that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue. 1 Cor. 14:18-19 (NASB)*

They had missed the point that edification through the teaching of the Word of God was more important.

**Tongues Will Cease.** Is prophecy preferred as a spiritual gift over tongues? 1 Cor. 14:39 tells us that we should desire to prophesy more than to speak in tongues.

*Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues. 1 Cor. 14:39 (NASB)*

Even though prophecy is preferred, tongues are not to be prohibited. That is, prophecy is the greater gift. 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 also indicates that prophecy is preferred.

*Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease;*

if there is knowledge, it will be done away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 (NASB)

The first clue that prophecy is preferred in this passage is found in Paul's statement that the gift of prophecy and the gift of knowledge "will be done away" but tongues will "cease." Paul continues by saying that we know and prophesy in part and that the partial or "part" will be "done away" when the perfect comes. Tongues will cease but prophecy and knowledge "will be done away" when the perfect comes.

*TONGUES WILL CEASE.* The Greek word translated as "cease" in this verse is the middle form of PAUO. It means "to cease, auto-cease, come to an end, cause to stop, and stop on its own." The word has the idea of something stopping on its own but not permanently. For example, on one occasion we are told that Jesus had "finished" speaking (Luke 5:4), and on another occasion the wind and waves "stopped" (Luke 8:24). But, Jesus spoke sometime later, and the wind and waves still exist today. Therefore, we conclude that scripture teaches tongues was expected to cease on its own at some time in the future and will reoccur in the future. We will revisit this question later. This passage teaches that tongues are not as permanent as knowledge and prophecy.

*PROPHECY WILL BE ABOLISHED.* In contrast to tongues the same passage tells us that prophesying will be "done away." The Greek word translated as "done away" is the passive form of KATARGEO. The word means "to make idle, to make inoperative, to render useless, to destroy, abolish, pass away, vanish away, and nullify." The Greek word is composed of a prefix "KATA" which makes the word very strong and implies a strong decisive or cataclysmic event that destroys. That is, while tongues will stop on their own, knowledge and prophecy will be abolished only by a direct action of God.

What is prophecy? A survey of the various passages in which the Greek word PROPHETEUEO is translated as "prophesying or to prophecy" in the New Testament reveals that the word can refer to a prediction or it can refer to

someone speaking for God. Here are two verses to illustrate.

Many will say to Me on that day, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name . . ." Matt. 7:22 (NASB)

Then they spat in His face and beat Him with their fists; and others slapped Him, and said, "Prophecy to us, You Christ; who is the one who hit You?" Matt. 26:67-68 (NASB)

These two verses capture the range of meaning of the Greek word. The basic meaning of the Greek word is, "to tell forth," or "to speak for God." It does not necessarily mean predicting the future, but it does mean speaking for God. Moses' seventy leaders also prophesied without apparently predicting the future (Num. 11:16-26). When the prophets spoke for God, sometimes they predicted the future. The prophets spoke "forth" for God and sometimes they predicted the future.

The gift of knowledge is supernatural knowledge about the Bible - the Word of God. Someone who has this gift has deep knowledge of the scriptures and great understanding. A Bible College, Bible Institute, or seminary education does not give someone this gift. A lay person can have this gift and know more than the pastor who has been formally educated. 1 Corinthians 13:8 says that this gift will be "done away" too!

What is the message? The message is that "forth telling" for God will come to an end when the perfect comes. There are two major views in reference to "the perfect." Some believe "the perfect" is the completed Word of God, that is, the Bible. They believe the perfect is the Word of God containing all of the books of the Bible: Genesis through Revelation. The second major view is that the perfect is Jesus Christ.

This view states that when the Bible or the perfect was completed, prophecy and knowledge would end. But this cannot be supported from any passage in the New Testament. It also does not agree with the idea of seeing something face-to-face in 1 Cor. 13:12. Notice the three locations where the phrase "in part" occurs.

For we know *in part* and we prophesy *in part*; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know *in part*, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. 1 Cor. 13:9-12 (NASB)

The last verse is connected to the first verse and so is everything in between. Note that tongues is not included in the “in part” but prophecy and knowledge are included. The “part” will disappear when we see “face-to-face” and then we will be fully known. A book cannot see us or know us, not even a sacred book.

