

The New Birth

Part Two

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Systematic Theology

New Birth – Part Two

These notes taken from *The New Birth*
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Chapter 8

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

“Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence” (Acts 1:5).

“And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4).

What I Have Learned

The Holy Spirit

God is Holy (1 Peter 1:16). In fact, God alone is holy in Himself. Furthermore, God is a Spirit (John 4:24), and there is only one Spirit of God (Ephesians 4:4). The Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5: 3-4; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 with 6:19-20). One of the titles of the Holy Spirit is “Spirit of God” (Romans 8:9).

The titles “Holy Ghost” and “Holy Spirit” are interchangeable, with the *KJV* ordinarily using the former but sometimes the latter (Luke 11:13; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30). The original Greek text, however, uses only one phrase, *pneuma hagion*. All major translations since the *KJV* have uniformly chosen “Holy Spirit” since it is more understandable for modern English readers.

This title for God emphasizes His holiness and His spiritual nature. The Bible uses it most frequently in reference to the part of God’s activity among and in mankind that only a Spirit can perform. The New Testament particularly associates the Holy Spirit with God’s work of regeneration and His dwelling in man (John 3:5; 14:16-17).

The Baptism of the Spirit

This is a vital New Testament experience with God. The *KJV* speaks of being “*baptized with the Holy Ghost*” (Acts 1:5). *With* in this phrase comes from the Greek word *en*, which can also be rendered *in*, as both *TAB* and *NIV* note.

This word baptism means plunging, dipping, or immersing. By using this terminology, the Bible depicts the experience as a complete immersion in the Spirit of God. At the same time, the Bible describes a person who receives this experience as being filled with the Spirit. These are complementary (not contradictory) illustrations, for when an empty container is completely submerged into liquid it is not only surrounded but also completely filled with the liquid. These descriptions

communicate the idea that a person who receives the Holy Spirit achieves a close personal union with God. He lives in constant contact with God, and God becomes a part of his life. He becomes a temple in which God dwells, and the Spirit of God affects his every thought and action.

Biblical Terminology

The Book of Acts describes the baptism of the Spirit in many ways:

- “filled with the Holy Ghost” (2:4);
- “the promise of the Holy Ghost” (2:33);
- “the gift of the Holy Ghost” (2:38);
- “the Holy Ghost fell on all of them” (10:44);
- “poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost” (10:45).
- “received the Holy Ghost” (10:47); and
- “the Holy Ghost came on them” (19:6).

The epistles explain that the Holy Spirit dwells in us (Romans 8:9).

All these phrases simply identify the same New Testament experience in different ways. When empty human vessels are baptized in the Spirit, they are filled with the Spirit. When God pours out His Spirit on people, the Spirit comes on them, they receive the Spirit, and they are filled with the Spirit. When God gives the Spirit, He fulfills His promise and men receive the Spirit. (See Chart 8.)

Some of these descriptions compare the Holy Spirit to water, and Jesus described the Spirit as living water that would quench spiritual thirst (John 4:14; 7:38). However, the Holy Spirit is not actually a fluid but is God Himself. The Bible also associates the Spirit with fire (Matthew 3:11) and wind (John 3:8), but the Spirit is not literally fire, wind, or water.

Filled With the Spirit

This phrase appears in Acts as the equivalent of “*baptized with the Holy Ghost*,” with both describing the initial experience of receiving the Spirit of God to dwell in one’s life.

Some time after Pentecost a number of Spirit-baptized believers came together for a prayer meeting and were “*filled with the Holy Ghost*” (Acts 4:31). God met with these believers in a mighty way and renewed their original experience. When Peter spoke to the Jewish religious council he was “*filled with the Holy Ghost*” (Acts 4:8). Paul, “*filled with the Holy Ghost*,” prophesied that the sorcerer, Barjesus, would be blind for a time (Acts 13:9). From these instances we see that filled may mean a special, momentary endowment of power to one who has already been baptized in the Spirit. Today, many speak of this endowment as being anointed by the Spirit.

Other verses use the term “filled” to describe the continual dwelling of the Spirit in one who has been

baptized in the Spirit. The seven men chosen to assist the apostles were “*full of the Holy Ghost*” (Acts 6:3,5). Paul exhorted the Ephesian church to “*be filled with the Spirit*” (Ephesians 5:18). The latter verse is an exhortation to Spirit-baptized believers to let the Spirit continually control them. In this sense, to be “*filled with the Spirit*” is basically the same as to “*walk after the Spirit*” (Romans 8:4), meaning to receive daily guidance and power from the Spirit.

Even when a backslider repents, he is not “baptized” with the Spirit again, but refilled. Due to the backslider’s faithlessness and disobedience, he is disinherited, but he is not “unborn.” The historic fact of his regeneration and justification is still a reality. When he repents he does not need to be “born again” another time. He does not experience a second baptism of water or a second baptism of the Spirit, for the original baptism of water and Spirit becomes effective again when he repents. Instead, he is simply restored to a justified status and entitled once again to inherit eternal life as an obedient son of God.

In sum, the phrase “filled with the Spirit” can convey any one of these three meanings in apostolic church usage:

- 1) The initial Spirit baptism
- 2) The daily guidance and power that the Spirit grants to Spirit-baptized believers who continue to yield to Him, and
- 3) Subsequent experiences that renew the initial experience.

We must distinguish the baptism of the Spirit from all Old Testament experiences with God. The filling of the Spirit in Acts is different from the filling of the Spirit that John the Baptist had. It is a new experience for a new church.

Part of Salvation

As Chart 8A indicates, every description of the work of the Spirit in the initial experience of salvation can be equated with the baptism of the Spirit. The baptism of the Spirit is the same as the birth of the Spirit (John 3:5; chapter 4). The Spirit first begins to “dwell” in a person’s life when he is baptized with the Spirit. Any other alternative would not be logical. For example, how can the Spirit dwell in a person if he has not received the Spirit, if he has not been filled with the Spirit, if the Spirit has not come upon him, or if the Spirit has not fallen upon him?

1 Corinthians 12:13 settles any doubt in this matter: “*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.*” The Greek preposition translated *by* is *en* – the same preposition used in Acts 1:5. We could translate the sentence as, “With one Spirit we are all baptized into one body,” as the NIV indicates in a footnote. The Greek phrasing demonstrates that Paul referred to the same experience Jesus had promised in Acts 1:5. Thus, the

baptism of the Spirit is part of salvation and not an experience subsequent to salvation.

Most theologians recognize the essentiality of being filled with the Holy Spirit, that the baptism of the Holy Ghost is part of the new birth. Bloesch said, “We insist that the baptism of the Spirit must not be distinguished from the new birth.” Another non-Pentecostal theologian, Anthony Hoekema stated, “If we have been born again, we have the Spirit, since only the Spirit can regenerate us.” He also wrote, “Baptism in the Spirit. . . is not an experience distinct from and usually subsequent to conversion. . . but is simultaneous with conversion and an integral aspect of conversion. . . All Christians have been Spirit-baptized. Spirit-baptism is. . . identical with regeneration.”

The baptism of the Spirit is the means by which we receive Christ into our lives. There is no separation between Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, for the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9). Christ dwells in us by the indwelling of the Spirit (Ephesians 3:16-17). “*The Lord is the Spirit,*” and the Holy Spirit is “*the Spirit of the Lord*” (2 Corinthians 3:17-18, NIV). It is impossible to receive Christ on one occasion and receive the Spirit on another, for there is only one Spirit (Ephesians 4:4; 1 Corinthians 12:13). When we are baptized in the Spirit we receive Christ into our lives.

The baptism of the Holy Ghost is just the beginning of a continual life of being filled with the Spirit. It is not an experience only for the select few, nor is it a post-conversional experience received only after long tarrying and agonizing. Rather, it is part of conversion and it comes with repentance and faith. A person who receives the Spirit has not reached a point of perfection, but has simply begun to live a Christian life. After being baptized in the Spirit, he must seek to be renewed continually by submitting to the leading of the Spirit, letting Him have full control, and bearing the fruit of the Spirit.

Some people teach that the Spirit baptism is a second or third “word of grace,” meaning an instantaneous experience subsequent to saving conversion. Most Protestant denominations regard the baptism of the Spirit as part of conversion and deny the existence of instantaneous works of grace thereafter. The Holiness movement of the 1800’s taught that there was a second work of grace after conversion, called sanctification, in which a person is completely purified of indwelling sin.

In the early 1900’s, many Holiness people received the baptism of the Holy Ghost with tongues and classified that experience as a third work of grace. Others who received the Spirit baptism held that sanctification is a continual process throughout a person’s Christian life, and so classified the Spirit baptism either as a second work of grace or as part of conversion itself. In light of our analysis of biblical teaching and terminology, we conclude that the baptism of the Spirit is neither a second

work nor a third work but part of conversion and regeneration.

The Founding of the New Testament Church

The New Testament church began on the Day of Pentecost after Christ's ascension. John the Baptist did not start the church but only prepared the way for Jesus. Jesus declared John to be as great as any prophet, but then He said, *"He that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he"* (Luke 7:28).

Everyone who participates in God's rule today, which is accomplished by His indwelling Spirit, has greater spiritual privileges, blessings, and power than John had. John preached that the kingdom of heaven was at hand (Matthew 3:1-2); the message of the kingdom began with him (Matthew 11:11-13; Luke 16:16). However, he did not participate in the fullness of that kingdom, for the fullness of grace came only through Christ (John 1:16-17). He did not have the baptism of the Spirit, but he preached that Jesus would baptize with the Spirit (Matthew 3:11).

Jesus did not found the New Testament church during His earthly ministry, but He spoke of the church in the future tense: *"Upon this rock I will build my church"* (Matthew 16:18). He told the disciples shortly before His ascension that *"repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem"* (Luke 24:47). He told them to wait in Jerusalem until they received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit would give them power, and then they would become witnesses (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-8).

The New Testament church dates from the Day of Pentecost rather than from John's preaching or the Lord's earthly ministry. God had designed a new covenant with man, and this covenant required Christ's death and resurrection before it would come into effect. This new covenant or new testament (both *covenant* and *testament* in the KJV come from the single Greek word *diatheke*) includes the promise of the Holy Spirit (Jeremiah 31:31-33; 2 Corinthians 3:3-6).

Before the new covenant could come into effect, Jesus had to die: *"And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator"* (Hebrews 9:15-16). Jesus became the mediator of the new covenant by His death, and His resurrection made the death effective (Romans 4:24-25). Therefore, the Holy Spirit was given only after Christ's death and resurrection: *"But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified"* (John 7:39); *"It is expedient for you that I go*

away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you" (John 16:7). The New Testament church began on the Day of Pentecost, after Christ's death, burial, and resurrection made the new covenant (testament) available.

A New Experience for the New Church

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a new experience given to the New Testament church after Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension (John 7:39; 16:7). Just before Christ's ascension He promised the Spirit as a new, future experience to be received by His disciples while they tarried in Jerusalem (Luke 24:27-29; Acts 1:4-8). This promise was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4, 33).

No one before Acts 2:1-4 received this experience. The new covenant is a *"better covenant, which was established upon better promises"* (Hebrews 8:6), one of which is the promise of the Holy Ghost. After Hebrews 11 lists many great men of faith in the Old Testament, it closes by stating that they had not received the promise: *"And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect"* (Hebrews 11:39-40).

The prophets predicted the gift of the Spirit and desired to participate in its glory, but God reserved the Holy Spirit baptism for the New Testament church: *"Of which salvation the prophets have required and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you. . . Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven"* (1 Peter 1:10,12).

That the Spirit of God dealt with men in many different ways in the Old Testament is clearly stated in Scripture. Men of God were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:21). The Spirit of God anointed chosen vessels for specific purposes. However, beginning with Pentecost, God made a new experience and a greater dimension of His Spirit available. Today we can have His abiding presence in our lives, imparting power to overcome sins in a way unknown under the law (Romans 8:3-4). This inner power of the Spirit is a key factor that distinguishes the new covenant from the old (Jeremiah 31:31-33; Ezekiel 11:19). Before Pentecost, men were not regenerated (born again) in the New Testament sense; they did not have the Spirit baptism described in the Book of Acts.

Before Pentecost, John the Baptist, his mother Elisabeth, and his father Zacharias were *"filled with the Holy Ghost"* at specific times (Luke 1:15, 41,67). Their experience, however, was not the experience of the New Testament church, for the Holy Ghost was not yet given. John did

not have the baptism of the Holy Ghost, nor did his disciples (Luke 3:16, 7:28; Acts 19:1-6). In Luke 1, the phrase, “filled with the Holy Ghost,” describes an Old Testament experience in which God’s Spirit moved on people at a particular time for a particular purpose. In John’s case, the Spirit anointed him and separated him from his mother’s womb for a special ministry just as He had done with Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:5). John’s parents were temporarily endued with power of the Spirit to give prophetic utterances. Only after Pentecost does “filled with the Holy Ghost” specifically refer to the New Testament Spirit baptism, which first became available at that time.

Old Testament Prophecy

Although the Old Testament prophets did not receive the Spirit baptism, they did record God’s promises concerning the coming of the Spirit (1 Peter 1:10-12): “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit” (Joel 2:28-29). Peter quoted this prophecy and applied it to the baptism of the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:16-18).

God promised a new covenant in which He would write His laws upon the hearts of His people (Jeremiah 31:31-33). This promise is fulfilled by the outpouring of the Spirit, who writes the laws of God on our hearts (2 Corinthians 3:3-6) and who gives us power to fulfill the righteousness of the law (Romans 8:3-4). God said, “And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 11:19; see 36:26). In another prophetic passage He stated, “Neither will I hide my face any more from them; for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel” (Ezekiel 39:29).

New Testament Promise and Command

John the Baptist preached the promise of the Holy Spirit baptism: “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire” (Matthew 3:11). John did not preach that the Spirit was only for a select few, but for everyone who repented and received his baptism. God gave John a sign whereby he would recognize the One who would fulfill the promise (Jesus): “Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost” (John 1:33).

Jesus both promised the Spirit baptism and commanded His disciples to receive the Spirit, as the following quotations demonstrate:

- “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” (Luke 11:13).
- “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5).
- “But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14). The next quotation indicates that Jesus spoke of the Spirit outpouring.
- “In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified)” (John 7:37-39).

This last passage teaches several very important things:

- 1) The Holy Spirit is promised to all who believe in Jesus.
- 2) Belief in Christ must be in accordance with the teaching of Scripture, not divorced from it.
- 3) To believe is not just mental assent at a certain point in time, but continual believing, as the use of the present tense indicates.
- 4) The gift of the Holy Ghost to which Jesus referred did not come until after His resurrection and ascension. He specifically meant the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, and this is the experience all believers should receive.

Shortly before Christ’s death He emphasized to His disciples that the Holy Ghost would come after He left them. Furthermore, He said the Holy Ghost would be Himself in another form – in Spirit rather than in flesh: “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you” (John 14:16-18).

- “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26).
- “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit

of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me” (John 15:26).

- “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. . . .Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come” (John 16:7, 13).

Jesus reiterated the promise of the Spirit after His resurrection and turned it into a command. He commanded His disciples, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost” (John 20:22). They did not receive the Spirit at that time, as Luke’s account makes clear. “And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49); “And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. . . .But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:4-5, 8).

Other accounts of the Great Commission record the Lord’s promise to be with His disciples until the end of the age (Matthew 28:20) as well as His promise to give all believers power to cast out devils, speak with new tongues, be victorious over serpents, be protected against poison, and pray successfully for the healing of the sick (Mark 16:17-18). All these promises come to pass through the indwelling power of the Spirit.

Fulfillment in the Apostolic Church

The New Testament church continued to proclaim the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a promise and a command to all. Peter preached the promise on the Day of Pentecost with the support of all the apostles (Acts 2:38). Paul emphasized the need of the Spirit (Acts 19:1-6). He wrote, “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Romans 8:9). Paul defined the kingdom of God as “righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Romans 14:17).

The Significance of Acts

The New Testament consists of four divisions:

- 1) Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John)
- 2) Church History (Acts)
- 3) Epistles (Romans to Jude), and
- 4) Prophecy (Revelation)

The Gospels are historical accounts of the life, teachings, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. None of them describes the establishing of a church; they describe the One who would establish the church upon His person, teaching, and work. The Book of Acts is a narrative history of the New Testament church, describing its beginning in Jerusalem and its spread to all Judea, Samaria, and the Gentile world. The Epistles are letters of instruction and admonition written to born-again believers to help them in Christian living. While the Epistles do contain references to the initial conversion experience, they assume the readers have already been born of water and the Spirit. The Book of Revelation is also addressed to established churches and believers, revealing God’s plan for the future.

Acts is the only book in the Bible to contain historical accounts of people who received the new birth experience in the New Testament church, including all accounts of Christian water baptism and Spirit baptism. Because of the nature and purpose of the book, it contains most of the direct evidence relative to the question, “How can I be saved?” The Book of Acts is the pattern and norm for the New Testament church, not the exception. If Acts is not the norm, then the Bible gives no example of what the church should be like. The five accounts of the Spirit baptism in Acts are not exhaustive, but representative of the way in which God poured out His Spirit across the entire spectrum of humanity.

The Day of Pentecost

In obedience to Christ’s command, approximately 120 disciples returned to Jerusalem after His ascension to await the baptism of the Spirit. Included in this number were the twelve apostles (with Matthias replacing Judas), Mary the mother of Jesus, the brothers of Jesus, and several women (Acts 1:12-26). It appears that they were gathered in an upper room on the Day of Pentecost, a Jewish feast day that came fifth days after the Passover. (The Greek word *pentecoste* literally means “fiftieth day.”) On this first Pentecost after Christ’s ascension, the 120 received the Holy Ghost and spoke in tongues (Acts 2:1-4).

Some people contend that only the twelve apostles received the Spirit, but this is demonstrably incorrect:

- 1) Jesus gave the promise to all those at His ascension, not just to the Twelve.
- 2) All the 120 went to the upper room to await the fulfillment of the promise, and we find no record that any of them left.
- 3) In Joel’s prophecy, which Peter applied to Pentecost, God said He would pour out His Spirit on all flesh, including sons, daughters, young men, old men, servants, and handmaidens (Acts 2:16-18).

This certainly describes more than the Twelve; all 120, including the women, received the Spirit.

We can assume that an additional 3000 received the Spirit in response to Peter's sermon, as shown by the following:

1) Peter promised the gift of the Holy Ghost to all who heard his word (Acts 2:38-39), and 3000 received his word gladly (Acts 2:41). Peter began his sermon by explaining what had just happened to him; he ended it by offering the same experience to his audience.

2) The 3000 believed his message and applied it to their lives, and he preached that the gift of the Holy Ghost was available to them.

3) The 3000 were baptized (Acts 2:41). Even if this means water baptism alone, the Spirit was promised to all who would repent and be baptized in water.

4) The 3000 were "added unto them," namely to the 120 who had just received the Spirit. We conclude, as does *The Pulpit Commentary*, that 3120 received the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

The 3120 were all Jews and Jewish proselytes, for much later Jewish Christians still were not certain that Gentiles could be saved (Acts 10:11). Some could have been proselytes – Gentiles by birth but Jews by conversion (Acts 2:10). The 120 were mostly Galileans, but the 3000 included Jews from many different countries who had come to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of Pentecost (Acts 2:5-11).