The second and correct view says that Jesus Christ is the “perfect.” First, Jesus Christ was the perfect man in every respect (Heb. 5:9; 7:28). Second, Jesus is coming again (John 14:3; Acts 1:3-6). Jesus promised that He would return. If we combine both truths together, we discover that Jesus Christ is the perfect and He is coming back. Prophesying will be abolished at Jesus’ second coming and, consequently, so will prophecy. The spiritual gift of knowledge will continue until Jesus returns. When He comes, prophecy and knowledge will be unnecessary.

*TONGUES AND PROPHECY COMPARED.* Why did the Holy Spirit promise that prophecy would continue until Jesus returns but did not make the same promise about tongues? What is implied by the fact that tongues will cease on its own, but prophecy and knowledge will be abolished only at the end of the age? The answer is that tongues 1) will cease on their own, and 2) will not continue until the end of the age. The contrast of the two Greek verbs, *PAUO* and *KATARGEO*, and the fact that the Holy Spirit takes special effort to tell us that two of the three spiritual gifts will continue until Jesus’ return reveals that tongues is not as necessary as prophecy and knowledge. Tongues will not last as long as knowledge and prophecy. The gift of tongues is temporary, but not that of knowledge and prophecy.

**Summary.** The Holy Spirit has given us spiritual gifts. Each Christian has a different mix of gifts. All Christians

do not have the same gift. For example, each Christian does not have the gift of teaching, the gift of tongues, the gift of knowledge, or the ability to prophesy. All of the spiritual gifts are miraculous gifts since they are given by the Holy Spirit. They are supernaturally given. It is a miracle when someone who never had the ability to teach, supernaturally, becomes a dynamic, empowered speaker.

1 Corinthians 13:8-10 reveals that prophecy and knowledge are the more important of the three gifts of tongues, knowledge and prophecy since knowledge and prophecy will continue until the second coming of Jesus Christ. Tongues will not. It will cease on its own. Yet, many desire tongues - a visible gift - more than any other.

So, the apostle rebukes them in 1 Cor. 14:20, calling them babes in their thinking. They had forgotten that the edification of the saints was more important. Tongues only edify when they are interpreted. Prophecy always edifies. They had missed the point that edification of others was more important. They were self-serving in their pursuit of tongues. Prophecy would continue until Jesus’ return and tongues will cease.

# *Church Fathers & The Holy Spirit*

**H**ave tongues and prophecy ceased? In the last section, we discovered that prophecy will continue until Jesus returns. We also discovered that prophecy is “forth-telling” for God and does not always include future predictions. The spiritual gift of prophecy will continue, but the spiritual gift of tongues will cease on its own. Eusebius, an early church father, makes this interesting comment about the apostle Paul in his book “Church History of Eusebius.”

For the apostle thought it necessary that the prophetic gift should continue in all the Church until the final coming . . . (Church History of Eusebius. Book 5, Chap. 17).

When will tongues cease? Some believe that tongues stopped with the last apostle. They refer to statements of the earlier church fathers. Some Christians have responded by referring to the Holy Spirit’s appearance and ministry in the Old Testament, His ministry in the New Testament, and the quotes of some early church fathers who said that spiritual gifts were present, including tongues. They state that the Holy Spirit’s charismatic gifts have always been present. A short review is important before we examine the historical evidence.

It is true that the scriptures teach that the Holy Spirit has always been present. However, the ministry of the Holy Spirit has changed over time as we have seen in our study. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew text reveals that the Holy Spirit came upon men for a period of time; but after Pentecost the Holy Spirit lived inside believers permanently. Jesus repeatedly referred to the coming of the Holy Spirit in a new way. In the New Testament period, the Holy Spirit baptized, sealed, taught, and empowered believers by filling them. The Holy Spirit also gave spiritual gifts. Ephesians

4:7-11 reveals that these gifts also come from Christ. The ministry of the Spirit was unique.

It is a mistake to assume that the Holy Spirit’s ministry has always been the same. The gift of tongues is not referred to in the Old Testament. It is mentioned in only two New Testament books - Acts and 1 Corinthians. We have discovered that a display of the power of the Holy Spirit was predicted by Joel, and the fulfillment occurred at Pentecost. The display was obviously tongues. That is the message of Acts 2:15-17. Tongues started with the apostles. Even though the book of Acts mentions tongues only three times, it is clear that tongues occurred on other occasions. The Apostle Paul is a good example. 1 Cor. 14:5, 18 reveals that he spoke in tongues, but this fact is never revealed in the book of Acts. Also, the book of Acts does not reveal that the Corinthians spoke in tongues, but they did according to 1 Corinthians 14. Consequently, there is a temptation to suggest that tongues were universal, to assume that speaking in tongues is the normal Christian experience, and to assume that tongues will always exist.

However, we cannot use scripture to justify that claim. There is no scriptural evidence to support that claim either in the Old Testament or on other occasions, since scripture is silent. In fact, 1 Cor. 13:8-10 indicates that the gift of tongues will cease. It does not promise that tongues will continue until Jesus returns, even though there is a promise that knowledge and prophecy will continue. Scripture teaches that tongues will cease at some point in history before Jesus returns. The question we will now explore is, “Did tongues cease after the last apostle, John?”

We will discover shortly that spiritual gifts were known to the early church fathers. They quoted passages from 1 Corinthians 12-14 and referred to a variety of the gifts. Tongues was referred to by a number of the early church fathers but not by all of them.

**Apostolic Fathers.** A review of the books that were written by the early church fathers reveals that the gift of tongues was not a major topic. The apostolic fathers (A.D. 30-155) were silent about the gift of tongues. It is never mentioned by the earliest church father, Clement of Rome (A.D. 30-100), in his letter to the Corinthians. Yet, his life overlapped the apostles. If tongues were still active in the church at Corinth, it would seem that the gift would have been mentioned in his writings.

While there is clear evidence from Scripture that the gift of tongues was in operation during the time of the apostles, it is significant that the gift is nowhere alluded to, hinted at, or found in the Apostolic Fathers. It might be objected that this is simply an argument from silence and has as much support for the continuance of the gift as for the cessation of the gift. However, the importance of this silence takes on added weight when viewed in the light of certain facts.

... the wide geographical coverage of the Apostolic Fathers makes their silence significant. Clement wrote from Rome to Corinth; Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, wrote to those at Philippi; Ignatius of Antioch wrote to the churches of Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Rome, Smyrna, Philadelphia; the Epistle of Barnabas was probably written from Alexandria; The Shepherd of Hermas may have been written from Rome; Papias was from Hierapolis in Phrygia; the Didache may have been written from Egypt or possibly from Syria or Palestine; and the Epistle to Diognetus was probably written from Alexandria. This covers practically every significant area of the Roman Empire, and certainly if the gift of tongues were widespread and in abundance, it would surely have been alluded to or mentioned in some way. (Rogers, Cleon L. "The Gift of Tongues in the Post Apostolic Church (A.D. 100-400)," *Bibliotheca Sacra*. Apr-June 1965. Vol. 122. p. 135-6.)

The Apostolic Fathers included: Clement of Rome, Mathetes, Polycarp, Ignatius, Barnabas, and Papias. They

wrote about every theological subject, including future prophecy, but the spiritual gift of tongues is never mentioned (Rogers, Cleon. Ibid.).

**Justin Martyr.** Justin Martyr (A.D. 100-165) wrote after the apostles had died. History tells us that he was a Jew who became a Christian in A.D. 132 in the country of Turkey. Soon after he traveled the Roman Empire extensively proclaiming Jesus Christ as the savior of the world. He became a martyr for his faith in A.D. 165.

His travels would have exposed him to the various charismatic gifts among the believers, if they existed. Yet when Justin Martyr referred to the charismatic gifts, he listed only seven gifts and not tongues. The gifts that he listed are as follows:

For one receives the spirit of understanding, another of counsel, another of strength, another of healing, another of foreknowledge, another of teaching, and another of the fear of God. (Martyr, Justin. *Dialogue with Justin*. Chap 39).

It is important to note that only two of these are recognized in scripture as being spiritual gifts - healing and teaching.

Later in the same book, he tells us that the gift of prophecy was still present. This is consistent with 1 Cor. 13:8-12.

For the prophetic gifts remain with us, even to the present time. And hence you ought to understand that [the gifts] formerly among your nation have been transferred to us. And just as there were false prophets contemporaneous with your holy prophets, so are there now many false teachers amongst us, of whom our Lord forewarned us to beware; so that in no respect are we deficient, since we know that He foreknew all that would happen to us after His resurrection from the dead and ascension to heaven. (Martyr, Justin. *Dialogue with Justin*. Chap 82).

**Irenaeus.** It is estimated that Irenaeus (A.D. 102-202) wrote "Against Heresies" in about A.D. 165-175. He wrote



after Justin Martyr died. In chapter 6 section 1, we discover that he refers to the existence of prophecy and tongues.