The company of believers later came together to pray and were "all filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 4:31). This was not a first-time Spirit baptism but a renewal and an anointing of the Spirit-baptized Jewish believers.

In conclusion, the Day of Pentecost represents the first occurrence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, specifically, the first outpouring on the Jews.

Samaria

The second recorded Spirit baptism (i.e., outpouring of the Spirit on people for their first time) occurred in Samaria. Racially and religiously, the Samaritans were a mixture of Jew and Gentile and thus constituted a class of people distinct from either.

Philip the evangelist (one of the Seven, not one of the Twelve) took the gospel to Samaria. The Samaritans listened to him, saw miracles (including healing and casting out of evil spirits), had great joy, believed his message and were baptized in water in the name of Jesus. However, despite all this, they had not received the Holy Ghost (Acts 8: 6-16).

This incident reveals that the baptism of the Spirit is a definite experience not to be confused with and not necessarily accompanying miracles, great emotion, mental belief, repentance, or water baptism. When the apostles heard what was happening in Samaria, they sent Peter and John. When Peter and John prayed for the Samaritans and laid hands on them, they received the Holy Ghost (Acts 8:17).

The Samaritans did not receive the Holy Ghost until Peter and John laid hands on them. Apparently they were not fully prepared earlier. They had "believed Philip," but evidently they had not committed themselves totally to Christ. When Peter and John arrived, prayed for them, and laid hands on them, their faith increased to the point of receiving the Spirit.

This story does not teach that one of the twelve apostles had to bestow the Holy Ghost, for Paul was filled with the Spirit when Ananias prayed for him (Acts 9), and the Ephesians received the Holy Ghost when Paul prayed for them (Acts 19). Similarly, the laying on of hands is not an absolute requirement, for the 120 received the Spirit without this act (Acts 2), and so did Cornelius (Acts 10). The laying on of hands has the following significance and purpose:

1) It demonstrates submission to God's plan and leadership.

2) It symbolizes the bestowal of God's blessing, promise, and calling; and

3) It helps instill faith in the seeker.

The experience of the Samaritans demonstrates that one can believe to a certain extent and even be baptized in water and yet not receive the Spirit. There is no salvation without the Spirit (Romans 8:9), so the Samaritans needed the baptism of the Spirit to complete their salvation, as the case of Simon the Magician exemplifies. Hoekema says, "The Samaritans were not true believers when Philip baptized them, and therefore did not receive the Spirit for salvation until the apostles laid hands on them. . . Could it not be that the whole point of the narrative is to teach that salvation is impossible without the Holy Spirit?" Most Protestant commentators agree that the Samaritans were not saved until they received the Spirit.

Paul's Conversion

God arrested Saul of Tarsus (Paul) by a light from heaven, but we find no indication that Paul was saved at this moment. Rather, the Lord told him, "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 9:6). God sent Paul to Ananias in order for Paul to receive his sight and "be filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 9:17). When Ananias laid hands on Paul and prayed for him, Paul immediately received his sight, arose, and was baptized (Acts 9:18).

We can safely assume Paul received the Holy Ghost at this time although the Bible does not specifically describe Paul's Spirit baptism. But we know the Lord's stated purpose must have been accomplished. Paul's writings and ministry confirm that he indeed received the Spirit. Again Hoekema's analysis is useful: "We conclude that Saul's conversion was not an instantaneous happening but a three-day experience. Saul's being filled with the Spirit at the end of the three days, therefore, must not be

understood as a 'Spirit-baptism' which occurred after his conversion, but as an integral aspect of his conversion." Bloesch agrees that Paul's new birth occurred when he received the Spirit at his baptism by Ananias.

The Gentiles in Caesarea

The next account of the Spirit baptism centers around Cornelius, a Roman centurion (captain over one hundred men) who lived in the city of Caesarea. He was devout man, feared God, gave much alms, prayed to God often, and even had an angelic visitation. Despite all of these qualities and honorable activities, he was not saved. The angel told him to send for Peter, "*Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved*" (Acts 11:14). Probably he had repented but had not received the Holy Spirit and so was not saved.

Cornelius was not a Jew, either by birth or conversion, but a Gentile. Upon God's direct command, Peter went to Caesarea and preached to Cornelius, his kinsmen, and his friends. While Peter was preaching, His Gentile listeners all received the Holy Ghost and began to speak in tongues (Acts 10:44-46). Peter identified this sign as the baptism of the Spirit – the same gift that the Jews received on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 11:15-17). This is a very significant account, because it marks the first time that Gentiles were baptized with the Spirit.

The Disciples of John at Ephesus

When Paul met about twelve disciples of John the Baptist in the city of Ephesus, he asked, "*Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?*" (Acts 19:2). They answered, "*We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost*" (Acts 19:2).

Possibly these disciples had never heard John preach about the Spirit baptism, or more likely they did not know the time had actually come to receive the promised experience. They were probably saying, "We have not heard whether the Holy Ghost is given yet." (See John 7:29, which literally says "*The Holy Ghost was not yet*" but which the KJV translates as "*The Holy Ghost was not yet given.*") At any rate, Paul next asked these men, "*Then what baptism did you receive?*" (Acts 19:3, NIV),

When he found that they had received only John's baptism, he re-baptized them in the name of Jesus. Then he prayed for them and laid hands on them, upon which they received the Holy Ghost, spoke in tongues, and prophesied (Acts 19:6).

It is enlightening to see Paul's approach to these "believers." He was not content until he asked two very important questions:

- 1) Have you received the Holy Ghost? and
- 2) How were you baptized?

He taught them and worked with them until they were baptized in the name of Jesus and received the Holy Ghost with the sign of tongues.

This incident is extremely important to us today because it provides strong evidence that baptism in the name of Jesus and the baptism of the Spirit with tongues were the norm for the entire New Testament church. Not only is this evident from Paul's two questions for "believers," but it is also apparent from the very fact that God chose to record this incident. If it were not for Acts 19, the other accounts could possibly be explained away as unusual, one-time events. For example, Acts 2 records the birth of the church among the Jews, Acts 8 records the extension of the gospel to the Samaritans, and Acts 10 records its extension to the Gentiles. However, no such special circumstances existed in Acts 19; Acts 19 shows that the baptism of the Holy Ghost with tongues is for all who believe on Jesus.

Hoekema attempts to explain away Acts 2, 8, and 10 as described above and then admits that Acts 19 is "probably the most baffling of all the passages in Acts associated with *glossolalia* [speaking in tongues]." Nevertheless, he attempts to explain why the Ephesians needed this experience while we supposedly do not:

"1) The faith which these Ephesian believers had when Paul first came to them was not full-orbed Christian faith but a faith which was quite incomplete.

2) There were special circumstances which made the bestowal of glossolalia on these Ephesian disciples necessary."

These "special circumstances," he contends, were:

"1) They had not heard about the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost and thus needed tongues to convince them that it had in fact occurred.

2) They were a prominent group of believers who were to form the nucleus of the Ephesian church, yet they did not have an adequate understanding of Christianity. For the sake of the Ephesian church, this nucleus needed tongues to complete their understanding.

It should be noted that all of this reasoning applies with equal force today. The baptism of the Spirit is still necessary to complete Christian faith. Tongues are still needed as a sign of the outpouring of the Spirit. People still need to be convinced that the Spirit has been given. The Spirit is still necessary to transform a small group of believers into the nucleus of a local church. Whatever reasons God had for giving the Ephesians the baptism of the Spirit, those reasons are still valid for individuals and local congregations today. If anything, we have a greater need today for people to come to a complete Christian faith and to understand that the Spirit has indeed been poured out on the church.

Conclusion About the Spirit Baptism

Our study of these five cases demonstrates two important concepts this chapter has emphasized:

1) The baptism of the Holy Spirit is an essential part of salvation for the New Testament church age (the new birth) and not a separate experience subsequent to salvation.

2) The baptism of the Spirit is for all people in the New Testament church age (from Pentecost to the Second Coming of Christ), not just for a special group segregated from us by race, nationality, time, or position.

Some people object to the teaching that the baptism of the Spirit is essential on the basis of people in the Gospels who were saved without receiving the Spirit, such as Christ's disciples before Pentecost, the thief on the cross, and others whom Jesus forgave of sins. However, these examples occurred under the Law and in a unique transitional period in salvation history. The Holy Spirit was not given, and the New Testament church did not exist until the Day of Pentecost.

During the time of Jesus' earthly ministry, He upheld the old covenant as the path to eternal life (Luke 10:25-28) and commanded His followers to obey the Law of Moses (Matthew 19:16-19); 23: 1-3,23). He told an adulteress, "Go, and sin no more" (John 8:11), leaving her with the Law as a moral guide. He told one leper He healed, "Go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded" (Matthew 8:4), and He told ten other lepers, "Go shew yourselves unto the priests" (Luk3 17:14).

Those who accepted Christ's message were saved under the old covenant while they waited for the new covenant and the promised Holy Spirit. They were saved in harmony with the Law, not in contradiction to it. For example, Jesus served as both sacrificial lamb and high priest for the thief on the cross. Before Pentecost, God expected people to follow the Law; after Pentecost God expects them to follow the gospel for the New Testament church age.

Only for the Apostolic Church?

A few people hold that the baptism of the Spirit was only for the apostles or the apostolic age. However, the Spirit was promised to and received by men, women, young, old, Jew, Samaritan, and Gentile. Joel promised this experience to all flesh in the latter days (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:16-18). If Pentecost was in the latter days, then all subsequent history is also. Peter told the crowd at Pentecost, "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39). He expressly promised the gift to their children, which included some not yet born and also some who would live past the days of the twelve apostles.

"All that are afar off" included those distant from the Day of Pentecost both in space and in time. The call of the Lord extends to everyone – to "whosoever will" (Revelation 22:17). The example of the Ephesians shows

that the baptism of the Spirit is for everyone and was not just given once to each national group as an unrepeatable experience. Indeed, the Bible promises the Spirit to all believers (John 7:38-39; Acts 11:15-17) and to all who ask (Luke 11:13).

Those who say the Book of Acts is not for today have the burden of proof. If Acts is not the pattern for the New Testament church, what is? Where in the Bible does God retract His promises relative to the baptism of the Spirit? Where does the Bible say the experience of the book of Acts is not for today? We must conclude that the promise of the Spirit is still ours today.

Salvation in Acts Without the Spirit?

Some claim that people in the Book of Acts were saved without receiving the Spirit. For example, the Bible does not explicitly record that the following received the Holy Spirit:

- The 5000 who believed after the healing of the lame man (Acts 4:4)
- The Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8)
- Lydia (Acts 16)
- The Philippian jailer (Acts 16)

However, this is an argument from silence. No verse says they did not receive the Spirit. The Bible simply does not go into detail to describe all these conversions. Just as the Gospels record only representative miracles and events in Christ's ministry for lack of space (John 21:25), so Acts describes only a sampling of the important conversion experiences. God inspired Luke to choose five accounts of the Spirit baptism that would have great symbolic significance for later ages. Luke recorded enough to establish a precedent for every situation so that it was not necessary to record every other case or to describe other conversions in detail.

Even so, there is still evidence that all converts received the Spirit. The 5000 "believed" and Lydia "believed", and true belief leads to receiving the Spirit. The eunuch and the jailer both received an experience that caused rejoicing, which probably was the result of the baptism of the Spirit.

In sum, five key examples include the baptism of the Spirit as part of conversion, and these five cases represent all classes of people. A number of other conversion experiences are not told in detail, but the accounts of many of them imply the baptism of the Spirit while none specifically excludes it. We conclude that the five examples were meant to establish the pattern. The less specific cases should be read in light of the five examples given to us. Under no circumstances can mere silence or lack of a complete description overthrow the clear evidence of the five cases Acts records.

How to Receive the Holy Spirit

Since the baptism of the Holy Spirit is part of salvation and is available to us today, the Spirit is not difficult to receive. God promises His Spirit to all who ask (Luke 11:13), believe (John 7:38-39), and obey His Word (Acts 5:32). The seeker must have faith in God's promise, for without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6).

Peter promised the Spirit to all who would repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38). The example of the Samaritans shows that in the absence of complete faith, water baptism cannot automatically bring the Spirit. Moreover, the example of Cornelius shows that the Spirit can come before water baptism. The recipient must totally submit himself to God, willing to do anything God requires. At that point of complete submission and released faith, God pours out His Spirit. If the recipient has not been baptized in water in Jesus' name, he is commanded to do this as soon as possible.

Repentance is necessary. For the Holy Spirit to dwell in a life, that person must turn from sin and separate himself from spiritual uncleanness (2 Corinthians 6:16 – 7:1). Only God can make him righteous, but he must express a desire to turn from sin and receive pardon, ask for God's help in turning from sin, and surrender totally to God.

If someone will repent and have faith, God will give His Spirit, even though that person may have some false concepts in other areas, such as water baptism. In such cases, God grants His Spirit to lead the sincere person into further truth. God is not looking for reasons to deny the seeker, but He will give His Spirit to anyone who meets the conditions of repentance and faith as set forth in His Word.

If someone wants the baptism of the Holy Spirit, he should come to God with faith, believing His Word and expecting to receive the promise. He should repent from his sins by confessing them, asking pardon, pledging to do God's will (with His help), and totally surrendering to Him. He should determine in his mind that he wants God's Spirit that very day, regardless of what God may require of him in the future. After he repents and makes this total commitment, he should begin to praise God for hearing and answering prayer. Then, the Spirit will come in, take complete control, and inspire the seeker to speak in a language he has never learned. Often, the laying on of hands after repentance helps the seeker focus his faith at a point in time and receive the Spirit. This was a very common practice in the Early Church, although it was not a prerequisite for receiving the Spirit.

It is not wise to emphasize expectation and praise until the seeker has repented, for no matter how much he praises God he cannot receive the Spirit without repentance.

Receiving the Spirit is only as difficult as the seeker makes it. It takes only as much time as he needs to

repent and surrender completely to God, which may be just a moment. Tarrying for long periods of time or seeking many times is not necessary. Those who do not receive the Spirit either lack faith to receive or have not fully repented and yielded every area of their lives to God. The 120 on the Day of Pentecost had to wait seven to ten days for the first outpouring, but since that time the Spirit has been freely available to all.

If people are taught how important it is to receive the Spirit baptism, how simple it really is to be filled with the Spirit, and how to prepare their hearts, they usually receive the Spirit easily. If the necessity of the Spirit baptism is taught many people will be filled. On the other hand, if the experience is merely presented as an optional blessing, most people will not. If repentance and faith are taught, most seekers will receive the Spirit in the water of baptism or when hands are laid upon them after repentance.

Young children, the elderly, the uneducated, the educated, the poor, and the rich all receive the Spirit. Buddhists and others from non-Christian backgrounds often receive the Spirit on their first visit to a Christian church. The accounts of Cornelius and the Ephesians both show that a person can receive the Spirit instantly, at the moment he repents and believes.

The Work of the Spirit

When a person is baptized in the Spirit, he receives the Spirit of Christ in his life on a permanent basis (Romans 8:9; Ephesians 3:16-17). He becomes a part of God's spiritual family, and God's Spirit begins to guide him. The Bible describes this in several ways:

- 1) By the Spirit we are born into the kingdom of God (John 3:5).
- 2) The Spirit adopts us into the family of God (Romans 8:15-16; Galatians 4:5-6)
- 3) The Spirit baptizes us into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13)
- 4) The Spirit sanctifies us (1 Corinthians 6:11; 1 Peter 1:2)
- 5) The Spirit is the seal of our salvation (Ephesians 1:13), and
- 6) The Spirit is the earnest (pledge, guarantee, first installment) of our inheritance (Ephesians 1:14).

In short, receiving the Spirit is part of our salvation. Of course, we should not sharply separate the baptism of the Spirit from water baptism since they join together to complete the new birth and bring all the benefits of salvation.

In addition to being part of salvation, the baptism of the Spirit brings power (1 Timothy 1:7), which includes:

- Power to witness and be a living testimony that Christ saves from sin (Acts 1:8),

- Power to overcome sin, live righteously, and mortify the deeds of the flesh (Romans 8:4; 13), and
- Resurrection power when Christ comes for His church (Romans 8:11).

The Spirit brings rest and refreshing (Isaiah 28:11-12; Acts 3:19), and gives a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7). The Spirit becomes a teacher, a guide into all truth, and an illuminator of the Word of God (John 14:26; 16:13). He also becomes our intercessor and way of access to God (Romans 8:26-27; Ephesians 2:18). Finally, the Spirit works in our lives to give the nine-fold fruit of the Spirit; namely, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance (Galatians 5:22-23; Romans 5:5; 14:7).

All these works of the Spirit reinforce the doctrine that receiving the Spirit is essential to salvation. Without all the above workings of the Spirit, we cannot successfully live a victorious Christian life that is pleasing to God. Anyone who tries to be saved without receiving God's spirit is attempting to be saved by his own efforts and is doomed to failure.

Conclusion

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the normal, basic New Testament experience with God. It is the birth of the spirit. God has promised this experience to all who will believe Him and has commanded all to receive the Spirit. A person can receive the Spirit today by simply repenting of sin, having faith in God, and asking God for His gift. Once he receives the Holy Spirit, He will give him power to overcome sin and live a holy life. If a person lets the Spirit continually fill (control and guide) him, he will bear the fruit of the Spirit and truly live a Christ-like life.

What Have You Learned?

1. The title "Holy Spirit" emphasizes what two things about God? _____

2. What are seven (7) ways that the Book of Acts describes the baptism of the Spirit? Support with Scripture. _____

3. What two (2) Biblical phrases describe the initial experience of receiving the Spirit of God to dwell in a person's life? Support your answers with Scripture. _____

4. What three (3) meanings in the apostolic church age can be drawn from the phrase "filled with the Spirit"? _____

5. Explain the difference between all Old Testament experiences with God and the New Testament experience of the baptism of the Spirit. _____

6. When did the New Testament Church begin? _____

7. What had to happen before the new covenant could come into effect? Write out the Scripture (with reference) that supports your answer. _____

8. Briefly explain why John the Baptist, his mother Elisabeth, and his father Zacharias were "filled with the Holy Ghost" but did not have the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Use Scriptures to support. _____

9. Name at least three (3) Old Testament prophets who recorded God's promises concerning the coming of the Spirit. List Scripture references to support. _____

10. Give four (4) Scripture references to support the statement that Jesus both promised the Spirit baptism and commanded His disciples to receive the Spirit. _____

11. What four (4) important things are taught by John 7: 37-39 about the baptism of the Holy Spirit? _____

12. Write in full (with reference) the verse of Scripture that proves Jesus said the Holy Ghost would be Himself in another form—in Spirit rather than flesh. _____

13. What six (6) promises of the Lord are recorded in the Great Commission as found in Matthew 28:20 and Mark 16:17-18? _____

14. Acts is the only book in the Bible to contain historical accounts of what important event? _____

15. Give three (3) proofs that the twelve apostles were not the only people who received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. _____

16. Give four (4) proofs that an additional 3000 received the Spirit in response to Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost. _____

17. How were the Samaritans different from both Jews and Gentiles? _____

18. What are three (3) purposes (and significance) for the laying on of hands? _____

19. How did Peter know that Cornelius and his household had received the Holy Ghost? Support your answer with Scripture reference. _____

20. What two (2) questions did Paul ask the "believers" who were disciples of John the Baptist in Acts chapter 19? _____

21. What are two (2) important concepts we see after studying the accounts of Spirit Baptism found in the Book of Acts? _____

22. Before Pentecost, what did God expect people to do for salvation? _____

What does he expect people to do after Pentecost—if they want to be saved? _____

23. Where in the Bible do we find the pattern for the New Testament church? _____

24. Briefly explain how it is possible for a person to receive the Holy Spirit. _____

25. List six (6) ways the Bible describes how a person becomes a part of God’s spiritual family, and is guided by the Spirit. Give Scripture to support each answer. _____

26. In addition to being part of salvation, the baptism of the Spirit brings power for what three (3) things? Support each answer with Scripture. _____

27. What are five (5) other things (besides power and a right to be in God’s family) does the baptism of the Spirit bring into our lives? Support your answer with Scripture. _____

Chapter 9

Speaking in Tongues

“And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4).