In like manner we have also heard many brethren in the Church, who possess prophetic gifts, and who through the Spirit speak all kinds of languages, and bring to light for the general benefit the hidden things of men, and declare the mysteries of God, whom also the apostle terms “spiritual,” they being spiritual because they partake of the Spirit, and not because their flesh has been stripped off and taken away, and because they have become purely spiritual. (Irenaeus. Against Heresies. Book 5, Chap. 6)

However, he used the perfect tense, *audivimus*, of the Latin verb “to hear” (*audire*) when he referred to having heard about the gifts. The perfect tense of the Latin verb implies completed action in the past. He does not say that he saw or witnessed them himself. In fact, he uses the term “we” indicating that he and his fellow believers were not eye witnesses to prophecy or tongues.

The following quote is extremely interesting. Irenaeus refers to the gift of knowledge and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. In addition, he tells us that Matthew wrote a gospel to the Jews. Mark wrote a gospel for Peter. Luke wrote for Paul, and John wrote a gospel by himself.

We have learned from none others the plan of our salvation, than from those through whom the Gospel has come down to us, which they did at one time proclaim in public, and, at a later period, by the will of God, handed down to us in the Scriptures, to be the ground and pillar of our faith. For it is unlawful to assert that they preached before they possessed “perfect knowledge,” as some do even venture to say, boasting themselves as improvers of the apostles. For, after our Lord rose from the dead, [the apostles] were invested with power from on high when the Holy Spirit came down [upon them], were filled from all [His gifts], and had perfect knowledge: they departed to the ends of the earth, preaching

the glad tidings of the good things [sent] from God to us, and proclaiming the peace of heaven to men, who indeed do all equally and individually possess the Gospel of God. Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and laying the foundations of the Church. After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter. Luke also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him. Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia. (Irenaeus. Against Heresies. Book 3, Chap. 1)

**Clement of Alexandria.** Claims have been made that Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 153-217) referred to spiritual gifts and tongues specifically. For example, one author states that Clement believed that tongues would cease in the future. Yet, a careful review of the references to the spiritual gifts reveals that Clement was only quoting scripture. Here is the passage in question:

“Love covers a multitude of sins. Perfect love casts out fear. Vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth. Prophecies are done away, tongues cease, gifts of healing fail on the earth. But these three abide, Faith, Hope, Love. But the greatest of these is Love.” And rightly. For Faith departs when we are convinced by vision, by seeing God. And Hope vanishes when the things hoped for come. But Love comes to completion, and grows more when that which is perfect has been bestowed (Who Is the Rich Man That Shall Be Saved?, 38, p. 861).

In other passages, such as “The Stromata” Chapter 21, Clement quotes scripture and refers to spiritual gifts in general.

**Montanus.** We have already discussed the fact that

Montanus (circa A.D. 150) was a heretic who distorted the scriptures and claimed that he spoke for the Holy Spirit. Eusebius, an early church father, states that Montanus was a priest of the oriental ecstatic cult called Cybele, the mother goddess of fertility before he became a Christian. After his conversion he joined a group known as the Illuminati (“the enlightened”).

Before his conversion to Christianity, he apparently was a priest of the Oriental ecstatic cult of Cybele, the mother goddess of fertility. According to the 4th-century church historian Eusebius of Caesarea, Montanus . . . entered into an ecstatic state and began prophesying in the region of Phrygia, now in central Turkey. Montanus became the leader of a group of illuminati (“the enlightened”), including the prophetesses Priscilla (or Prisca) and Maximilla. The members exhibited the frenzied nature of their religious experience by enraptured seizures and utterances . . . (Encyclopedia Britannica Ultimate Reference Suite DVD).

The early church fathers state that Montanus’ teachings were in direct conflict with the teachings of the apostles (Tertullian. Against Marcion. Book 5 Chap. 13). Apollonius states that the prophecies of Montanus did not come true, and he lived in wealth as a result of his followers. Montanus made predictions that did not come true and statements that were later proved to be wrong. He was regarded as a false prophet (Church History of Eusebius. Book 5, Chap. 18).