What I Have Learned

Speaking in Tongues Defined

Speaking with (or in) tongues is “the supernatural gift of speaking in another language without its having been learned.” The Greek word underlying this phrase is *glossa*, which means a tongue, either as the organ of the body or as a language. Hence, a modern theological term for speaking in tongues is *glossolalia*. Some modern translations render the *KJV* phrase “speak with other tongues” as “speak in foreign tongues” (Moffat), “speak in foreign languages” (Goodspeed), and “speak in different languages” (Phillips).

The New Testament contains four passages that indisputably describe speaking in tongues: Acts 2, Acts 10:44-47, Acts 19:6, and 1 Corinthians 12:14. In each case, those who spoke in tongues did so by the power of God’s Spirit, “as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4).

Speaking in tongues is not gibberish or merely an unintelligible, ecstatic utterance without objective meaning. Those who speak in tongues speak in genuine languages, even though the speakers themselves do not understand what they say. Many times observers recognize these languages (Acts 2). The languages can be either human or angelic in nature (1 Corinthians 13:1).

Speaking in tongues is not an accidental, irrelevant, unimportant, or rare phenomenon; it is a gift from God and a significant part of God's plan for the New Testament church.

Isaiah 28:11-12

Isaiah foretold the role of tongues in the church: *"For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing; yet they would not hear"* (Isaiah 28:11-12). The rest and refreshing is the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38 with 3:19), and Isaiah predicted that stammering lips and foreign languages would accompany it.

Some assert that Isaiah referred merely to an invasion of Israel by foreigners, but this argument ignores several important points:

- Isaiah associated tongues with rest and refreshing, not invasion.
- Peter's words further link this refreshing with the Holy Spirit.
- Paul applied Isaiah's words to speaking in tongues: *"In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not"* (1 Corinthians 14:21-22).
- Paul used the passage in Isaiah to teach that God has chosen speaking in tongues as a sign in the New Testament church to encourage unbelievers to believe His Word.

If Isaiah 28:11-12 does refer to a foreign invasion of Israel, then it has an immediate fulfillment (Assyrian invasion) and a distant fulfillment (tongues in the New Testament Church). Double fulfillment of prophecy or typology is such a common occurrence in the Bible that it is known as the "Law of Double Reference." At any rate, on the authority of Peter and Paul, Isaiah 28:11-12 does have a valid application to speaking in tongues in the New Testament church.

Mark 16:17

Just before Christ's ascension, He promised that speaking in tongues would follow believers as a sign: *"And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues"* Mark 16:17). Some translations render "new tongues" as "new languages" (TAB) or "foreign tongues" (Goodspeed).

Opponents of speaking in tongues have attacked this verse by pointing to verse 18, which lists several other signs: *"They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."* Some small sects in

the southeastern United States interpret this verse to mean Christians should prove their faith by handling poisonous snakes, and critics attempt to associate tongues with snake handling in order to discredit the former. In effect they say, "We do not understand verse 18, so we refuse to listen to verse 17." However, the proper approach is to understand both verses.

Verse 18 does not mean we should deliberately handle poisonous snakes as a test of faith. An example from Satan's temptation of Christ makes this clear. Satan quoted an Old Testament promise of protection and demanded that Jesus prove the truth of Scripture and His own righteousness by attempting to commit suicide (Matthew 4:6). Jesus answered, *"It is written again, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God"* (Matthew 4:7). We should not try to force God to act in a certain way, and we should not deliberately ask for trouble to see what God will do. We cannot prove our faith or His Word by trying to harm ourselves, for that is contrary to His will.

Rightly understood, Mark 16:18 promises protection in case of accidents. If a child of God is accidentally bitten by a serpent, he can trust God for deliverance. This harmonizes well with the rest of verse 18, which tells us we can trust God in cases of sickness or accidental poisoning. As an example, when Paul was accidentally bitten by a deadly viper, he calmly shook it off and was miraculously unharmed (Acts 28:1-6).

It is probable that Mark 16:18 also has a spiritual application, promising the believer power over demonic powers. From Genesis to Revelation the Bible characterizes the devil as a serpent. When Jesus gave seventy of His disciples power over evil spirits, He said, *"Behold I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you"* (Luke 10:19). It is logical to conclude that Mark 16:18 promises both protection against the effect of snakebites and victory in battle against spiritual foes. At the same time, the promise does not instruct us to tempt God by deliberately handling snakes as a test of faith. We should not try to discredit verse 18 in order to ignore verse 17, but we should seek to understand and apply both verses to our lives.

A second objection to Mark 16:17 is that two important Greek manuscripts of the Bible do not contain Mark 16:9-20. Critics thus imply that this passage is not the inspired Word of God. However, many conservative scholars believe that this passage is part of God's Word for the reasons stated below:

- The argument against the passage is based primarily on the two oldest existing manuscripts, the *Codex Sinaiticus* and the *Codex Vaticanus*. However, both admittedly contain other incorrect additions and omissions. For example, both contain several apocryphal books, and the

latter omits the New Testament after Hebrews 9:14. It also contains a blank column where Mark 16:9-20 should go. Their age does not necessarily mean greater reliability. Perhaps these manuscripts were not used very much because of their known unreliability, while more correct manuscripts wore out due to great use and were destroyed when new copies were made from them.

- A vast number of other important manuscripts contain the passage, including the third oldest in existence, the *Codex Alexandrinus*.
- The passage appears in many early versions, including the Old Latin, Syriac Peshitta, Coptic, and Gothic.
- Many early church fathers quoted or alluded to the passage, including Irenaeus, Papias, Justin, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Jerome, and Augustine.
- The passage is consistent with the other Gospel accounts.
- The doctrines taught in the passage are affirmed in other scriptural passages.
- It is extremely unlikely that someone would deliberately manufacture this passage with its teaching on tongues, power over demons, divine protection, and divine healing. If the church did not believe these doctrines (as critics of tongues maintain), why would someone add this passage and why would the ancient church accept it?
- Mark 16:8 reads, *“And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.”* This simply does not sound like a plausible ending for Mark’s Gospel. We do not believe God would leave the account at this low point of fear and despair without mentioning the resurrection and the commissioning of the disciples.
- The passage was probably questioned because of the gradual disappearance of spiritual gifts as most of Christendom lost contact with the Holy Spirit. Indeed, some modern critics reject it primarily because of its content.
- If for some reason a few copies of Mark were circulated in an unfinished condition, it does not necessarily follow that other copies did not contain the passage.

In short, there is simply not enough evidence to discard Mark 16:9-20 from the Bible. We must take the words of Jesus in verse 17 at face value; speaking in tongues is a sign that will follow Christian believers everywhere.

The Day of Pentecost

The initial fulfillment of the prophecies concerning tongues occurred on the Day of Pentecost. On this occasion 120 Jewish disciples of Christ were baptized with the Spirit and spoke in tongues, including the apostles, the brothers of Jesus, Mary the mother of Jesus, and a number of women: *“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting, and there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance”* (Acts 2:1-4).

The supernatural sound filled the room, signifying that the Spirit had come to that place to manifest Himself in a special way and to do a special work. The tongues like fire settled on each individual, signifying that the Spirit was ready to baptize and fill each person. *“They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them”* (Acts 2:3, NIV). After this, they were all filled with the Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Acts 2:4 teaches that the miracle took place as the Spirit moved on the speakers, not on the hearers. They began to speak in tongues only after the Spirit had entered, so speaking in tongues was the unique sign that each person had been baptized or filled with the Spirit.

The sound of wind and the tongues like fire never appear again in Scripture. Apparently they accompanied the founding of the New Testament church and the first outpouring of the Spirit much as lightning, thunder, and fire had accompanied the giving of the Law in the Old Testament (Exodus 19:16-19). Once God demonstrated that His Spirit was freely available to all, there was no need to emphasize it again in this fashion. Unlike the sound and the fire, however, speaking in tongues does reoccur a number of times in the Bible. Since it is the only sign particularly associated with an individual Spirit baptism (the others are signs of the availability of the Spirit), speaking in tongues has a lasting importance and function that the other signs do not.

Jews from many nations were in Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of Pentecost. When the 120 received the Spirit and began to speak in tongues, many of these visitors began to gather, with fourteen foreign lands being represented (Acts 2:5-11). These foreign Jews began to hear the various languages of their native countries and marveled that uneducated Galileans could speak all these foreign tongues.

Some people assert that God performed this miracle so the foreigners could hear the gospel preached to them, but a short time later Peter delivered a sermon to all of them in one language. This was probably Aramaic, the native language of all Jews at that time, or possibly

Greek, the international language of commerce. At any rate, the audience did not need the miracle of tongues to bring them the gospel message.

Instead, God used tongues as a miraculous sign to show them He had bestowed His Spirit. Peter used their questions and comments about tongues to open his sermon, and he immediately told them this was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy concerning the outpouring of the Spirit (Acts 2:14-21). Later in his sermon, Peter said, "*Exalted to the right hand of God, he [Jesus] has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear*" (Acts 2:33, NIV). The audience had just seen and heard people speaking in tongues, so Peter emphasized it as the evidence of the promised Holy Ghost.

Cornelius Spoke in Tongues

We find the next explicit record of speaking in tongues in the story of the first Gentiles to receive the Spirit: "*While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell n all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God*" (Acts 10:44-46).

The Jewish Christians with Peter did not expect these Gentiles to receive the Holy Ghost immediately, because Jews traditionally believed one first had to convert to Judaism in order to be saved (Acts 15:1). Despite this strong preconception, the Jews with Peter were forced to admit that Cornelius and his household had indeed received the Spirit, for they heard them speak with tongues. As *The Pulpit Commentary* states, "This was the incontrovertible evidence of their reception of the Holy Ghost." There is no mention of either a sound like wind or tongues like fire; speaking in tongues alone was the conclusive evidence.

The Spirit-filled Gentiles also "magnified God," meaning they praised God, either in tongues or in their own languages. If the latter, it was a consequence of receiving the Spirit but certainly not the miraculous sign that convinced skeptical Jews.

Peter reported these events to the church in Jerusalem, saying, "*And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning*" (Acts 11:15). Speaking in tongues is the only sign that both Acts 2 and Acts 10 have in common, but it alone was enough to convince Peter that the Gentiles had received the Pentecostal experience.

The Ephesians Spoke in Tongues

The disciples of John the Baptist at Ephesus also spoke in tongues when they received the Spirit: "*And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on*

them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied" (Acts 19:6).

This account demonstrates that the baptism of the Spirit with tongues is for all believers. The tongues in Acts 2 and 10 perhaps could be explained away as one-time signs for the Jews and Gentiles respectively, but Acts 19 has no precedent-setting value other than to establish this experience as the norm for the New Testament church. The only purpose tongues accomplished in this setting was to be a sign to these individual believers that they had received the same experience already given to others. This use of tongues is just as valid and as needed today. Whatever reasons God had for giving the Ephesians the sign of tongues, those reasons still exist today.

These Ephesians also "prophesied" after they received the Spirit. Prophecy is "the speaking forth of the mind and counsel of God" or "the forth-telling of the will of God." According to *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, one definition of the verb prophecy is to "speak under inspiration." This can mean the gift of prophecy in which God speaks a direct message through human lips (1 Corinthians 12:10), or it can mean any anointed preaching, praising, and testifying (1 Corinthians 11:4-5; Revelation 19:10). Just as the 120 on Pentecost told of the wonderful works of God as they spoke in tongues (Acts 2:11), so these Ephesians apparently prophesied as they spoke in tongues. Possibly, the Spirit anointed these men to speak words in their own language after they had spoken in tongues. At any rate, prophecy resulted from the Spirit baptism but was not a sign such as tongues, because of these facts:

- Tongues preceded prophecy, so tongues was the initial sign.
- No other account of Spirit baptism mentions prophecy, so it is not a uniform sign.
- Tongues is readily identifiable as a supernatural, miraculous sign while prophecy is not, especially with respect to a non-believing observer.

The Samaritans Spoke in Tongues

The account in Acts 8 of the Samaritans who received the Holy Ghost does not explicitly mention speaking in tongues; it gives no description of signs of their Spirit baptism. Despite the lack of detailed description, some tangible sign was present. The Spirit baptism was an objectively observable phenomenon that both believers and nonbelievers immediately recognized as supernatural. It is logical to assume that this sign was speaking in tongues.

- Despite the miracles, joy, belief, and water baptism, everyone knew the Samaritans had not yet received the Spirit. Philip, Peter, and John all expected a particular sign and knew the

Samaritans did not have the Spirit due to the absence of the sign.

- Everyone knew the Samaritans received the Spirit at the moment Peter and John laid hands on them. There must have been a definite sign for everyone to perceive this with such certainty. Moreover, this sign was more than an emotional feeling, a confession of faith, or water baptism, since those had occurred earlier. Neither were they looking for a manifestation of any miracle or any spiritual gift, because healing and casting out of spirits had already occurred.
- There must have been a definite, supernatural sign for Simon the Magician to be impressed enough to desire it. Simon apparently wanted to buy and use this miracle in his magical shows; he desired the power to lay hands on people and have the miraculous sign manifest itself. Again the sign was much more than an expression of joy, a confession of faith, or praise to God, all of which could be counterfeited with ease and none of which would impress a magician or his skeptical audience. Moreover, this sign impressed Simon in a way that all the other miracles had not.

The Pulpit Commentary acknowledges the existence of a sign: "There are signs of an impartation of the Spirit by the apostles which we do not appear to understand fully, because it differs from any impartation of the Spirit with which we have experience." It continues, with respect to Acts 8: "These points assume that the indications of the Spirit's coming on the disciples were such as we find at Pentecost. There was some gift of tongues, or preaching, or praying – some outward sign which all could realize." Of course, in the Pentecostal accounts only tongues served as the outward sign of the Spirit baptism itself. Neither preaching or praying is a possibility, since neither is a unique, miraculous sign and since the Samaritans had already observed both.

When we compare the Samaritans' experience with the other accounts, it is obvious that the accompanying miraculous sign was speaking in tongues. Indeed, Hoekema, who does not even believe speaking in tongues is available for the church today, comes to the same conclusion. He states, "Though we are not told in so many words that the Samaritans spoke with tongues. . .there must have been some public evidence of their having received the Spirit. We may therefore agree with our Pentecostal friends at that point that the Samaritans probably did speak with tongues."

Paul Spoke in Tongues

Acts 9 indicates that Paul received the Spirit but it gives no description of this event. As a result, the passage does not mention speaking in tongues. Paul, however, spoke in tongues frequently, for he later said, "*I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all*" (1

Corinthians 14:18). Since he taught that speaking in tongues came by the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12: 8-10), it is consistent to assume that he first spoke in tongues when he received the Spirit, just as everyone else did.

Like the Ephesian account, Paul's witness demonstrates that tongues was not just a one-time, unrepeatable event in the Early Church. Paul, a Jew, spoke in tongues long after the Jews at Pentecost did, and he continued to do so in his devotion and ministry.

Comparison of the Accounts in Acts

We have investigated all five cases recorded in Scripture where people received the Holy Ghost. In three cases (Pentecost, Cornelius, Ephesus) those who received the Spirit immediately spoke in tongues. A fourth case (Samaria) does not explicitly describe any particular external manifestation but it clearly requires the presence of a miraculous, immediately identifiable outward sign, and most commentators agree this was speaking in tongues. In the fifth case (Paul) the Bible gives no description of the Spirit baptism, but later reveals that the recipient spoke in tongues throughout his Christian life.

What about other possible signs of the Spirit baptism? Acts 2 records a sound like wind and tongues like fire, but these preceded the first outpouring of the Spirit and are not mentioned in any other account. Acts 8 demonstrates that not all spiritual gifts and miracles were considered as signs. Acts 19 mentions prophecy, but only after it mentions speaking in tongues. Acts 10 mentions magnifying (praising) God, which is not a miraculous sign; as the one sign sufficient in and of itself to prove that the Spirit had been given. (See Table 9 to summarize this comparison.)

Speaking in tongues is the only outward manifestation to appear in more than one account and the only one to occur at the actual moment of the individual Spirit baptism. The Book of Acts teaches that a person will speak in tongues when he receives the Holy Ghost. Therefore, speaking in tongues is the initial sign (evidence) that one has received the gift (baptism) of the Holy Spirit.

Other Possible References

Jesus perhaps had speaking in tongues in mind when He said, "*The wind bloweth where it listeth [pleases], and though hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit*" (John 3:8). Speaking in tongues at least initially fulfills Romans 8:16, which says, "*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.*" It was also probably a factor in Paul's mind when he wrote about confessing with the mouth the Lord Jesus as part of salvation (Romans 10:9), for no one can truly confess Jesus as Lord except by the spirit (1 Corinthians 12:3).

Are Tongues Necessary?

Tongues in and of themselves do not save. Nevertheless, the relationship between the Spirit baptism and tongues is similar to that of faith and works. We are saved by faith, not works, yet works always accompany genuine faith. Likewise, tongues cannot save us, yet the Spirit baptism produces tongues as the initial sign.

Do tongues always accompany the baptism of the Spirit? The Book of Acts indicates this to be so; it describes tongues and nothing else as the initial sign associated with the individual filling. A Spirit baptism without tongues is a non-biblical concept; the Bible does not discuss this possibility. We should always expect speaking in tongues when someone receives the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

The Reasons for Tongues

Why did God choose tongues as the sign of the Spirit baptism? We must realize that God is sovereign; He can establish a plan without explaining His reasons to us. The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and God often uses unusual, foolish, or despised things in the eyes of men to accomplish His will (1 Corinthians 1:25-29). Examples are water baptism for the remission of sins and prayer to the invisible God.

We must accept speaking in tongues because God chose this sign. God has historically used outward, physical signs to accompany His covenants with man and the promised blessings under those covenants. Examples are the rainbow to Noah and circumcision to Abraham.

Humans did not invent tongues in a desperate, faithless search for a tangible sign of salvation. God Himself ordained tongues for the church, and we accept His plan by faith. Tongues cannot substitute for faith in the Christian's walk with God, but God gives tongues as the confirmation of faith (Mark 16:17).

Having said this, we can identify several reasons why God chose tongues as the initial sign of the Spirit baptism.

1) The tongue seems to be the most difficult member of the body to control. It is a small member but it can direct, control, and defile the whole body (James 3:2-6). *"The tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly member, full of deadly poison"* (James 3:8). If a man cannot control his tongue his religion is vain, but if he can control his tongue he can control the whole body (James 1:26; 3:2). Before someone receives the Holy Ghost he must surrender his whole being to God, and the last member he surrenders is the tongue. When this happens, God enters and takes complete control, demonstrating His glory. Since the brain controls speech, this actually signifies that God has taken control of our center of consciousness, reasoning, and will – in short, the whole person.

2) Speaking in tongues symbolizes the unity of the church. After the flood, human beings persisted in disobeying God and tried to compete with God by building the Tower of Babel. To stop their evil schemes and to scatter them, God gave them many languages instead of one (Genesis 11:1-9). Beginning with Pentecost, God reversed the process, taking people from many nations and uniting them into one spiritual family by the sign of tongues. The church contains people of every tribe, nation, and tongue, but all are one through the language of the Spirit. Speaking in tongues becomes the new language associated with citizenship in the kingdom of God.

3) Speaking in tongues is universal in application and a valid sign under any circumstances. Regardless of a people's nationality, language, or location, they can recognize speaking in tongues when it happens among them.

4) Speaking in tongues provides certainly about one's experience with God since it signifies the baptism of the Spirit at a certain point in time. If one has been baptized in the name of Jesus, has received the Holy Ghost with the initial evidence of speaking in tongues, and continues to obey God's Word, he can know he is saved.

Many churches deny this evidentiary role, and as a result their members struggle with uncertainty about salvation. One Protestant writer stated, "Probably the majority of Christians have a problem with assurance of salvation at some time during their Christian experience. In some cases the difficulty lingers for years. . . . Many are those who continually trip to the altar in search of assurance – and repeatedly leave without finding it." This writer also said, "A Christian may know intellectually, 'I am saved' and yet be overwhelmed by the feeling, 'I am not saved.'" His solution is this: "If one believes that Jesus is the Son of God and has asked Him to enter his life as Lord and Saviour, then he should ignore all feelings and claim salvation." We acknowledge that salvation does not rest in human feelings, but we should certainly pay attention to conviction from God, especially if our experience does not conform to the biblical pattern.

Comments by another Protestant author demonstrate why many church members still have doubts despite the simplistic formula above: "It is possible to make a public profession of faith in Christ and be baptized and still not experience salvation. It might have been only a historic belief with no personal commitment. Your doubts may mean that you really need to be converted." For example, if a prominent member of a church that teaches unconditional eternal security begins to live in open sin, the church will say he never had a genuine conversion in the beginning. This leads many to wonder how they can ever know if their own conversion is genuine. He found that usually twenty percent fall into this category. His

conclusion: "This is probably representative of most of our churches. Some of our members struggle with doubts and conclude that they have not been truly converted. It may be true of you." His solution: "Turn from sin, ask Christ into your heart as Saviour and Lord, and believe in Him." These instructions are fine, but somehow they must be applied spiritually and not just intellectually. The Lord provides objective evidence of full commitment to Him; when one repents from sin and believes on Jesus according to the Scriptures, he will receive the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues.

Not a Sign of the Spirit's Abiding Presence

Speaking in tongues is the initial sign of receiving the Spirit, but by itself it does not prove the abiding presence of the Spirit. Many more important evidences of the Spirit's abiding presence exist, such as the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). In particular, love is the ultimate test of true discipleship (John 13:34-35). The true child of God will love God, obey His commandments, walk after the Spirit, and be led by the Spirit (1 John 2: 3-5; Romans 8: 4, 14). In the absence of these characteristics, speaking in tongues does not guarantee that the Spirit dwells in one and controls his life.

After one has received the Holy Ghost, a continual ability to speak in tongues indicates only that he has faith for that particular gift and can yield to God for that particular purpose. He might still believe false doctrine, resume a life of sin, or refuse God's leadership in other areas of life. We must always adhere to biblical doctrine, obey biblical instructions, and submit to God's Spirit in order to be saved.

Someone can have the ability to speak in tongues and not be ready to meet God, because God will always honor faith in a certain portion of His Word despite a lack of submission in other areas. This explains why God answers the prayers of sinners, fills people with the Holy Ghost before baptism in Jesus' name, and performs miracles when hypocrites preach. Many people experience miracles and preach in Jesus' name but will not be saved because they do not follow God's Word and will (Matthew 7:21-27).

Romans 11:29 says, "*For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.*" Although this verse occurs in another context, perhaps it teaches a principle with general application: once God bestows a spiritual gift He never revokes it entirely. Even if the recipient turns from God or abuses the gift, God seems to leave a portion of it to encourage the backslider to repent.

It is also possible that the human mind or spirit can "learn" to speak in tongues. When God enables someone to speak in tongues, He apparently places the words in his brain. God directs the speech but does so by using the person's physical apparatus, including brain cells, nerves, voice box, mouth, and tongue. It is possible,

then, that the brain may store these words just as it stores other information. The next time God moves on the individual, he may give new words or He may activate the existing words in memory. This could explain why some people repeat the same phrases when the Spirit moves on them.

Over a period of time the brain can possibly subconsciously "learn" to activate this stored combination of words on its own. If so, even without the moving of the Spirit, the person could utter words that were at one time given by the Spirit. This would explain how some people can "speak in tongues" at will even without the moving of the Spirit or even after the Spirit has left their lives.

In addition, we should not overlook that possibility of false imitations of tongues by men or even counterfeit tongues caused by the power of Satan. Satan has power to perform many miracles, and he often tries to imitate God's work (Exodus 7:10-12; Revelation 13:2, 11-15). Some unbelievers or apostates may "speak in tongues" by the power of Satan. Of course, the existence of counterfeit tongues produced by the spirits of men or devils does not destroy the reality of biblical tongues as given by the Spirit of God.

After the Baptism of the Spirit

The Bible does not teach that speaking in tongues is a necessary sign after the occurrence at the initial Spirit baptism. Just as frequent tongues speaking does not necessarily signify spirituality, so a lack of the same does not necessarily signify unspirituality. Speaking in tongues plays no further evidentiary role, except perhaps as a reminder and confirmation of the previous experience. Of course, Paul spoke in tongues frequently (1 Corinthians 14:18), and those who receive the Spirit usually speak in tongues again and again throughout their lifetimes.

The gift of tongues is one of the gifts available to those who have the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:8-10). First Corinthians 12: 30 implies that not everyone continues to speak in tongues on a regular basis, although it probably refers primarily to public messages.

A Spirit-filled person who does not continue to speak in tongues is no less a Christian because of it. However, if he will seek the gift of tongues, exercise faith, and yield to the Spirit just as he did at the initial experience, he can speak in tongues again. Since tongues is for private edification, we believe that God desires for him to seek and use the gift of tongues. Once received, a failure to exercise this gift may indicate a drifting away from God. The gift of tongues is available to all Spirit-filled people who ask in prayer, with persistence and faith (Matthew 7:7-11; 21:22; John 14:12-14; 1 Corinthians 12:31).

The Gift of Tongues

Paul discussed the gift of tongues in 1 Corinthians 12:14. He wrote the book to saved believers who were all baptized in the Spirit and thus had all spoken in tongues (1 Corinthians 1:2; 12:13). His purpose was to instruct them in the use of the gift of tongues, particularly in public meetings. Since these three chapters are so important to any discussion of tongues in the church today, let us summarize their main points relative to this subject.

1 Corinthians 12

Verse 1: Paul's purpose is to teach about spiritual gifts.

Verse 2: The Corinthians had been totally ignorant of spiritual things before their conversion.

Verse 3: The Spirit will always exalt Jesus. No one can understand that Jesus is Lord except by the illumination of the Spirit, and no one can actually have Jesus as Lord of his life except through the power of the Spirit.

Verses 4-11: There are many spiritual gifts, but all come from the Spirit of God for the benefit of the church. Paul listed nine:

- The Word of Wisdom
- The Word of Knowledge
- Faith
- Gifts of Healing
- The Working of Miracles
- Prophecy
- Discerning of Spirits
- Kinds of Tongues
- Interpretation of Tongues

Verses 12-27: Born-again believers are all members of one body, the body of Christ. We are baptized into the one body by the one Spirit of God.

Verses 28-30: God has given different functions to various members of the body. Paul listed eight offices and gifts God has placed in the church as a whole:

- Apostles
- Prophets
- Teachers
- Miracles
- Gifts of Healings
- Helps
- Governments
- Diversities of tongues

Not everyone has these public offices or exercises these public gifts.

Verse 31: We should earnestly desire the best gifts. However, there is something greater and more important than spiritual gifts.

1 Corinthians 13

None of the spiritual gifts is of any value without love. Speaking in tongues (whether human or angelic in origin) is useless without love. Prophecy, tongues, and knowledge will all pass away when perfection comes to the world, but love will remain forever. There are three great things in this world – faith, hope, and love – and the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 14

Verse 1: We should follow after love but also desire spiritual gifts, particularly prophecy.

Verses 2-4: Speaking in tongues edifies (builds up, benefits) the speaker, but prophecy (inspired utterance in a tongue known by all) edifies others.

Verse 5: Paul wanted everyone to speak in tongues, but wanted even more for them to prophecy. In the church (Public meeting of believers), prophecy is greater than tongues, unless the tongues are interpreted.

Verses 6-11: Without an interpretation, a public message in tongues does not profit the church as a whole.

Verses 12-14: We should seek to exercise spiritual gifts for the benefit of the whole church. Specifically, when someone gives a public message in tongues, we should pray for the interpretation.

Verses 15-19: Paul personally prayed and sang both in the spirit (i.e., in tongues) and in an understandable language. A public, representative prayer should be in the language of the hearers. Paul personally spoke in tongues more than any of the Corinthians, but in the church (public meetings) he spoke in a known language in order to teach others.

Verse 20: We must be mature in understanding when the gift of tongues is and is not appropriate.

Verse 21-25: If everyone continually speaks in tongues in church, observers will think they are insane. However, if everyone prophesies in a known language, listeners can be led to God. Even though tongues will arrest unbelievers' attention initially, it does not benefit them if the whole service is devoted to tongues speaking.

Verses 26-31: Conclusion for public meetings: A normal church meeting can and should include psalms (songs), doctrine, tongues, revelations (spiritual truths in a known tongue), and interpretation of tongues; but all of this must be done for the benefit of everyone.

Some guidelines for implementing this principle are:

- Let there be two or at most three public messages in tongues.
- Take turns in giving them instead of everyone speaking at once.
- Let someone interpret each message.
- If there is no interpretation, the one speaking in tongues should stop giving public messages but

he can speak in tongues quietly for his own private benefit.

- Let there be two or at most three messages of prophecy.
- The listeners should judge for themselves whether the message is of God.
- Take turns in prophecy; everyone is allowed to prophecy.

Verses 32-33: The gift of prophecy is subject to those who exercise it. God desires that all gifts be exercised in an orderly manner in church.

Verses 34-35: Women should not disrupt church services by asking questions aloud, but should ask their husbands at home. (Of course, women can prophecy in church, 1 Corinthians 11:5-6 and 14:31).

Verses 36-38: Let all acknowledge these guidelines to be of God.

Verse 39: Everyone should desire to prophesy and no one should forbid speaking in tongues.

Verse 40: We should do everything decently and in order.

Conclusion About 1 Corinthians 12-14

1) Speaking in tongues is a normal part of the New Testament church. Paul spoke in tongues, encouraged other believers to do likewise, gave instructions for the proper use of tongues, and commanded the church not to forbid tongues.

2) Speaking in tongues is the same phenomenon in 1 Corinthians as in Acts. The Greek word is the same in both books. Paul talked about literal languages as in Acts 2, not unintelligible, ecstatic gibberish (1 Corinthians 13: 1).

3) In Acts, speaking in tongues is the initial sign of the Spirit baptism, but in 1 Corinthians we find that tongues have two additional purposes. Specifically, speaking in tongues has continuing value for edification of the individual in personal devotion and for edification of the church as a whole when interpreted.

4) A public message in tongues has little benefit unless it is interpreted.

5) Tongues are very beneficial in personal devotions.

How Does Speaking in Tongues Occur?

Genuine, biblical tongues speaking comes only as the Spirit of God gives the utterance (Acts 2:4). If one desires to speak in tongues, he must first receive the Spirit. He should not begin by seeking tongues, for tongues themselves are not very important. Speaking in tongues will occur automatically when he received the Spirit in tongues.

Of course, if one is not familiar with the phenomenon of speaking in tongues, he may unconsciously restrain the utterance. In such a case, the seeker should be encouraged to relax and surrender totally to God's Spirit, but in no case does he need to be "taught" to speak in tongues. Asking him to form nonsense words or repeat unknown syllables is unbiblical and wrong. It seeks to give tongues without the Spirit, and any "tongues" not inspired by the Spirit is vain babbling. Someone who has not received the Spirit should not concern himself too much with tongues but should concentrate on repenting and believing God for the Spirit.

Someone who has received the Spirit can and should seek the gift of tongues as a regular part of his life, but he should also recognize that not everyone will exercise the public gift (1 Corinthians 12: 28-30). It is much more important to bear the fruit of the Spirit and live a Spirit-filled life than it is to cultivate tongues speaking. Of course, the mature Christian can have both the fruit and the gifts of the Spirit.

Objections

Many people today raise objections to tongues speaking. Here is an analysis of the most prominent ones, as paraphrased from Protestant Professor Anthony Hoekema's book, *What About Tongues Speaking?*

1) "The Bible does not teach that every believer must seek a post-conversion Spirit baptism." This objection applies to many "Pentecostal" groups, but not to the doctrine presented in this book. The Spirit baptism is part of conversion, but tongues still accompany it.

2) "Pentecostalism implies a non-biblical subordination of Christ to the Holy Spirit." Again, this does not apply. We believe the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, and we receive Christ when we receive the Spirit. The doctrine of the Spirit baptism thus magnifies Christ above all.

3) "Pentecostalism tends to create two levels of Christians: those who have received the Spirit baptism and those who have not." This does not apply to us either. Since the Spirit baptism is part of conversion, it simply distinguishes true apostolic Christians from everyone else.

4) "Pentecostalism implies that the church has not had the fullness of truth from the end of the first century to the beginning of the twentieth." Chapter 11 will show that speaking in tongues has existed throughout church history. In any event, history and tradition cannot stand against Scripture. Man's sin, rebellion, error, and ignorance can drastically affect the history of God's people, but this does not mean it is God's will. Israel's backsliding and subsequent captivity does not mean God desired this from the start. Actually, all of Protestantism rests on the belief that for centuries the visible church discarded many essential truths of the gospel.

5) "A spiritual blessing does not need to be attested to by a physical phenomenon." We can accept this statement, but this does not prevent God from designating one if He so chooses, and in the case of the Spirit baptism He has done so. The Bible describes speaking in tongues as the evidence of the Spirit baptism (Acts 10:46) and as a "sign" (1 Corinthians 14:22).

God often chooses a physical sign to accompany a spiritual work. Water baptism consists of both a spiritual blessing (remission of sins) and a physical manifestation that is a necessary part of it (the outward ceremony). Other examples that combine a spiritual blessing with a physical manifestation are prayer, anointing of the sick, ordination, the Lord's Supper, holiness of life, and the Second Coming. The long-term evidence of the Spirit baptism is spiritual fruit, but this does not prohibit God from establishing an initial physical sign.

6) "It cannot be proved that miracles are for the church today." We discuss this objection below in all of its variations.

Miracles Exist Today

The most popular argument against tongues today is that the days of miracles are over. Chapter 8 established that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is for people today, so logically tongues are for today also. Below we analyze each variant of the argument that miracles, and specifically tongues, no longer occur.

1) "Miracles were only for the apostles." We can easily disprove this statement by the 120 at Pentecost, Cornelius, and the Ephesians, all of whom spoke in tongues. Stephen and Philip, who were not of the Twelve, also performed many miracles (Acts 6:8; 8:6-7).

2) "Only the apostles or those commissioned by them (by the laying on of hands) could perform or receive a miracle." This modification to account for the above counterexamples still fails. Ananias prayed for Paul and he received his sight (Acts 9:17-18), but absolutely nothing indicates that Ananias received a special commissioning from the Twelve. Paul and Barnabas were not of the Twelve nor commissioned by them, but God performed many miracles in their ministry (Acts 14:3).

The New Testament promises miracles to all believers without restriction or discrimination. Jesus promised that all believers could speak in tongues and experience other miracles (Mark 16:17-18). All believers can receive answers to prayer, including miracles (Matthew 21:22;; Mark 11:22-24; John 14:12-14; 15:7). Local elders can pray successfully for the saints' healing (James 5:14-16). Miracles and tongues are God's gift to the whole church (1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28).

3) "Miracles were only for the days of the apostles." The passages cited above discredit this statement, for none specify a time limitation. To the

contrary, each was given to all believers or to the church as a whole without restriction as to time. Paul wrote 1 Corinthians to the entire church of all ages, addressing it "unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours" (1 Corinthians 1:2). He expressed confidence that they would "come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 1:7). That book discusses the gifts of the Spirit, including gifts of healing, working of miracles, and kinds of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:8-10), so Paul clearly expected the church to retain and properly use all the spiritual gifts until Christ's return.

Everyone agrees that the Great Commission applies to the church today, and so must its fulfillment. The Early Church fulfilled it: "And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following" (Mark 16:20); "God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonder, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will" (Hebrews 2:4). If we have the same faith, and the same needy world, surely we will have the same signs accompanying and confirming our message.

Tongues Have Not Ceased

1 Corinthians 13:8-10 states, "Charity never faileth: but where there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." Some people use this passage to teach that tongues have ceased, by identifying "that which is perfect" with the completed New Testament. This argument fails for a number of reasons:

1) The spiritual gifts, including tongues, will reside in the church until the second coming of Christ (1 Corinthians 1:2-7).

2) This being so, it is logical to identify "that which is perfect" with Jesus Christ, or more specifically, with the Second Coming of Christ. The Greek word translated as "perfect" is *teleion*, which is neuter singular, but the Greek language always refers to the Scriptures in the feminine plural.

3) Tongues will cease at the same time as prophecy and knowledge, according to verse 8. Prophecy includes inspired preaching, praising, and testifying. Obviously the church still has prophecy and knowledge.

4) The Bible and miracles do not have interchangeable functions. The Bible presents the Word of God in written form, but God still uses miracles, signs,

and spiritual gifts to confirm the Word (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:4).

5) In 1 Corinthians 13:11-13, Paul compared levels of spiritual growth to physical and mental growth, but he did not label tongues as childish. He compared our partial knowledge to the perfect knowledge we shall have when Christ returns. If we have already reached the ultimate stage, then we are more mature than Paul was, for he died before the completion of the New Testament. If speaking in tongues be childish, Paul never left the childish stage, for he continually spoke in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:18).

6) The New Testament is God's Word, but we are not yet perfect, nor is the world perfect. Perfection will come only after Christ returns.