Eusebius quotes Apollonius who was an eye-witness of Montanus. Apollonius states that Montanus encouraged his followers to divorce their spouses, created communes in Phrygia, collected money, and paid those who would preach his doctrine. The prophetess, Maximilla, who followed Montanus, divorced her husband and declared herself to be a virgin after reportedly being filled with the Holy Spirit (Church History of Eusebius. Book 5, Chap. 18). Here is a significant comment,

. . . unquenchable desire for leadership, gave the adversary opportunity against him. And he became beside himself,

and being suddenly in a sort of frenzy and ecstasy, he raved, and began to babble and utter strange things, prophesying in a manner contrary to the constant custom of the Church handed down by tradition from the beginning. (Church History of Eusebius. Book 5, Chap. 16)

Consequently, any comments about spiritual gifts are suspect since he was a false teacher. The apostle Peter makes this comment about false teachers,

*But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies . . . Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. 2 Pet. 2:1-3 (NASB)*

**Tertullian.** Tertullian (A.D. 155-220) was influenced by Montanus. Yet Tertullian only mentions spiritual gifts and never gives personal testimony to experiencing tongues. In his book, Against Marcion, he quotes a large amount of scripture but never comments about the existence of tongues in his time. Here is some of his writing,

Now, on the subject of “spiritual gifts,” I have to remark that these also were promised by the Creator through Christ; and I think that we may derive from this a very just conclusion that the bestowal of a gift is not the work of a god other than Him who is proved to have given the promise . . . Now hear how he declared that by Christ Himself, when returned to heaven, these spiritual gifts were to be sent: “He ascended up on high,” that is, into heaven; “He led captivity captive,” meaning death or slavery of man; “He gave gifts to the sons of men,” that is, the gratuities, which we call charismata. (Tertullian. Against Marcion. Book 5 Chap. 8)

Tertullian then proceeds to quote from 1 Corinthians

12. Near the end of chapter 8 he challenges Montanus or Marcion to demonstrate the gifts.

Let Marcion then exhibit, as gifts of his God, some prophets, such as have not spoken by human sense, but with the Spirit of God, such as have both predicted things to come, and have made manifest the secrets of the heart; let him produce a psalm, a vision, a prayer — only let it be by the Spirit, in an ecstasy, that is, in a rapture, whenever an interpretation of tongues has occurred to him; let him show to me also, that any woman of boastful tongue in his community has ever prophesied from amongst those specially holy sisters of his. (Tertullian. Against Marcion. Book 5 Chap. 8)

In chapter 4 of “Exhortation to Chastity,” Tertullian indicates that the apostles fully displayed the gifts of prophecy and tongues and “not partially, as all others have.” Notice the word “all.” He included everyone since the time of the apostles. His comment is not clear enough to conclude that he was alluding to prophecy and tongues during his time. His statement is truly independent of when prophecy and tongues occurred. If he was referring to prophecy and tongues in his time, then he is implying that the gifts were suppressed.

**Origen.** Origen (A.D. 185-254) is one of the best known and scholarly early church fathers. He was highly educated and well traveled. Origen’s father died as a martyr, and consequently he had to earn money to support his mother and six younger brothers. As an adult he was a pupil of Clement of Alexandria, whom he succeeded as head of the catechetical school under the authority of the bishop Demetrius. Origen was a significant writer. His best work is considered to be the Hexapla which is a synopsis of Old Testament versions of the Hebrew text and the Septuagint.

In his writings he never makes any comment about tongues. However, he does make this important statement.

Moreover, the Holy Spirit gave signs of His presence at the beginning of Christ’s ministry, and after His ascension He gave still more; but since that time these

signs have diminished, although there are still traces of His presence in a few who have had their souls purified by the Gospel, and their actions regulated by its influence. For the Holy Spirit of discipline will flee deceit, and remove from thoughts that are without understanding. (Against Celsus. Book VII, 8).

In this statement Origen tells us that there were only “traces” of the signs of the Holy Spirit left during his time. There are two important facts to be recognized in this statement. First, by “traces” he implies that the obvious presence of the Holy Spirit had diminished over time and was no longer in full display. Second, he does not tell us which spiritual gifts are included in his expression “signs.” He could be alluding to prophecy or tongues. Prophecy we expect to continue.

**Novatian.** Novatian (A.D. 200-258) was the first Roman theologian to write in Latin. He was ordained in Rome and became a leader of the Roman clergy. During the Decian persecution, A.D. 249-251, thousands of Christians were systematically persecuted. History tells us Christians were given the opportunity to renounce their faith, offer incense to other gods, or give up their sacred books. Many did. Those who did were called the *lapsi* or the “Lapsed” because they had returned to paganism.

Novatian wrote two letters to Bishop Cyprian of Carthage concerning the *lapsi*. He had a moderate view toward the apostates; but when Cornelius was elected pope in 251, Novatian hardened his position and refused to let the *lapsi* return to the church. Novatian was martyred (A.D. 258) under the Roman emperor Valerian.

In his work “Concerning the Trinity,” Novatian briefly stated that Jesus had sent the Spirit, that He came at Pentecost, and then added these words:

This is He who places prophets in the Church, instructs teachers, directs tongues, gives powers and healings, does wonderful works, often discrimination of spirits, affords powers of government, suggests counsels, and orders and arranges whatever other gifts there are of charismata; and thus makes the Lord’s Church everywhere, and in all, perfected and completed. This is He who, after the

manner of a dove, when our Lord was baptized, came and abode upon Him, dwelling in Christ full and entire, and not maimed in any measure or portion; but with His whole overflow copiously distributed and sent forth, so that from Him others might receive some enjoyment of His graces: the source of the entire Holy Spirit remaining in Christ, so that from Him might be drawn streams of gifts and works, while the Holy Spirit dwelt affluently in Christ (Novatian, Concerning the Trinity, Chap. 29).

Novatian states that the Spirit “places” the charismatic gifts within the church. It is not clear if he was saying that all of the gifts were active, including tongues, or if he was simply teaching that the Holy Spirit gives these gifts. From the context before and after this passage, it is clear that Novatian was teaching the role of the Holy Spirit.

**Constitutions of the Holy Apostles.** The book is a compilation of various works. It is estimated that the work was written in the fourth century (circa A.D. 300-399). At first the work seems to suggest that signs and wonders were occurring, but the author’s understanding of signs and wonders is explained. It does not include prophecy and tongues.

Let not, therefore, any one that works signs and wonders judge any one of the faithful who is not vouchsafed the same: for the gifts of God which are bestowed by Him through Christ are various; and one man receives one gift, and another. For perhaps one has the word of wisdom, and another the word of knowledge; another, discerning of spirits; another, foreknowledge of things to come; another, the word of teaching; another, long-suffering; another, continence according to the law . . . (Constitutions of the Holy Apostles. Book 8, Chap. 1, Section 1).

**Ambrose.** Ambrose (A.D. 339-397) the youngest son of an imperial viceroy of Gaul. His father died soon after his birth, and Ambrose was reared in Rome, in a palace frequented by the clergy. Later in life he was bishop of Milan. He was a prolific writer. One of his works was about

the Holy Spirit. The only significant statement he makes about the spiritual gift of tongues is found in the following statement,

See, God set apostles, and set prophets and teachers, gave the gift of healings, which you find above to be given by the Holy Spirit; gave divers kinds of tongues. But yet all are not apostles, all are not prophets, all are not teachers. Not all, says he, have the gift of healings, nor do all, says he, speak with tongues. For the whole of the divine gifts cannot exist in each several man; each, according to his capacity, receives that which he either desires or deserves. But the power of the Trinity, which is lavish of all graces, is not like this weakness. (Ambrose. On The Holy Spirit. Book 2, Chap. 13, 150).

He states that the gifts of healings and tongues were given by the Holy Spirit and then adds that no gift is given to every believer. Ambrose attempts in this book to prove that the Trinity works together. It is not divided. It is not like the gifts which are distributed differently to believers. Ambrose’s statement does not indicate that tongues were continuing.

**Chrysostom.** John Chrysostom (A.D. 347-407) was the son of a high-ranking military officer and was brought up as a Christian by his widowed mother. He studied near the city of Antioch and eventually was ordained as a deacon and then a priest. Later he moved to the city of Constantinople and ministered there for 12 years. He established himself as a great preacher. His homilies or sermons include some on the gospels of Matthew and John, Acts, and eight of St. Paul’s letters.

Chrysostom makes one of the most significant and direct statements about spiritual gifts, namely tongues. He states he has no knowledge of tongues. They had ceased to exist. Here it is,

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that when ye were Gentiles, ye were led away unto those dumb idols, howsoever ye might be led. This whole place is very obscure: but the obscurity is produced by our ignorance of the facts

referred to and by their cessation, being such as then used to occur but now no longer take place. And why do they not happen now? Why look now, the cause too of the obscurity hath produced us again another question: namely, why did they then happen, and now do so no more? This however let us defer to another time, but for the present let us state what things were occurring then. Well: what did happen then? Whoever was baptized he straightway spake with tongues and not with tongues only, but many also prophesied, and some also performed many other wonderful works (Chrysostom, John. 1 Corinthians. Homily 29, Section 1).