7) It is difficult to see how the completion of the New Testament could have put a halt to tongues, prophecy, and knowledge. Did all tongues suddenly cease when John penned "Amen" to the Book of Revelation? Did each person cease to speak in tongues when he first read the entire New Testament?

Receiving the Spirit Without Tongues?

We analyzed all five biblical accounts of the Spirit baptism and concluded that tongues were present in each case. Many other passages describe believers as "filled with the Spirit" without mentioning tongues, but they refer to people who had already been baptized in the Spirit. Tongues do not necessarily accompany all subsequent experiences with God after the initial baptism.

Some conversion accounts in the Book of Acts do not specifically mention tongues. The plan of Acts is to describe a few representative conversions in detail, then briefly mention other conversions. Three very important passages describe tongues, and these detailed accounts set the pattern for the general accounts, not vice versa. No argument from silence can overwhelm or erase these explicit testimonies.

It is not surprising that speaking in tongues is mentioned no more than it is. The important things are repenting, believing, and receiving the Spirit. Tongues simply come along with the Spirit baptism and have no significance apart from this experience. Appropriately, the Bible places more emphasis on believing and receiving the Spirit, letting us know just enough to expect tongues without unduly emphasizing it.

The discussion in *The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* of speaking in tongues at the conversion of Cornelius (Acts 10:45-46) makes an amazing concession for a non-Pentecostal work: "We cannot tell for certain whether the gift of tongues was the inevitable accompaniment of the coming of the Spirit." In other words, it admits that on the biblical evidence tongues may have always accompanied the outpouring of the

Spirit in the apostolic church. It tries to avoid this conclusion by two facts:

1. Speaking in tongues is not mentioned frequently in Acts.
2. In 1 Corinthians Paul indicates that not all members of the church had the gift of tongues.

The first fact is explained as the Bible's way of emphasizing the Spirit baptism without placing too much emphasis on speaking in tongues in and of itself. With respect to the second, Paul was not discussing tongues at the initial Spirit baptism (which all had received). Rather, he implied that not all Spirit-filled believers exercised the subsequent gift of tongues, particularly in the sense of giving public messages in tongues.

Conclusion

Some points from *The Pulpit Commentary* with which we agree are:

- 1) Speaking in tongues means the miraculous utterance of a foreign language unknown to the speaker.
- 2) It is not the gift of a foreign language for missionary purposes.
- 3) It is a real language, not gibberish.
- 4) I can be a heavenly or a human language.
- 5) Speaking in tongues in Corinth was the speaking of real languages.
- 6) Speaking in tongues is a symbol of the unity the church has in Christ.

In conclusion here are the three functions that speaking in tongues has in the New Testament church:

- 1) Speaking in tongues is the initial sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4; 10:46; 19:6). This is to be distinguished in purpose from "the gift of tongues," which God grants to Spirit-filled believers subsequent to conversion.
- 2) A Spirit-filled person can exercise the gift of tongues in personal devotions (whether private or congregational) for his own personal edification (1 Corinthians 12:8-10; 14:18; 23, 28).
- 3) A Spirit-filled person can exercise the gift of tongues for the edification of the local assembly. This occurs when a public message is given in tongues and interpreted (1 Corinthians 12:8-10; 28-30; 14:5; 12-13, 27-28).

If we understand what speaking in tongues is and the purposes for which it is given, we can correctly understand and harmonize all scriptural teaching on the subject. Speaking in tongues is a normal part of the believer's experience with God, the personal devotion of the believer, and the public meetings of the church. Most

of all, we can expect a person to speak in tongues when he first receives the Holy Spirit into his life.

What Have You Learned?

1. What is the definition of speaking with (or in) tongues? _____

2. Write in full and memorize Isaiah 28: 11-12.

3. What two Scripture references in the Book of Acts explain what Isaiah was referring to when he spoke of the rest and refreshing? _____

4. Some argue that Isaiah was referring to an invasion of Israel by foreigners. This would ignore what three important points? _____

5. What is meant by the term "law of double reference?" _____

6. List the four (4) passages found in the New Testament that indisputably describe speaking in tongues. _____

7. What is the promise found in Mark 16: 18 when it is rightly understood? _____

8. When did the initial fulfillment of the prophecies concerning tongues occur? _____

9. Write in full and memorize Acts 2: 1-4. _____

10. What was the only sign that both Acts 2 and Acts 10 have in common? _____

11. What is the precedent-setting value of the experience recorded in Acts 19? _____

12. What are the three (3) reasons why we can logically assume the Samaritans spoke in tongues in Acts chapter 8? _____

13. What does Paul's witness demonstrate about speaking in tongues? _____

14. Give at least four (4) reasons why God chose tongues as the initial sign of the spirit baptism. _____

15. Speaking in tongues is the initial sign of receiving the Spirit, but by itself does not prove the abiding presence of the Spirit. What does prove that the Spirit is abiding in a person's heart and life? (Give Scripture reference to support your answer.) _____

16. What is the Gift of Tongues? (Support your answer with Scripture.) _____

17. What are five (5) conclusions we should make about 1 Corinthians chapter 12-14? _____

18. Give a brief explanation of how speaking in tongues will occur. _____

19. List six (6) points taken from the *Pulpit Commentary* (with which we agree) that are important to remember. _____

20. What are three (3) functions that speaking in tongues have in the New Testament church? Support your answer with Scriptures. _____

Chapter 10

The Witness in Church History: Baptism

***“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us”
(Hebrews 12:1).***

What I Have Learned

Since all doctrine must be based on Scripture alone and not on man's traditions, creeds, or philosophies (Galatians 1:8-9; Colossians 2:8; 1 Timothy 3:16-17), we have based all conclusions in this book on the Bible. However, many people have never heard the doctrines we have presented, and some assume them to be modern inventions. Although history cannot alter or replace biblical truth, the study of these doctrines in church history is very enlightening.

Problems in Studying Church History

There are several difficulties that the student of church history, particularly ancient history, must consider:

1) Doctrinal bias of church historians. Modern historians often interpret the statements of ancient writers from the perspective of their own beliefs, finding teachings that simply are not there. On the other hand, the doctrinal positions of historians can limit their understanding of doctrines that did exist.

2) Doctrinal bias of ancient church writers. Consciously or unconsciously, ancient writers sometimes distorted or misrepresented the views of their doctrinal opponents. As a result, we do not always have an adequate presentation of certain ancient views, especially minority views. For example, what concept of Oneness would future generations have if their only source of information were articles written by trinitarians? Likewise, skeptical observers have often described worshipers in ways that made them appear ridiculous, absurd, ignorant, or mentally deranged. For example, what would someone think of Pentecostals if he read only the accounts of cynical opponents?

3) Possibility of interpolations (additions to ancient manuscripts). Most of our information about church history comes from manuscripts that were copied hundreds of years after the original writings. In many cases the copyists changed or inserted certain lines to create support for particular doctrines. For example, a number of the epistles of the post-apostolic fathers exist in short and long versions. Obviously, one form (probably the longer one) is corrupt and reflects changes made by generations of editors and scribes. As another example, an ancient Christian writing called the *Didache* was apparently written in the 2nd century, but the only Greek manuscript we have of it dates from the 11th century. This means errors and deliberate changes could have accumulated over 900 years, and the document may reflect teachings from Roman Catholicism.

4) Existing documents may not reflect the views of the average believer of that time period. In times when many people were not literate and books had to be handwritten, theological documents tended to be written and copied by the educated elite. Then, as now, theologians were frequently more liberal in their doctrines than were the majority of believers.

5) History is written by the victors. Many who opposed officially accepted doctrines were persecuted so that they had little opportunity to leave an adequate written record of their beliefs. The documents they did write were usually destroyed and not recopied. For evidence of a minority doctrine to survive at all often means it must have been very prevalent in its day. Surviving records probably reveal only a fraction of those who actually held the belief.

6) False doctrines existed from the earliest times. There is plenty of evidence in the biblical writings of Paul, Peter, John, and Jude that false doctrines abounded even in the days of the apostles and threatened to overwhelm the church. For this reason, the antiquity of a write is no guarantee of his doctrinal purity.

Repentance and Water Baptism

The church leaders of the early post-apostolic era (A.D. 90-140) taught that baptism was for believers only and

that repentance was necessary for baptism to be of any value. Lutheran Professor Otto Heick states, "Baptism, of course, was not meant to work magically. Without repentance and faith it would avail nothing." Lutheran Professor E. H. Klotzsche says of the belief in this time: "In closest relation to baptism stands repentance. It is preparatory to baptism." However, when infant baptism began to gain acceptance, theologians began to teach that faith and repentance could follow baptism. This ultimately led to the Roman Catholic sacrament of penance. "When the original sequel of repentance and baptism became inverted by the practice of infant baptism, penance. . .acquired the status of a sacrament."

Water Baptism by Immersion

Church historians generally agree that the early post-apostolic church practiced immersion. Klotzsche says, "The practice of immersion was undoubtedly universal in the early church." Kenneth Scott Latourette affirms this view: "Baptism seems to have been by immersion, at least normally." Some historians assert that other modes were practiced in these early times, but they agree that immersion was the predominant and preferred mode even when others began to develop.

Hermas (early 2nd century) described baptism by immersion and Irenaeus (died 202?) denounced baptism by pouring. Tertullian (died 220?) taught baptism by immersion and disapproved of infant baptism. Cyprian (died 258?) is the earliest apologist for sprinkling, but even he considered immersion to be the normal practice. He described baptism as a dipping but advised sprinkling for the sick. The *Didache* teaches baptism by immersion, but permits pouring if much water is not available. The *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* (2nd or 3rd century), which contains a parallel passage to this portion of the *Didache*, teaches immersion but does not mention pouring.

The Eastern Orthodox still practice immersion even for infants, despite the fact that their counterparts in the West, the Roman Catholics, switched to sprinkling. Many Protestants continue in the Catholic tradition even though most early Protestant leaders recognized that immersion was the biblical method.

- Martin Luther expressed a preference for immersion based on the Greek word *bapto*.
- John Calvin acknowledged immersion as the practice of the Early Church.
- John Wesley interpreted Romans 6:3-5 to mean immersion.

Water Baptism as Part of Salvation

Early post-apostolic Christians affirmed baptism as part of salvation. Latourette remarked, "Baptism was believed to wash away all sins committed before it was administered. After baptism, the Christian was supposed

not to sin.” He also said, “Baptism seems to have been regarded as requisite for the ‘remission of sins’ and for the new birth through which alone one could enter the Kingdom of God.”

With respect to baptism in the first and second centuries the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* states, “The dominant ideas were those of forgiveness of sin, regeneration, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. . . The change effected by baptism was attributed to the ‘name’ and to the water, which were regarded as actually effective and not merely symbolic.” According to Heick, the post-apostolic father (A.D. 90-140) taught that “baptism confers the forgiveness of sins.” For example, this was the teaching in the *Epistle of Barnabas* and *the Shepherd of Hermas*. For the Greek Apologist (A. D. 130-180) baptism was “a washing of forgiveness and a regeneration.” They said it “brings pardon and the new life, and is therefore necessary to salvation.”

Other early theologians who taught that God remits sins at water baptism were Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Origen, Tertullian, and Augustine. Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytus, and Cyprian specifically described water baptism as the birth of the water in John 3:5, and Hippolytus and Cyprian identified water baptism as the laver of regeneration in Titus 3:5 as, “*Except a man be baptized of water and of the Spirit, he shall by no means enter into the kingdom of heaven.*”

Tertullian taught that at water baptism the believer has his sins washed away, is born in water, and is prepared for the Holy Spirit. He believed that John’s baptism pointed towards future remission of sins and that Christ’s disciples continued John’s baptism during Christ’s earthly ministry. He described baptism as a seal of faith that is necessary to salvation, stating that John 3:5 “has tied faith to the necessity of baptism.”

These men and writings represent many different theological factions, and we do not endorse all of their doctrines; nevertheless it is interesting to see that all agreed on the necessity of baptism. Third century controversies over heretic baptisms demonstrate that all Christendom of the time agreed that “there can be only one baptism, and that this baptism is essential to salvation.”

Roman Catholics have always taught the essentiality of baptism, but have transformed it from an act of faith into a sacramental act by teaching the necessity and validity of infant baptism despite the lack of personal faith and repentance. This incorrectly presumes that regeneration comes by the power of the ceremony itself instead of by grace through faith.

Among Protestants, Martin Luther held that baptism is a necessary part of salvation. Article IX of the *Augsburg Confession* (an early Lutheran creed) states, “Baptism is necessary to salvation.”

The *Lutheran Catechism* says, “Baptism is no trifle, but was instituted by God Himself. . . it is most solemnly commanded that we must be baptized or we cannot be saved.” In accordance with his emphasis on justification by faith, Luther taught that baptism was effective only through faith, but still held that God actually forgives sin at the moment of water baptism. Luther even taught the validity of infant baptism, based on the theory that God gives faith to infants. In our estimation, Luther was incorrect in teaching infant faith and infant baptism, but he was correct in simultaneously affirming justification by faith and the essentiality of water baptism.

Most Protestants after Luther began to teach that baptism is symbolic only, but this is a comparatively new doctrine in church history and not all Protestants accept it. In addition to Luther and his followers, the Churches of Christ teach that water baptism is necessary in order to obtain remission of sins. United Church of Christ theologian Donald Bloesch stated, “Baptism plays a prominent role in our conversion and is not just a symbol of our conversion.” He also wrote, “The overall witness of the New Testament seems to be that baptism by itself is not indispensable for salvation, but baptism joined with repentance and faith becomes the means by which people receive the gift of regeneration.”

The Earliest Formula

Early post-apostolic Christians administered water baptism by using the name of Jesus in the formula. According to Heick, “At first baptism was administered in the name of Jesus, but gradually in the name of the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” He concluded from a passage in the writings of Justin (which we will analyze shortly) that during the period from about A. D. 130 to 140 the trinitarian baptismal formula gradually received acceptance.

The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics states: “The earliest form, represented in the Acts, was simple immersion. . . in water, the use of the name of the Lord, and the laying on of hands. To these were added, at various times and places which cannot be safely identified:

- The triune name (Justin)
- A moral vow (Justin and perhaps Hermas, as well as already in the NT in 1 Peter)
- Triune immersion (Justin)
- A confession of faith (Irenaeus, or perhaps Justin)
- Unction (Tertullian)
- Sponsors (Tertullian)
- Milk and honey (Tertullian).”

It further elaborates: “In connection with the name. . . the question of formula arises. The earliest known formula is ‘in the name of the Lord Jesus,’ or some similar phrase; this is found in the Acts, and was perhaps still used by

Hermas, but by the time of Justin Martyr the triune formula had become general. It is possible that the older formula survived in isolated communities, but there is no decisive contemporary evidence.”

First and Second Centuries

Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible admits that one could draw the following conclusion from the historical evidence: “The original form of words was ‘into the name of Jesus Christ’ or ‘the Lord Jesus.’” Baptism into the name of the Trinity was a later development. After the one mention of it, Matthew 28:19, we do not find it again until Justin Martyr, and his formula is not identical with that in the Gospel.”

The dictionary preferred one of the following two explanations sometimes given by trinitarians as to the use of the name of Jesus, since they are more consistent with traditional practice:

1) Baptism in the name of one person in the trinity is baptism in the name of the whole trinity and so is valid. (This explanation admits that the original formula actually was “in the name of Jesus.”)

2) The phrase “in the name of Jesus” was not meant to be a formula, but only signified that the baptized ones acknowledged Jesus as Lord and Christ. (Of course, this logic could be applied equally as well to Matthew 28:19, leaving us with no formula for Christian baptism.)

In addition to the sources we have cited, most other church historians agree that baptism in Jesus’ name was the older formula.

Hermas, in the early second century, wrote of baptism “in the name of the Lord” and in the “name of the Son of God.” He taught that baptism caused an essential change to take place in one’s life because of the use of the name, but stressed that the name was not a magical formula and could not be effective in the absence of Christian virtues. He wrote, “If you bear His name but possess not His power, it will be in vain that you bear His name.”

The *Didache*, another second century Christian document, speaks of baptism “into the name of the Lord” but also speaks of baptism “into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.” Some conclude that the *Didache* recognizes both formulas as valid. We must not overlook the possibility of interpolations, for while scholars have variously dated the *Didache* from A. D. 120 to 200, the only existing Greek manuscript of it dates to 1056. Moreover, it teaches other non-biblical practices relative to baptism such as pouring as an alternative to immersion, fasting before baptism, and triple immersion.

Most scholars assert that Justin Martyr’s *First Apology*, written around A. D. 150, contains the oldest historical

reference to the triune formula. Here is the key phrase, which describes baptized persons: “For in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water.” We should note, however, that Justin did not recite the modern trinitarian formula but explicitly included the name Jesus, probably in deference to older practice.

Justin taught that Jesus was a subordinate, second being created by God the Father and did not clearly distinguish the Holy Spirit as a third person. Consequently, it is no great comfort for trinitarians to find evidence of their formula in his writings. In fact, the modern doctrine of the trinity did not become dominant until the councils of Nicea (325) and Constantinople (381). Just because one man in A.D. 150, who did not believe in the full deity of Christ, referred to a baptismal formula similar to the modern trinitarian one does not mean all or even most in his day had abandoned the older Jesus’ name formula. Evidence for general usage of the modern trinitarian formula at this early date is not as decisive as some have indicated.

History records a possible reference to Jesus Name baptism shortly after Justin’s time. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, wrote, “We are made clean, by means of the sacred water and invocation of the Lord.” His last major work, however, describes a baptismal formula that was apparently the same as Justin’s.

Closely associated with the baptismal formula is the doctrine of the Godhead. The early post-apostolic fathers, such as Ignatius, Clement of Rome, Polycarp, and Hermas, were certainly not trinitarians. They basically believed in one God and in Jesus as God manifested in flesh. It is hardly surprising, then, to find no reference in their writings to a trinitarian baptismal formula.

The heretic Marcion broke away from the church during this time, and his followers preserved the older baptism “in the name of Jesus Christ.” The *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, written by an Asiatic presbyter in the second century, gives an account of baptism “in the name of Jesus Christ.”

Third Century

Significantly, we still find references to baptism in Jesus’ name long after Justin’s time. In the third century, a debate arose over the validity of baptism performed by “heretics.” Stephen, Bishop of Rome (Roman Catholics consider him a pope), held such baptism to be valid, while the North African theologian Cyprian held it was not. In opposing Stephen, Cyprian discussed the case of “heretics” who baptized in the name of Jesus. He asked, “Can they who among the heretics are said to be baptized in the name of Christ be judged to have obtained remission of sins?” He argued that the Jews in

Acts properly received baptism in the name of Jesus only because they already acknowledged the Father, but that Gentiles who did not acknowledge the Father must be baptized in the full trinity.

“How, then, do some say, that a Gentile baptized without, outside the Church, yea and in opposition to the Church, so that it be only in the name of Jesus Christ everywhere, and in whatever manner, can obtain remission of sin, when Christ Himself commands the heathen to be baptized in the full and united Trinity?”

Cyprian further argued that heretics deny the Father and blaspheme Him, so baptism in the name of Jesus only cannot save them.

Cyprian’s opponents argued that Jesus’ name baptism was always valid, even if performed by heretics, because of the power in the name of Jesus. Firmilian, Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, wrote to Cyprian in 256. He quoted Stephen as saying that “the name of Christ is of great advantage to faith and the sanctification of baptism; so that whosoever is anywhere soever baptized in the name of Christ, immediately obtains the grace of Christ.”

Cyprian responded to Stephen’s view as follows: If this were to then heretics could also receive the Holy Spirit simply by laying on hands and invoking the name of Jesus. This would mean they would be born of the water and Spirit and so would be true Christians, even though they were outside the Catholic Church. Cyprian argued that this could not be correct. Just as the name Jesus could nor impart the Holy Spirit outside the Catholic Church, so baptism in the name of Jesus only was not valid outside the Church:

“If they attribute the effect of baptism to the majesty of the name, so that they who are baptized anywhere and anyhow, in the name of Jesus Christ are judged to be renewed and sanctified; wherefore, in the name of the same Christ, are not hands laid upon the baptized persons among them, for the reception of the Holy Spirit?”

Historians conclude from these writings that many in Cyprian’s day used the Jesus’ name formula, and that probably Stephen allowed the formula. Some believe that even Cyprian accepted this baptism as long as the Catholic Church performed it and the trinity was not denied. In any case, the whole debate demonstrates that many people practiced baptism in Jesus’ name during the third century A.D.

Striking verification comes from *A Treatise on Re-Baptism by An Anonymous Writer*. Some scholars believe the author was a fourth century monk named Ursinus, but most believe he was a bishop in the third century who opposed Cyprian. The treatise discusses what should be done about persons “who, although

baptized in heresy, have yet been baptized in the name of our lord Jesus Christ” and who turn from their heresy to the Catholic Church. It concludes that rebaptism is not necessary: “Heretics who are already baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ must only be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

The author makes a number of interesting points in his discussion:

1) His position had the support of “the most ancient custom and ecclesiastical tradition” and “the authority of so many years, and so many churches and apostles and bishops.”

2) “The power of the name of Jesus invoked upon any man by baptism. . .afford[s] to him. . .no slight advantage for the attainment of salvation,” citing Acts 4:12 and Philippians 2:9-11.

3) The “invocation of the name of Jesus ought not to be thought futile by us on account of the veneration and power of that very name, in which name all kinds of power are accustomed to be exercised.”

4) The invocation of Jesus’ name alone does not bring salvation to the heretic, but if he corrects his error, acknowledges the truth, and receives the Holy Ghost, then it becomes effective; the heretic does not “lose that former invocation of the name of Jesus.”

5) This teaching does not contradict Matthew 28:19.

6) Not only were heretics baptized by “invoking the name of the Lord Jesus,” but many people, both “Jews and Gentiles, fully believing as they ought, are in like manner baptized.”

Fourth Century

Even after the Council of Nicea, we find mention of Jesus’ name baptism, which indicates that it was still a live issue. Ambrose (340 – 398), although a trinitarian, apparently held it to be valid on the ground that baptism in the name of one person of the trinity is the same as baptism in the name of the whole trinity. An editor’s footnote says, “This passage has given rise to the question whether St. Ambrose taught, as some others certainly did (probably on his authority) that baptism in the Name of Christ alone, without mention of the other person, is valid.

The Council of Constantinople in 381 specifically condemned Sabellian baptism, which it described as prevalent in Galatia. A fourth or fifth century addition to the *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* condemns those who perform only “one immersion, which is given into the death of Christ” and requires all baptism to be performed by three immersions in the trinitarian formula. An Eastern variant of this passage further links the single immersion into Christ with modalism. Therefore, it insists that the baptismal candidate be taught that the Father or the Holy

Spirit did not come in flesh and that the Holy Spirit is not the Father or the Son.

The Medieval Age

The church in Constantinople condemned Sabellian baptism in a letter to Antioch around 450, the Justinian Code of 529 (Byzantine Empire) declared the death penalty for both antitrinitarianism and rebaptism, the Council of Constantinople in 553 again condemned Sabellian baptism, and Martin Damian (died 579), Bishop of Braga, condemned Sabellian baptism for "retaining single immersion under a single name."

Bede (673-735) of England accepted the validity of baptism in Jesus' name based on the reasoning attributed to Ambrose, as did the Council of Frejus (792) and Pope Nicholas 1 (858-867). Other medieval writers who mentioned the Jesus Name formula were Peter Lombard (died 1160), Hugo Victor (died 1141), and Thomas Aquinas (1225-1275).

From this evidence we conclude:

- 1) Throughout church history some people were acquainted with the Jesus Name formula.
- 2) Many theologians regarded it as valid.
- 3) Since it reappears repeatedly as an issue, people in various ages apparently maintained the practice.

The Reformation Era Forward

Martin Luther encountered a dispute over the Jesus Name formula in his day. Many sixteenth and seventeenth century Antitrinitarians baptized in Jesus' name. For example, in 1572, George Schomann was baptized in "the name of Christ." Thomas Edwards of England wrote in 1646 about some "heretics" who taught that baptism using the words Father, Son, and Holy Ghost was a man-made tradition and that Christian baptism was "only in the name of Jesus Christ." In the nineteenth century, many of the Plymouth Brethren, as well as some other English groups, taught on the authority of Acts 2:38 that baptism should be in the name of Jesus only.

Oneness Believers Throughout History

Throughout history many have affirmed the doctrine of Oneness (the belief in one God with no distinction of persons, who came in flesh as Jesus). Since these Oneness believers denied the trinity, we assume most baptized in Jesus' name, although historical records usually are silent on the subject. Below is a brief list of non-trinitarians recorded in history who believed in the deity of Jesus and probably baptized in His name.

1) *Anti-Nicea era*: The post-apostolic fathers (including Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Hermas, Ignatius), possibly Irenaeus, some Montanists, Noetus, Praxeas, Epigonus, Cleomenes, probably the Roman

bishops Callistus and Zephyrinus, "the majority of believers" in Tertullian's day, Sabellius.

2) *Nicen era*: Marcellus of Ancyra, Photinus, Commodian, Priscillian, Sabellians.

3) *Medieval era*: Sabellians, Priscillianists, possibly unknown "heretics."

4) *Reformation era*: Michael Servetus (whose doctrine was known to Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin and who was burned at the stake with Calvin's approval), Emmanuel Swedenborg (who recognized the error of the trinity but taught some unusual, non-biblical doctrines), some Anabaptists, many anti-trinitarians, William Penn and many early Quakers.

5) *Nineteenth century*: John Clowes (England), John Miller (U. S.), some New England Congregationalists.

6) *Twentieth century*: Oneness Pentecostals, some Sabbatarians, some charismatics.

Twentieth Century

This century has seen a great revival of baptism in the name of Jesus. The modern Pentecostal movement began on January 1, 1901, and its first leader, Charles Parham, began to baptize in the name of Jesus as early as 1901 or 1902. He reasoned as follows: Since baptism identifies us with Christ's death and burial and since Jesus Christ is the only One who dies for us, we should be baptized in Jesus' name.

The noted Pentecostal evangelist Andrew Urshan began to baptize in Jesus' name as early as 1910. Beginning in 1913, the doctrines of baptism in Jesus' name and the Oneness of God began to sweep across the North American Pentecostal movement under the leadership of Frank Ewart, R. E. McAlister, Glenn Cook, and others. Each case (Parham, Urshan, the 1913 revival) was independent of the others. Each began with prayerful Bible study and a specific experience in which God gave illumination of His Word.

In 1915 Andrew Urshan brought the Pentecostal message to Russia, where some of his converts asked him to baptize them in Jesus' name, not knowing that Urshan and others had already seen this truth. This began the Pentecostal movement in that land. A few years later, a group of Chinese Christians began to teach Oneness and baptism in Jesus name based solely on their reading of the Bible, not realizing that anyone else in the world believed it. In 1917 they organized the True Jesus Church, which exists in Communist China and Taiwan today.

Many prominent leaders in the early Pentecostal movement were baptized in Jesus' name, including:

- A. H. Argue
- Frank Bartleman (Azusa Street participant and historian)

- E. N. Bell (one of two organizers of the Assemblies of God and its first General Chairman)
- William Booth-Cliborn
- Glenn Cook
- G. Garr
- Frank Ewart (early associate of William Durham and prominent revivalist)
- Howard Goss (one of two organizers of the Assemblies of God and one of its executive presbyters)
- L. C. Hall
- G. T. Haywood (prominent black leader)
- F. Lawrence
- Harry van Loon
- R. E. McAlister (prominent evangelist)
- Aimee Semple McPherson
- C. O. Opperman (an executive presbyter in the Assemblies of God) and
- H. G. Rodgers

Bell later abandoned Jesus Name baptism under pressure from trinitarian colleagues, as did Aimee McPherson, who subsequently founded the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, and R. G. Hoekstra, who has achieved financial success with his "Chaplain Ray" radio broadcast.

Bell's story is particularly interesting. At first he rejected what he called "The Sad New Issue," but then he was baptized in Jesus' name, giving three reasons why:

- 1) God had dealt with him personally about it for some time.
- 2) God took away every other message in his preaching until he would obey.
- 3) This is what the apostles taught and practiced.

Bell revealed his re-baptism in a powerful article entitled "Who is Jesus Christ?" but prior to publication the Assemblies of God deleted many parts of it, including the fact of his re-baptism. The article expressed his "brand new vision" of who Jesus really was and the intense emotional experience that accompanied his new understanding and baptism. Eventually, however, Bell suppressed his new baptismal practice in order to maintain fellowship with the Assemblies of God, and in 1920 he became General Chairman a second time.

The position of the Assemblies of God on this issue is also very interesting. In 1915 the group accepted Jesus Name baptism as valid. A short time later it highly recommended a compromise formula that included both the words of Matthew 28:19 and Acts 2:38. Finally in 1916 it rejected the Jesus Name formula, requiring all to accept use of the titles of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

All but one of the Assemblies of God preachers in Louisiana accepted Jesus Name baptism as did almost all the early Canadian Pentecostal leaders, including the founders of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. However, in 1919 the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada renounced Oneness, accepted trinitarianism, and affiliated with the Assemblies of God.

In all, approximately twenty-five percent of American Pentecostals believe in Oneness and baptize in the name of Jesus. In addition, some trinitarian Pentecostals baptize in Jesus' name, including:

- 1) Bethel Temple and Bible School in Seattle, founded by W. H. Ofler
- 2) The Pentecostal Church of Indonesia, which resulted from missionary efforts by that group
- 3) Bethesda Missionary Temple in Detroit, pastored by James Lee Beall
- 4) Gospel Temple and Northern California Bible College, led by Ernest Gentile.

Many modern charismatics have begun to baptize in Jesus' name, including some in the Maranatha Campus Ministries, which exists on more than sixty college campuses. There are approximately fifteen to twenty small Sabbath-keeping groups (apparently non-Pentecostal) that teach Oneness and baptize in Jesus' name.

Conclusion

Baptism in the name of Jesus has evidently existed throughout church history and is now enjoying a great revival.

Chapter 11 will investigate the history of the baptism of the Holy Spirit with tongues. At the end of that chapter we will draw some general conclusions about the apostolic doctrine in church history.

What Have You Learned?

1. What is the basis for all doctrinal teaching? _____

2. What are six (6) difficulties that a student of church history (especially ancient church history) must consider? _____

3. What did the church leaders of the early post-apostolic era (A.D. 90-140) teach about baptism? _____

4. What did each of these church historians believe about the method of water baptism in the early post-apostolic church?

Klotsche: _____

Latourette: _____

Hermas: _____

Irenaeus: _____

Tertullian: _____

Cyprian: _____

5. What do each of these historical writings have to say about the early post-apostolic method of water baptism?

The *Didache* _____

The *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* (2nd or 3rd century)

6. Martin Luther expressed his preference for immersion based on what evidence? _____

7. What two other prominent Protestant church leaders recognized immersion as the Biblical method of water baptism? _____

8. What did church historian Latourette say about baptism as part of salvation? _____

9. What does each of the following authorities on church history say about baptism as a part of salvation in the first and second centuries?

The *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* _____

Heick _____

Greek Apologists (A.D. 130-180) _____

10. Which four (4) early theologians taught that God remits sins at water baptism? _____

11. Tertullian taught that what three (3) things take place at water baptism? _____

12. What did Tertullian teach about John's baptism? _____

13. What do Roman Catholics teach about water baptism, and how does this affect the doctrine of regeneration? _____

14. What does Donald Bloesch say about baptism and salvation? _____

15. According to the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* was the earliest formula of baptism? _____

16. To this earliest formula (found in Acts) was added what seven (7) other trinitarian doctrines, attributed to what theologian? _____

17. Given the historical evidence, what does Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible* admit about the formula for water baptism? _____

18. Which document, (written when?) contains the oldest historical reference to the triune formula? _____

19. When did the modern doctrine of the trinity become dominant? _____

20. Which doctrine is closely associated with the baptismal formula? _____

21. Which four (4) early post-apostolic fathers were not trinitarians? _____

22. What did these four (4) early post-apostolic fathers believe? _____

23. What occurred in the third century that proves baptism in Jesus' name was around long after Justin's time? What was demonstrated as a result? _____

24. What three (3) conclusions can be drawn from the evidence found in the Medieval Age about the Jesus Name baptismal formula? _____

25. Given the following era in history, what did each person or group teach about the Jesus Name formula?

1646 – Thomas Edwards of England: _____

1800s – Plymouth Brethren: _____

26. What was the reasoning of Charles Parham when he began to baptize in the name of Jesus as early as 1901 or 1902? _____

27. What two (2) doctrines began to sweep across the North American Pentecostal movement in 1913? _____

28. Each case of Pentecostal revival in North America began independently of each other through what two (2) things? _____

29. When and how did the Pentecostal movement begin in the nation of Russia? _____

30. Chinese Christians based their teaching of Oneness and baptism in Jesus' name solely on what? _____

31. What were the three (3) reasons given by E. N. Bell for his baptism in Jesus' Name? _____

32. Give the position of the Assemblies of God on the issue of baptism in Jesus' name in 1915 and 1916. _____

This chapter investigates the existence of the Holy Spirit baptism with tongues in church history and draws conclusions about the complete apostolic message throughout history. We should keep in mind all the difficulties associated with such a study, as discussed in Chapter 10. The words of *Encyclopedia Britannica* serve well as our central proposition: "Post-apostolic instances of glossolalia have been recorded throughout the history of the Christian church."

First and Second Centuries

The post-apostolic fathers of the first two centuries believed in the gift of the Holy Spirit, practiced the laying on of hands to receive the Spirit, and testified that the gifts of the Spirit, including tongues, existed in their English word *gifts* represents the Greek word *charismata* in the original texts, the same word Paul used for the nine gifts of the Spirit including tongues (1 Corinthians 12).

Clement of Rome (died 100?) reminded the Corinthians that "a full outpouring of the Holy Spirit was upon you all."

Ignatius (died 107?) wrote to the church at Smyrna: "Ignatius. . .to the Church of God the Father, and of the beloved Jesus Christ, which was through mercy obtained every kind of gift, which is filled with faith and love, and is deficient in no gift, most worthy of God, and adorned with holiness. . .Be ye strong, I pray, in the power of the Holy Ghost." He also admonished Polycarp to pray so that he might "be wanting in nothing, and . . .abound in every gift."

The *Didache* says, "For the Father desireth that the gifts be given to all" and also describes prophets who speak "in the Spirit."

Justin Martyr wrote, "For the prophetic gifts remain with us, even to the present time. . .Now it is possible to see amongst us women and men who possess gifts of the Spirit of God."

Irenaeus (130?-202?), Bishop of Lyons, wrote, "Those who are in truth His disciples, receiving grace from Him, do in His name perform (miracles). . .It is not possible to name the numbers of the gifts which the Church (scattered) throughout the whole world, has received from God, in the name of Jesus Christ." He taught the necessity of receiving the Spirit and specifically described speaking in tongues as evidence of the Spirit:

"[T]he perfect man consists in the commingling and the union of the soul receiving the spirit of the Father. . .For this reason does the apostle declare, 'We speak wisdom among them that are perfect,' terming those persons 'perfect' who have received the Spirit of God, and who through the Spirit of God do speak in all languages, as he used [h]imself also to speak. In like manner we do also hear many brethren in the Church, who possess prophetic gifts, and who through the Spirit speak all

Chapter 11

The Witness in Church History: Tongues

"We also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses. . ." (Hebrews 12:1).

What I Have Learned

kinds of languages . . . whom also the apostle terms 'spiritual,' they being spiritual because they partake of the Spirit."

Celsus, a pagan, wrote near the end of the second century that Christians in his day spoke in tongues. The theologian Origen (died 254?) preserved his testimony without denying the existence and validity of tongues, and accepted the gifts of the Spirit for his day.

A group called the Montanists emphasized the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues.

Third Century

Tertullian wrote against the heretic Marcion shortly after A.D. 200: "[T]he Creator promised the gift of His Spirit in the latter days; and . . . Christ has in these last days appeared as the dispenser of spiritual gifts." Tertullian specifically mentioned the gift of tongues and quoted 1 Corinthians 12:8-11 and Isaiah 28:11 as applicable in his day. He regarded speaking in tongues as one of the marks of a true church:

"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. . . 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. . . Now all these signs (of spiritual gifts) are forthcoming from my side without any difficulty."

Novation (died 257?), a presbyter in Rome, wrote about the Holy Spirit:

"This is He who places prophets in the Church, instructs teachers, directs tongues, gives powers and healings, does wonderful works, offers 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."

Sabellius apparently taught the baptism of the Holy Spirit with tongues. None of his writings have survived, but Epiphanius said that Sabellius taught regeneration by the Holy Ghost and Pseudo-Athanasius records that Sabellius taught on the spiritual gifts of 1 Corinthians 12.

Asterus Urbanus (c. 232) indicated that the Christians of his day expected the spiritual gifts to remain permanently in the church. Writing against the later Montanists, he asked why they no longer had prophets after their prophet Montanus and his co-workers died. Urbanus noted that the true church would always have the prophetic gifts (prophecy, tongues, interpretation of tongues): "For the apostle [Paul] deems that the gifts of prophecy should abide in all the church up to the time of the final advent."

Fourth and Fifth Centuries

Hilary (died 367), bishop of Poitiers, mentioned both tongues and interpretation of tongues, describing them as "agents of ministry" ordained of God.

Ambrose (340-98), bishop of Milan, taught that all the gifts of 1 Corinthians 12 were part of the normal Christian experience.

By the late fourth century and early fifth century, Christendom had for the most part, evolved into what came to be known as the Roman Catholic Church. Apparently, speaking in tongues had practically disappeared from most places in the backsliding church, but the memory of it remained to some extent. John Chrysostom (345-407), bishop of Constantinople, wrote a comment on 1 Corinthians 12:

"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 . . . Well: what did happen then? Whoever was baptized he straightway spoke with tongues. . . They at once on their baptism received the Spirit. . . [They] began to speak, one in the tongue of the Persians, another in that of the Romans, another in that of the Indians, or in some other language. And this disclosed to outsiders that it was the Spirit in the speaker."

Augustine (354-430) testified that the church in his day did not expect to speak in tongues when receiving the Holy Spirit, but admitted that this used to be the case:

"For the Holy Spirit is not only given by the laying on of hands amid the testimony of temporal sensible miracles, as He was given in former days. . . For who expects in these days that those on whom hands are laid that they may receive the Holy Spirit should forthwith begin to speak with tongues?"