Later Chrysostom suggested at least two reasons for the disappearance of spiritual gifts: The Christians who spoke in tongues led to schism, and tongues were no longer necessary after the faith had been established.

**Conclusion.** We have reviewed all of the relevant passages of the early church fathers that discuss tongues, and some about prophecy. There are many other passages that discuss spiritual gifts in the process of teaching about them. Sometimes spiritual gifts were discussed to explain another passage in scripture. Allusions were made to prophecy and tongues, but never was there a strong statement that the author had experienced tongues.

As we have witnessed, prophecy continued. That agrees with 1 Corinthians 13:8-12. However, tongues eventually disappeared. Origen said that only “traces” of the signs of the Holy Spirit occurred during his time (A.D. 185-254). By the time of John Chrysostom (A.D. 347-407) tongues had ceased.

# Conclusion

**H**ow shall we conclude our study? We have discovered that the Holy Spirit has been ministering since the creation. The Old Testament scriptures reveal that He came upon men. Some of them prophesied. Others were given supernatural abilities to judge, to provide wisdom, to exercise great leadership, and to perform exceptional feats. The Holy Spirit did not necessarily remain with them. In fact, He left King Saul (1 Sam. 16:14), and David was concerned that He might leave (Ps. 51:11). The Holy Spirit moved both holy prophets and one false prophet to prophesy. The Old Testament books were written by men who were moved by the Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21).

Scripture is silent for about 400 years between the book of Malachi and the time of the New Testament. We have no visibility of the activity of the Holy Spirit, but it is clear from the apostles that no man or woman can come to God without the Holy Spirit helping them to understand (John 16:7-11; 1 Cor. 2:11-15; 12:3). The Holy Spirit has been helping people believe in God since Adam and Eve.

**Spirit's Ministry Changes.** Yet Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would come. The coming of the Holy Spirit was unique. The prophet Joel had predicted His coming would occur in a new and unique way. That was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:16-21). The Spirit was the Helper or Comforter. When He arrived, the apostles spoke in tongues. Tongues were new. They had not occurred before. The ministry of the Holy Spirit changed on the day of Pentecost.

The Holy Spirit now lives inside Christians. Depending upon the spiritual walk of believers, they can be filled with the Spirit and experience special empowerment. The Spirit starts living inside men and women when they truly believe, and He continues living inside them until they die and meet their God face-to-face (Rom. 8:11).

The ministry of the Holy Spirit has changed with time: Old Testament to New Testament. While His ministry

of imparting saving faith continues, other aspects of His ministry among us have changed. It is an error to assume that His ministry has not evolved in the past and it is an error to assume that it will not change in the future too!

Yes, Jesus Christ's divine attributes - His essential being - are the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). Yet His activities have changed. He lived in the heavens before He became a man (John 6:38). After He died, He returned to heaven (Acts 1:11) and now sits at the right hand of the Father (Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20). Some day He will come at the end of the world and reign as a king on a throne during the millennial kingdom (John 18:37; Rev. 20:6). Jesus' ministry has and will continue to evolve. The Holy Spirit is the same yesterday, today, and forever, but how He ministers has changed and may continue to evolve.

**What Will Change?** When the Spirit came, we discovered that He now baptizes, convicts, seals, indwells, helps believers pray, teaches, gives spiritual gifts, and empowers believers by filling them with Himself. We have discovered that the new gift of tongues, which was one aspect of Joel's prophecy, was used in the book of Acts to prove to the apostles that salvation was given to the Gentiles and not just the Jews. Salvation was for both Jews and Gentiles.

Tongues was recorded three times in the book of Acts (Acts 2:1-13; 10:46; 19:6) and possibly a fourth in Acts 8:18. Those are the only occurrences of tongues in the New Testament, except for 1 Corinthians 14. 1 Cor. 12-14 is the major discussion about tongues in the New Testament. From a historical point of view, the last recorded event of tongues in the New Testament occurred about one year after 1 Corinthians was written in about A.D. 56.

**Tongues Will Change.** We have discovered from 1 Corinthians 13:8-12 that while prophecy and knowledge will continue until we see Jesus face-to-face, tongues will cease some day on its own. The Holy Spirit wanted to teach

us that love will continue forever; but other things such as the spiritual gifts of tongues, prophecy, and knowledge will not.