Evidently some "heretics" in Augustine's day believed in receiving the Holy Spirit with evidence of speaking in tongues. He sought to refute with them by the following argument:

- Tongues are valuable without love (1 Corinthians 13).
- Love comes only by the Spirit (Romans 5:5).
- They did not have the Spirit because they did not belong to the Catholic Church.
- No one expected tongues any longer anyway.

The Medieval Age

Evidence of tongues in medieval times is sparse, probably because the Roman Catholic Church was so effective in silencing "heretics." Nevertheless, there are

reports of speaking in tongues among the following groups:

- Waldenses, 1100's Europe – A group that rejected papal authority and attempted to base their beliefs solely on the Bible.
- Albigenses, 1100's Europe – Another group that rejected papal authority and emphasized purity of life.
- Franciscans and possibly other mendicant orders, 1200's, Europe – Catholic monks who embraced a very simple lifestyle and traveled throughout the countryside preaching.

The Reformation Era Forward

Reports of speaking in tongues increase greatly after the Protestant Reformation, due to several factors:

- 1) Greater religious freedom,
- 2) Renewed emphasis on Bible study, apostolic doctrine, conversion, and spiritual experiences,
- 3) The invention of printing, and
- 4) The closer proximity to our time.

According to respected historians, speaking in tongues has occurred among many groups (from 1500 to 1900):

1) Anabaptists, 1500's, Europe – One of the four main branches of the early Protestant movement (along with Lutherans, Reformed, and Anglicans). Unlike other Protestants, the Anabaptists emphasized the following:

- Restoration of apostolic patterns of worship and lifestyle,
- The importance of a conversion experience,
- Baptism of believers only,
- Baptism by immersion,
- Total separation of church and state,
- The power of overcoming sin after conversion, and
- The need to live a holy life.

A prominent Anabaptist leader named Menno Simons, whose followers became known as Mennonites, wrote about speaking in tongues as if it were expected evidence of receiving the Holy Ghost. Many early Anabaptists worshiped quite demonstratively; in the words of a secular history text some participated in "very excited, 'enthusiastic', evangelical practices. . . what Americans know as 'holy rolling' . . . The congregation sometimes shouted and danced, and always sang hymns with great fervor." In view of their doctrine and worship, it is not at all surprising that speaking in tongues occurred among early Anabaptists.

2) Prophecy movement, 1500-2 England.

3) Camisards, 1600's and 1700's, southern France (often called the Prophets of the Cevennes). A group of Huguenots (French Protestants), mostly

peasants, who resisted the attempts of Louis XIV's government to convert them to Roman Catholicism. Many were imprisoned, tortured, and martyred. Observers reported tongues, uneducated peasants and young children prophesying in pure, elegant French, enthusiastic, demonstrative worship, and people "seized by the Spirit."

4) Quakers, 1600's, England. A group that emphasized spiritual experience and waited on the moving of the Spirit in their services. The early Quakers received their name because they literally "quaked" under the power of the Spirit.

5) Jansenists, 1600's and 1700's, France. A Catholic reform movement.

6) Pietists (including Moravians), late 1600's Germany. The Pietists emphasized spiritual experience and Christian living.

7) Converts of Camisards, early 1700's, England. Some Camisards fled to England to avoid persecution, making converts there.

8) Methodists, 1700's, England, particularly in the revivals of Wesley and Whitefield and in later American revivals.

Wesley himself believed that the gifts of the Spirit had practically disappeared but that a fully restored church would have them again. When a certain Dr. Middleton wrote that the gift of tongues was absent from later church history, Wesley replied that:

- Many ancient writings are no longer extant.
- Many Christians wrote no books.
- The ante-Nicene fathers do not say tongues ceased with the apostles.
- Just because tongues was not specifically recorded does not mean it was not practiced. He said, "Many may have spoken with new tongues, of whom this is not recorded; at least, the records are lost in a course of so many years."
- In reply to the objection that tongues did not exist in his time, Wesley replied, "It has been heard of more than once, no farther off than the valleys of Dauphiny" [southern France].

We should also note the strong emphasis on repentance and physical demonstrations in the Methodist revivals. One hostile historian wrote, "Extreme emotional disturbances, ecstasies and bodily seizures of various sorts were common in the Wesleyan Revival of the eighteenth century in England, "with people in Wesley's meetings exhibiting 'violent motor reactions. . . convulsions and shakings' and screaming." Similar phenomena occurred in the Great Awakening, a period of American revival in the 1700's led by Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, and others.

9) Revivals and Camp Meetings, 1800's, America. It is reported that physical demonstrations occurred in later American revivals, called the Second Awakening, which began with camp meetings in Kentucky and swept across the American frontier. In the camp meetings people "shouted, sobbed, leaped in the air, writhed on the ground, fell like dead men and lay insensible for considerable periods, and engaged in unusual bodily contortions," and the "jerks." Observers at various American revival meetings reported sobbing, shrieking, shouting, spasms, falling, rolling, running, dancing, barking, whole congregations breathing in distress and weeping, and hundreds under conviction and on the ground repenting.

These meetings were conducted by Methodists, Baptists, some Presbyterians, and later the Holiness movement. With such a strong emphasis on repentance and free, demonstrative worship, it is not surprising that many people received the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. A great revival swept the University of Georgia in 1800-1801, and the students "shouted and talked in unknown tongues."

In many cases tongues speaking went unreported because observers did not recognize it or its significance and did not distinguish it from other physical phenomena. One historian said, "Throughout the nineteenth century speaking in unknown tongues occurred occasionally in the revivals and camp meetings that dotted the countryside. Perhaps the phenomenon was considered just another of the many evidences that one had been saved or sanctified."

10) Lutherans, early 1800's Germany. This began among followers of Gustav von Below.

11) Irvingites, 1800's England and America. The Spirit fell among the London congregation of a prominent Church of Scotland pastor named Edward Irving, beginning with Mary Campbell and James and Mararet MacDonald. Soon after, Irvingites formed the Catholic Apostolic Church, which emphasized the gifts of the Spirit. This revival also gave birth to the Christian Catholic Church and the New Apostolic Church, and there were Irvingites in the traditional denominations. Unfortunately, these groups gradually lost the gifts of the Spirit, degeneration into ritualism, suffered rapid decline, and are almost nonexistent today. Church historian Philip Schaff 91819-1893) wrote of observing speaking in tongues in an Irvingite church in New York:

"Several years ago I witnessed this phenomenon in an Irvingite congregation in New York; the words were broken, ejaculatory, and unintelligible, but uttered in abnormal, startling, impressive sounds, in a state of apparent unconsciousness and rapture, and without any control over the tongue, which was seized as it were by a foreign power. A friend and colleague (Dr., Briggs), who witnessed it in 1879 in the principal

Irvingite church in London, received the same impression."

12) Plymouth Brethren, 1800's, England.

13) Readers (Lasare), 1841-43, Sweden.

14) Revivals, 1859, Ireland.

15) Holiness people, 1800's, Tennessee and North Carolina.

We should note that one German historian attributed speaking in tongues to Martin Luther, and a friend of Dwight Moody described some of Moody's followers speaking in tongues. However, it is unclear whether either source definitely meant speaking in tongues as we know it. The Westminster Confession, an important statement of Presbyterian Calvinism adopted by English Puritans in 1648, specifically required that prayer be made in a known tongue.

Twentieth Century

The modern Pentecostal movement began on January 1, 1901, in a small Bible college in Topeka, Kansas, operated by Charles Parham, a minister with a background in the Holiness movement. The students began to seek the baptism of the Spirit with tongues, and Agnes Ozman was the first student to experience speaking in tongues. The revival soon spread to many denominations and around the world. Since then, speaking in tongues has been verified and documented many times.

In the late 1950's, a revival of tongues speaking, known as the charismatic or neo-Pentecostal movement, began among non-Pentecostal churches and has spread throughout the Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox churches. Others have formed their own churches, and many have remained in their traditional denominations.

Statistics on Pentecostals Today

In 2020 it is estimated that there are

- 92 million denominal Pentecostals
- 234 million Charismatic Pentecostals
- 259 million independent Pentecostals

It is estimated that 25% of the world's Christians are Pentecostal and that by 2025 this will increase to 30%. As "Time Magazine" noted, this means Pentecostals are larger than any single bloc of Protestants in the world today.

As defined by this source, affiliation is much more than membership or regular attendance; it includes adult adherents, children, attending sympathizers, and irregular attendants. (See Chart 11A for statistics on the major Oneness Pentecostal groups in the United States today.)

As of 2019, The United Pentecostal Church International estimated a total constituency of approximately 5,000,000. At that time it had:

- 4819 churches in the United States and Canada, with
- 1000 considered as home missions churches, and
- About 5 new churches being started per week.

Foreign missions statistics at that time included:

- Works in 195 countries and territories,
- 37,428 churches and preaching points,
- 582 established Bible colleges,
- An increase in 12 months of 942 churches, and
- 139,892 constituents.

Major foreign missions fields as of 2019 are listed below:

Major UPCI Mission Fields (2019)

(Multiply Baptized by 2 or 3 to obtain Constituents)

Country	Churches	Baptized
Argentina	487	43,800
Brazil	1070	116,650
El Salvador	398	51,623
Haiti	570	45,723
India, N.E.	845	65,652
India, South	727	19,770
Indonesia	718	27,050
Kenya	426	81,833
Madagascar	1020	130,614
Mexico	731	83,649
Papua New Guinea	389	39,153
Pakistan	1021	41,493
Philippines	2686	271,684
Spain	71	6,166
Uganda	540	182,384
Venezuela	1575	310,280

Many other Oneness Pentecostal groups exist outside the United States. (See Chart 11B for those with over 10,000 adult adherents as of 1970.)

The True Jesus Church is an indigenous church formed by mainland Chinese in 1917 without any prior contact with other Oneness Pentecostals. Just before the Communist takeover, it had 1260 churches and 125,000 affiliated; since then its members have gone underground in secret house meetings. It is one of the few churches to resist successfully the government's efforts to merge all Protestants into one registered body called the Three-Self Patriotic Movement. The True Jesus Church teaches that birth of water is water baptism, that using the name of Jesus at baptism is for remission of sins, that birth of the Spirit is receiving the Spirit and that the evidence of receiving the Spirit is speaking in tongues.

The UPC of Colombia is a completely autonomous church founded by UPC missionaries. It is the fastest growing and the largest non-Catholic denomination in the country. Its amazing progress has been the subject of two scholarly books by non-Pentecostal researchers.

Many smaller Oneness Pentecostal bodies exist around the world including several in Mexico, many in the Caribbean, many among Caribbean immigrants to England, and the Church of the Spirit (Footwashing) in Yugoslavia.

For Russia the World Christian Encyclopedia lists a single Oneness Pentecostal body, an underground group known as the Evangelical Christians in the Apostolic Spirit. They are the oldest Russian Pentecostals, dating back to Andrew Urshan's revivals of 1915, and they practice footwashing. The only officially registered church which contains Pentecostals is the Union of Evangelical Christians – Baptists (AUCECB).

In the 1940's the Oneness people were forced to join this government controlled organization, but many soon left, preferring to become an illegal sect. Apparently, many remained in this group, for in 1974 a Oneness believer names Peter Shatrov was elected to the presidium of the AUCECB, thereby becoming the major Pentecostal spokesman in the AUCECB and in the U.S.S.R. as a whole. We assume, then, that many groups classified as trinitarian could have significant numbers of Oneness believers. (See Chart 11C for statistics for Russian Pentecostals.)

Conclusion

We do not agree with all the doctrines of every individual or movement discussed in this chapter, but our investigation has demonstrated a basic truth: through the ages people have believed, preached and experienced repentance, baptism by immersion, baptism for the remission of sins, baptism in Jesus' name, receiving the Holy Spirit, and speaking in tongues. These are not modern day inventions; the Bible teaches them and many throughout history have followed them.

In particular, it can be stated that some groups adhered simultaneously to baptism in Jesus' name and baptism of the Spirit with tongues. We find both doctrines among:

- The early post-apostolic fathers (1st and 2nd centuries),
- Later Sabellians (4th, 5th, 6th centuries),
- Various "heretics" (3rd and 4th centuries, middle ages),
- Anabaptists (16th century),
- Antitrinitarians (16th and 17th centuris),
- Easy Quakers (17th century), and
- Plymouth Brethren (19th century).

No doubt Satan has tried to suppress the facts, but there is enough evidence to indicate that God has always had

some people who taught the full apostolic doctrine. We are confident that the apostolic church, as defined by message and experience, has never been absent since the days of the apostles.

Church history alone can never prove the validity of doctrine, but it provides insight into how these key doctrines were altered or lost over the centuries. It helps to dispel the myth that these doctrines are of recent origin. The clear teaching of Scripture is enough to tear away the shrouds of non-biblical tradition, but perhaps this brief historical survey can aid in the process.

In these latter days, the full apostolic truth is proclaimed around the world. This century has seen a miraculous revival of the baptism of the Holy Spirit with tongues. In less than one century, the Pentecostal movement has grown from a small group to the largest single grouping of Protestants in the world, and it has affected every branch of Christendom. We firmly believe a revival of the name of Jesus will match the outpouring of His spirit. The history of the church is not over; we believe the best is yet to come!

What Have You Learned?

1. What does the *Encyclopedia Britannica* say about tongues in church history? _____

2. What three (3) things did the post-apostolic fathers practice in their salvation message? _____

3. What two (2) Scripture passages were used by Tertullian (a 3rd century historian) use to support the evidence of tongues as one of the marks of a true church? Write each in full, with reference. _____

4. By the late 4th and early 5th centuries, Christendom had evolved into what religion? _____

5. During the Medieval Age, there are reports of speaking in tongues among what three (3) groups? Briefly describe each group. _____

6. What four (4) reasons are given for the increase of reports of speaking in tongues after the Protestant Reformation? _____

7. What fifteen (15) groups reportedly spoke in tongues from 1500 – 1900? Briefly describe each group (when, where and who). _____

8. What was the Great Awakening, and who were the leaders? _____

9. What was the reply of John Wesley to the objection that tongues did not exist in his time? _____

10. The Revivals and Camp Meetings in America during the 1800's were conducted by what four (4) different church groups? _____

11. When and where did the modern Pentecostal movement begin? Who was the leader? _____

12. Explain what is meant by the "charismatic or neo-Pentecostal movement." _____

13. What significant fact was noted in *Time Magazine* about Pentecostals? _____

14. Give a brief definition of each of the following oneness groups found outside North America.

The True Jesus Church _____

Evangelical Christians in the Apostolic Spirit _____

The UPC of Colombia _____

15. What basic truth is demonstrated through the study of tongues in church history? _____

16. If church history cannot prove the validity of doctrine, what insights can it provide? _____

Chapter 12

Are There Exceptions?

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?" (Hebrews 2:3-4).

What I Have Learned

Can there be any exceptions to the New Testament plan of salvation we have studied in this book? This chapter will analyze some proposed exceptions in the light of Scripture.

Basic Principles

At the outset, we must establish some basic principles to guide our discussion:

1) God alone will judge the salvation of each person (Romans 2:16; Hebrews 12:23). No human being can condemn a soul to hell or guarantee him a place in heaven, for salvation is a matter between the individual and God.

The Lord taught us not to judge each other, but to judge ourselves and leave the judgment of others to God (Matthew 7:1-5; Luke 6:37). Jesus did not come to condemn the world but to offer salvation (John 3:17), and we should do likewise. We should proclaim the gospel, encourage obedience to it, and warn of the biblically prescribed consequences for disobedience, but the final results rest in God's hands.

We should not be quick to reject those who reverence the name of Christ, but who apparently do not have the fullness of truth. The disciples rebuked a man who cast out devils in Jesus' name because he was not part of them, but Jesus said, "*Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part*" (Mark 9:39-40). People such as these are not necessarily saved (Matthew 7:21-23), but they may still help to spread the Word of God and the name of Jesus (Philippians 1:15-18). Instead of opposing them, we should be thankful for that good they do and endeavor to lead them to more truth. If we preach the full gospel in a positive way, the truth will speak for itself and be its own defense.

2) God is sovereign in His bestowal of mercy. He said, "*I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion*" (Romans 9:15). Nevertheless, He has voluntarily chosen a plan of salvation and will abide by it; He has clearly established the conditions upon which He will grant mercy. Paul first taught God's sovereignty in salvation (Romans 9:14-24), but then explained that God will grant salvation to everyone who believes on Jesus, confesses Him as Lord, calls upon His name, and obeys His gospel (Romans 10:9-17).

3) The Bible is the sole authority for doctrine and instruction in salvation. Jesus told the Jews, "*Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life*" (John 5:39-40). He did not rebuke their reliance on the Scriptures to find eternal life, but their refusal to believe on Him for eternal life when the Scriptures pointed so clearly to Him.

The Bible contains the only gospel we can preach. Paul states, "*But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other*

gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8-9).

All true doctrine must rest upon the Bible. "*The holy scriptures. . . are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works*" (2 Timothy 3:15-17).

We cannot impose demands that the Bible does not support, nor can we make exceptions that the Bible does not grant. Precisely because God is sovereign in granting salvation, we must limit ourselves to the clear teaching of Scripture. If God has plans that go beyond what He has revealed to us in the Bible, that is His prerogative, but we have authority only to teach the plan God gave to us in the Scriptures. We have no right to offer false or uncertain hopes based on wishful thinking, speculations, reasoning, philosophy, or doubtful interpretations of difficult passages. We cannot make exceptions for situations that arise from failure to follow biblical teachings and examples.

4) We must not formulate doctrinal teaching on the basis of unusual or hypothetical situations. Human sympathy may sway us, but if we try to establish any exception we undercut the authority of God's Word. For example, God could have chosen to remit sins without water baptism, but we exceed our authority if we assert that He will or list circumstances under which He will. If we make an exception for one who was not baptized, then logically speaking baptism is not necessary for anyone.

By playing judge in this manner we will encourage disobedience or a casual approach to the Word of God. God alone is qualified to be Judge, and as such He will apply general principles to specific facts in order to reach a fair and legally correct decision. We should obey the full gospel to the utmost of our understanding and capacity, encourage everyone else to do the same, and leave eternal judgment to God.

5) God is the most loving, merciful, and just Judge anyone could have. His love, mercy, and sense of fairness are perfect, while ours are not:

- "*For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations*" (Psalms 100:5);
- "*Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints*" Revelation 15:3).

When it comes to salvation, our concept of justice is faulty, because no one deserves salvation. Only God has the right to grant mercy. Only He knows what is fair in each situation because only He has perfect knowledge. Only He knows the condition of the heart, the

opportunities of the past, and what an individual will do if given future opportunities.

6) We cannot compromise God's plan because only a few follow it. *"For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar"* (Romans 3:3-4). Jesus said, *"Strait [small] is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it"* (Matthew 7:14). Someone asked Him, *"Lord, are there few that be saved?"* (Luke 13:23). He replied, *"Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able"* (Luke 13:24).