He used two different Greek words and one illustration to make His point. Why different verbs? He did not need to use different verbs unless there was a difference. One verb, KATARGEO, revealed that Jesus Christ will force prophecy and knowledge to stop when He returns. The other verb, PAUO, indicates that tongues will cease or stop on its own. PAUO ceases by itself, but prophecy and knowledge must be stopped.

*Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. 1 Cor. 13:8-10 (NASB)*

The illustration is significant because it supports the Holy Spirit's point that love continues. Even though prophecy and knowledge will continue, they will not continue forever. The Spirit does not mention the spiritual gift of tongues because it does not compete with love for longevity. Only prophecy and knowledge do. Tongues will cease on its own early. But even though prophecy and knowledge continue, they will not continue forever. They will be stopped when we see Jesus. Only love continues. That is the Holy Spirit's message! That is what He wanted to demonstrate.

A study of the early church fathers reveals that prophecy and knowledge continued, but tongues slowly disappeared. Origen referred to only traces of tongues existing, and Chrysostom said that it had disappeared. Other scriptural references to tongues were included in sermons and teaching materials, but not one reference can be found of a personal eye-witness account of tongues, except in references to a false teacher called Montanus.

**Will Tongues Stop?** Why will tongues stop? First, tongues was used to authenticate the ministry of the apostles and others in the early church (Acts 2:1-13; 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2: 3-4). Second, tongues was primarily a sign for

unbelievers (1 Cor. 14:22). Prophecy and knowledge were for believers. Third, tongues is not the most effect means to communicate unless needed (1 Cor. 12:30; 14:5, 13, 27). Prophecy and knowledge do not need to be interpreted. Fourth, tongues authenticated that salvation was for everyone (Acts 10:1-23). Fifth, God never commands us in the New Testament to speak in tongues, but we are told that it is the will of God to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:17-18). The results of being filled were discussed earlier. It did not include tongues. Tongues is not required to prove that a person is a Christian. 1 Corinthians 12:3; Galatians 5:22-23 and 1 John gives us the marks of a Christian (1 John 5:13) and tongues is not mentioned.

Has tongues already stopped? If tongues are present today, it will be a known language and not an unknown utterance. The spiritual gift of tongues is not an angelic language either. That would be an unknown utterance to humans. Will it stop some day? A careful reading of 1 Cor. 13:1 reveals that the Holy Spirit did not teach that the spiritual gift of tongues included angelic language. The Greek word for tongues in Acts 2 is GLOSSA. The word refers to "language, dialect, or tongue." Depending upon the context, it could refer to the physical tongue in one's mouth or to a spoken language. At Pentecost the apostles spoke in a known language.

*And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs - we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God." Acts 2:8-11 (NASB)*

In the writings of the early church fathers, GLOSSA was repeatedly used in the same way. 1 Cor. 14:22-23 says that GLOSSA are a sign to unbelievers. If the spiritual gift of GLOSSA was an unknown utterance, then even the unbelievers would not understand. It would not be a sign

to unbelievers.

**Conclusion.** The message of the New Testament is that tongues would stop and church historians state that tongues did stop. Jesus' ministry changed over time and we should expect that the ministry of the Holy Spirit would too! Is it possible that tongues could occur later, after the early church history? The answer is given in Joel 2:28-29 where we are told that prophecy, visions and the out pouring of the Holy Spirit will occur in the millennial kingdom which according to scripture (Matthew 24:15-31; Revelation 20:4-6) will occur in the future after Christ's second coming. Tongues are not mentioned in Joel, but Acts 2:17-21 describes a partial fulfillment of the Joel prophecy, which included tongues at the time of the apostles. Therefore, scripture strongly suggests that tongues will be present during the 1,000 year kingdom. The message of scripture is that tongues would cease on its own and it has.

Here is an interesting quote from the editorial director of the Charisma magazine,

Some Pentecostals today are softening this stance, partly because large percentages of their congregation do not speak in tongues. A recent study of fast growing denominations (funded by the Lilly Endowment) shows that only 25 percent of the members of some Pentecostal churches claim to have received that spiritual gift, although these people belong to groups teaching that Christians must speak in tongues in order to be considered Spirit-filled. (Grady, J. Lee. What happened to the Fire? p. 77).

In summary, we conclude that scripture prophesied that tongues would cease, and prophecy, or the forth-telling of God's message, will continue because prophecy is the greater gift to be desired. It will continue until we see Jesus face-to-face. Love will continue forever . . .

Love never fails . . . But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love. 1 Cor. 13:8, 13 (NASB)