In Noah's day God saved only eight souls out of the entire world because only they believed Him and obeyed His plan. In the first century, almost all of God's chosen people (Israel) rejected His plan, prompting Paul's statement in Romans. Almost all the religious leaders and religious community rejected the gospel. Should we be surprised if the same is true today?

Are the Heathen Lost?

Applying these principles, let us investigate the possibility of an exception for those who have never heard the gospel.

No one can inherit eternal life outside the gospel of Jesus Christ: *"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God"* (John 3:5). Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me"* (John 14:6). He also said, *"If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins"* (John 8:2). Paul wrote, *"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power"* (1 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

Even those who have never heard the gospel have a sufficient witness of God in His creation: *"Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and God head; so that they are without excuse"* (Romans 1:19-20). God holds everyone accountable to glorify Him as God and to be thankful to Him (Romans 1:21).

God has also given a conscience to all. The heathen may not have full knowledge of God's will, but they have enough conscience that:

- If they follow it God will lead them farther into His will, and

- If they do not follow it they will be condemned.

Everyone knows some things are morally wrong and that the proper penalty for these sins is death (Romans 1:32). Those who had the Law of Moses will be judged by it, and those who did not will be judged by the law of conscience (Romans 2:12-16). This does not mean anyone will be saved on the basis of conscience alone, because no one has ever lived up to the minimum demands of conscience. Everyone has transgressed at least once (Romans 3:10,23). No one will be saved by works, or by adherence to law, including the law of conscience (Romans 3:20; Ephesians 2:8-9). Conscience, then, will serve as a just basis for condemnation, not as a basis for salvation outside of Jesus Christ.

If someone sincerely attempts to follow conscience and diligently seeks after God, we believe He will reveal enough truth to him so that he can be saved. God *"is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him"* (Hebrews 11:6). He will always honor a broken and contrite heart (Psalm 34:18; 51:17), and He always reveals Himself to the seeker (1 Chronicles 28:9; Jeremiah 29:13-14; Matthew 7:7).

God does not save outside of truth; it is God's will for *"all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Timothy 2:4). Cornelius is a good example. He was a devout man who feared God, gave alms to the poor, and prayed to God constantly (Acts 10:1-2). In short, he did everything within his power to seek, worship, and obey God. His actions became a memorial before God, and as a result God sent an angel to him (Acts 10:3-6). The angel did not design a special plan of salvation for him or preach the gospel to him, but the angel gave him instructions so that he could find a preacher of the gospel. Cornelius was not already saved, for the angel told him, *"Call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved"* (Acts 11:13-14).

There was a woman in Seoul, Korea, whose mother was a shamaness (witch doctor). The mother's superstitious practices and constant communication with evil spirits caused the daughter to become so depressed that she attempted suicide. While near death she had a vision of two Americans. She recovered, and one day she passed by the First Pentecostal Church. Attracted by the noise of worship, she looked inside and saw the two American faces that had appeared in her vision. They were Elton and Loretta Bernard, the founders of the church. As a result of this miracle, the young woman began attending services, repented from her sins, was baptized in Jesus' name, received the Holy Ghost, and eventually won her mother to the Lord. She had known nothing of the gospel of Jesus Christ, but God apparently saw a longing in her heart for more than superstition and saw a sincere desire to worship Him. As a result, He led her to the truth.

If the heathen are saved without the gospel, then Christ's death was unnecessary and Christ's command to preach the gospel to every creature was a mistake. If the heathen are saved before hearing the gospel, then missionaries actually cause saved people to be damned, because many reject the gospel when they do hear it. In this case, Christ's commission would actually cause more people to be lost, contrary to God's stated will (2 Peter 3:9).

Paul said, *"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent? . . . So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"* (Romans 10:13-15, 17). The truth is that all men are lost until they hear, believe, and obey the gospel of Jesus Christ.

God is not unfair to base salvation totally upon the gospel, for everyone deserves to be lost. God was not responsible for man's sin and had no obligation to design a plan of salvation. Since salvation is by His grace, He can offer it on His own terms. Furthermore, God is not to blame that many people do not know about Him. Beginning with Adam and again with Noah, God revealed His will to all humanity. In our age He has commissioned the church to bring the gospel to everyone. It is not God's fault that men have repeatedly failed to transmit the knowledge of God to their descendants and to their fellow men. God is more than fair – He is gracious – to give every man a witness of Himself through creation and conscience.

Moral and Sincere People

No one is righteous in himself, no one is good in God's sight, all are sinners, and no one will be saved on the basis of his good works (Romans 3:10-12, 23, 27-28; Ephesians 2:8-9). One sin is enough to condemn the soul, and no matter how good a person may be, without God he is still a sinner. No one can earn salvation; it is a free gift of God and must be received on God's terms, which include faith in Christ and obedience to His gospel. No matter how morally a person attempts to live, if he does not follow God's plan he cannot be saved.

Morality and good works are not the determinants of salvation, for there have been Moslems, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, and others who have rejected Christ but who have manifested morality and good works equal to or greater than that of many professing Christians. No doubt many of the Jews who rejected Jesus were highly moral, obeying the Law of Moses in every detail. Paul was blameless as far as the righteousness of the Law, but he still needed a conversion (Philippians 3: 5-7).

Sincerity is not enough either, for false religionists, Communists, atheists, and others are often highly

sincere in their beliefs. It is absolutely necessary to worship God both in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). God demands obedience above sacrifice (1 Samuel 15:22), and no one will be saved who does not obey the gospel, regardless of sacrifice.

Only God sees the heart of a man and knows what he is truly like (Jeremiah 17:9-10). We must not make exceptions for those who seem to deserve salvation based on their goodness as perceived by faulty human judgment.

Those Who Profess Christ

Sincere profession based on a faulty concept of Christ is not enough; one must believe and obey the gospel. False prophets and cultists profess Christ, but they are not saved. According to Jesus, some people will sincerely profess Him, believe that they are saved, and even profess to perform miracles in His name, but they will not be saved because they did not obey His Word (Matthew 7:21-27). Many will profess to know Him and even to have enjoyed His presence but will not be saved (Luke 13:25-27).

Where does this leave those who have a certain degree of faith in Christ but have not obeyed the full gospel? We must recognize that they have responded to God's Word in some measure and that God has dealt with them. God seeks to lead them to the full truth, and if they continue to follow His Word and Spirit they will be saved. We must not belittle any genuine experience with God they may have. These people have begun to follow God's Word, but at this point in their experience they are not apostolic believers; they have not been born again of water and the Spirit according to John 3:5 and Acts 2:38.

Apollos is a biblical example of someone in this situation (Acts 18:24-28). He was an eloquent man, mighty in the Scriptures, instructed in the way of the Lord, and fervent in the spirit. He taught diligently the things of the Lord and spoke boldly in the synagogue, but he knew only the baptism of John. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and expounded the way of God unto him more perfectly. Apparently, they taught him baptism in the name of Jesus Christ and the baptism of the Holy Ghost, because that is what Paul taught twelve other disciples of John in the very next chapter.

From this account, we see that someone may have a deep knowledge of the Scriptures, a powerful ministry, and a spiritual fervency and still not be born again. Basically such people are pre-Pentecost believers, not part of the apostolic church. Despite their valid religious experience with God, they need to be led to further truth.

Perhaps one way to describe their position is to say they are in the conception stage and have not yet had the new birth. Pioneer Pentecostal leaders such as A. D. Urshan and G. T. Haywood used this analogy. The Word has been planted and conception has taken place as a result

(Luke 8:11; 1 Peter 1:23), but the actual birth has not yet occurred. They are in the formative stages of being a Christian and need to be led to the fullness of truth so they can have a normal, healthy birth.

Professing Christians in Church History

The Bible reveals only one plan of salvation for the entire New Testament church age, and the Bible has been available throughout church history. Historical accounts from the early post-apostolic age have also been available to later generations, and they confirm the apostolic message of baptism in Jesus' name and the baptism of the Holy Ghost with tongues. Furthermore, it appears that these doctrines have existed throughout church history.

We do not know everything about the spiritual lives of important church leaders during the Reformation period. Some possibly received the Holy Ghost and spoke in tongues without fully comprehending the significance of this experience. In many cases there is evidence that certain Protestant leaders were aware of key apostolic doctrines. For example, during the Reformation a noted Spanish physician named Michael Servetus proclaimed the oneness of God, the full deity of Jesus, and the need for rebaptism. Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin all knew of his doctrine. In particular, Luther was aware of a controversy over the Jesus Name baptismal formula. Speaking in tongues occurred among early Anabaptists and the Reformers could have heard of this experience. Luther definitely knew of the "enthusiasts," a group that emphasized the moving of the Spirit and communication with God through prophecy and inspiration (probably including tongues and interpretation). They opposed Luther as being a man of letter only; in turn Luther and the Lutheran Formula of Concord (1577) rejected them. Apparently, then, the Reformers were exposed to at least some apostolic doctrines.

The Reformers certainly were not infallible doctrinally, for they held such false doctrines as predestination of the individual soul, infant baptism, sprinkling, and the trinity. Neither were they always noble examples of Christian principles. Luther condoned and even recommended that a certain German ruler practice bigamy, believed that all Anabaptists were heretics and endorsed their execution, questioned the value of the Book of James and called it "an epistle of straw," endorsed violent persecution of the Jews, and strongly supported the German feudal princes in crushing peasant revolts. He wrote a tract condemning the peasant revolts, entitled "Against the Murderous and Thieving Hordes of Peasants," which said, "Let everyone who can, smite, slay, and stab" them. Zwingli died in battle attempting to extend Protestant rule to Catholic portions of his native Switzerland. Calvin consented to the execution of Servetus, allowing him to be burned at the stake near Geneva.

The basic noble character of these men and their significant contributions to church history are well documented, but it is equally true that none of them were perfect or infallible.

We cannot make special exceptions based on personal courage, zeal, or insight into certain areas of Scripture. Many people have demonstrated courage, zeal, determination, and sacrifice for false religions, politics, and nationalism. Many have been persecuted, cruelly tortured, and martyred for the sake of Judaism, Buddhism, Islam, Communism, revolutionary causes, and anarchism. Many heretics and cultists have suffered because of their profession of Christ. Men have lived and died for noble causes and even for causes important to God, such as democracy, freedom of religion, belief in Jehovah, and belief in the Bible. However, none of these people were saved because of their suffering or sacrifice. Under no circumstances should we allow the life of a pious ancestor or a noble leader in church history to dissuade us from believing, obeying, and proclaiming what we know to be God's will today.

Extra-biblical Speculations

All other schemes and speculations concerning salvation for those who do not experience the new birth are outside the boundaries of Scripture and must be treated as such.

A Second Chance After Death?

Some people, including Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses, teach the possibility of a chance to be saved after death, at least for those who did not have a "full" opportunity in this life. These theories may be interesting to speculate upon, but the Bible does not give us the authority to preach them as gospel. The Bible nowhere teaches the doctrine of a chance to accept the gospel after this earthly life is over, but if anything, it indicates there is no such chance:

- *"It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment"* (Hebrews 9:27).
- *"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his [the Son's] voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation"* (John 5:28-29).
- *"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works"* (Revelation 20:13).

Two passages have been used to support the doctrine of a second chance. One is Paul's allusion to baptism for the dead (1 Corinthians 15:29). The other passage states that the Spirit of Christ preached to spirits in prison who were disobedient in Noah's day (1 Peter 3:18-20). Here are some alternative explanations for this verse:

- The Spirit of Christ preached in Noah's day through Noah to those who are now in prison. The wording and tense of 1 Peter 4:6 support this interpretation.
- The Spirit of Christ went to the underworld while His body lay in the tomb and announced His victory over death to the fallen angels in prison (1 Peter 2:4) or to all the satanic forces.
- The Spirit of Christ made this announcement to human spirits in the underworld but did not offer anyone a second chance to be saved.

The last two explanations receive support from the Greek word translated "preached," which is not the usual word *euangelizo*, meaning to preach the good news of salvation, but *kerusso*, meaning to proclaim as information. Both explanations fit in well with the doctrine of Christ's descent into hell (*hades*), when He won the keys of hell and death and led captivity captive (Acts 2:25-32; Romans 10:7; Ephesians 4:8-10; Revelation 1:18).

A Subnormal New Birth?

Instead of teaching salvation today without the new birth, some hold that one can be born again with less than full conformity to the apostolic pattern. For support of this concept they point to examples in which God saved people within His plan for their day, but fulfilled His plan in an unconventional or unexpected way. Old Testament examples are Jethro, Balaam, and Nineveh. Also, the thief on the cross was saved under the Law, but with Jesus being his priest and sacrifice. This shows that God has the liberty to fulfill His plan in His own way, but we must not make too much of this example since it occurred in a unique situation and time period.

There are two possibilities raised with respect to New Testament salvation:

- 1) Some could be born of the Spirit without the sign of tongues because they did not know about it or did not understand it and so did not have faith for it.
- 2) Some could be born of water without orally uttering the name Jesus at baptism because they never heard it taught or did not understand it. This presupposes that at baptism they had genuine faith in Jesus as Savior and understood practically (if not theologically) that He is the fullness of the Godhead.

Although these arguments seem more logical and internally consistent, there are at least two serious difficulties:

- 1) The Bible itself teaches the complete apostolic experience without alluding to exceptions.
- 2) Throughout church history and today many sincere people have received the Holy Ghost with the evidence of tongues, including many who were not expecting tongues, and many have been baptized in the

name of Jesus who had never heard anyone teach baptism in Jesus' name.

In view of these difficulties, our clear responsibility is to receive and proclaim the complete apostolic experience, expecting to see the apostolic pattern repeated exactly.

Destiny of Infants

Our discussion has not treated the case of children who die before they are old enough consciously to believe God and repent from sin, nor has it dealt with the mentally incompetent. Several views have been proposed:

- 1) They cannot go to heaven due to their sinful natures (Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12-21). This presupposes that the sinful nature includes not only a compulsion to sin but also an inherited guilt apart from personal acts. Roman Catholics hold this view, teaching infants must be baptized to wash away original sin. They have invented a non-biblical place for un-baptized infants, called limbo, where there is neither pleasure nor pain.

- 2) They will go to heaven. Jesus used little children as examples to illustrate the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18:1-10; 19:14); perhaps this implies they are part of the kingdom. This view presupposes that based on Christ's atonement God will automatically eliminate their sinful nature.

- 3) They will be resurrected in the Millennium and given an opportunity to accept or reject salvation. Jehovah's Witnesses teach this, but there is no biblical support.

- 4) God will judge infants based on His foreknowledge of what they would have done had they lived. This raises unanswerable questions about the freedom of the will and the factors contributing to an individual's decision.

- 5) An infant's salvation is determined by that of his parents. The problem here is that God would condemn some infants because of their parents' sin and their own inability to believe. There are Old Testament examples in which children suffered because of their parents' sin, such as in the Flood. This does not necessarily mean those children were eternally damned, but simply demonstrates that children often suffer in this life as a result of their parents' actions.

First Corinthians 7:14 states that an unbelieving spouse is sanctified (separated) by a believing spouse and the children of that union are made holy (separated from the world to God). If this refers to salvation, arguably the unbelieving spouse and adult children are included. It seems clear, however, that it alludes to the godly influence that believers have on their families, which certainly may be a powerful factor in leading them to salvation.

We conclude that the Bible simply does not say what happens to infants and the mentally incompetent. This is not surprising, for the Bible is a very practical book and addresses only those who are able to respond. Perhaps the Bible does not address this subject because God does not want us to withhold the gospel from any age group. The Bible teaches us to train children in the ways of the Lord (Proverbs 22:6), and we should do this from the earliest ages. God fills even small children with His Spirit; members of families have been filled at ages 6, 7, 9, and 10. The Bible specifies no age limitation, perhaps because the age of accountability may vary considerably depending on the individual child's rate of development, capabilities, and training.

The lack of clear teaching regarding infants and the mentally incompetent should not disturb us. We should have faith in God, believing that He has a gracious plan for them even as He does for us. Having experienced God's grace, mercy, and love in our own lives, we can entrust them into His care without reservation.

Degrees of Punishment

The Bible indicates that sinners will suffer differing degrees of punishment based on the knowledge and opportunity they had on earth. This does not minimize, however, the reality of punishment that all sinners will have or the greatness of the salvation that they will forfeit. It may help us understand the justice of God a little better, and encourage us not to make exceptions to the gospel out of sympathy for those who seem to deserve punishment less than others. God will fairly evaluate every sinner's degree of responsibility and will mete out punishment accordingly. The Bible does not explain exactly how God will implement this principle, but the following passages teach it:

1) Jesus taught, "*For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required*" (Luke 12:48). By way of illustration, He told a parable about a master who unexpectedly returned to his possession. The servant who knew his lord's will but did not follow it was beaten with many stripes, while the servant who did not fully comprehend what his lord required but also committed deeds worthy of punishment received few stripes (Luke 12:42-48).

2) Hypocrites will receive a greater damnation than others (Mark 12:38-40).

3) Backsliders will be punished more severely than if they had never known the truth (Matthew 12:43-45; 2 Peter 2:20-22).

4) The saints, who are saved by faith, will receive rewards according to their good works (1 Corinthians 3:11-15). If the same principle applies to sinners, they will be punished according to their works.

5) Everyone will be judged according to his works as evaluated by the knowledge available to him

(Romans 2:6, 11-16). No one will be saved outside the gospel, but sinners who followed the law of conscience in certain areas will be excused in those areas, while those who transgressed will be punished (Romans 2:14-15). This distinction has meaning only if there are different levels of punishment.

6) If any man does a good deed for the gospel or for a Christian, he will not lose his reward under any circumstances (Matthew 10: 40-42; Mark 9:41). Possibly, some unsaved people will not receive their full reward in this life but will somehow reap benefits in the life to come.

Conclusion

The Bible does not teach any exceptions to the simple new-birth message, which is repentance from sin, water baptism in the name of Jesus, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost. We should not teach extra-biblical theories and speculations as revealed truth, but we should base all doctrine solely on the clear teaching of God's Word. God will save anyone who sincerely seeks truth with his whole heart and places complete faith in Jesus Christ.

We should preach the full gospel, which includes Acts 2:38 as the norm for the new birth.

What Have You Learned?

1. Write Hebrews 2: 3-4 in full. _____

2. List six (6) basic principles to guide any discussion about possible exceptions to the New Testament plan of salvation. Support each with Scripture references. _____

 3. Is there any exception to the necessity of following the plan of salvation for those who have never heard? Why not? Give at least seven (7) reasons to support your answer, with Scripture reference for each.

4. Will moral and sincere people be saved? Why not? Give at least five (5) reasons for your answer and support each with Scripture. _____

5. Give the two Scriptural examples of Jesus for people who sincerely profess him and even perform miracles in His name but are still not saved. _____

6. Give the Scriptural example (with reference) of someone who had a certain degree of faith in Christ, but who had not obeyed the full gospel. _____

7. What was the analogy used by two Pentecostal pioneers (G. T. Haywood and A. D. Urshan) to explain the position of someone who has a certain degree of faith but has not obeyed the full gospel? _____

8. Give three (3) Scriptural examples – written in full – that make it clear there is no chance to accept the gospel after this life is over. _____

9. 1 Peter 3: 18-20 is one passage that is used to support the doctrine of a second chance after death. What three (3) explanations can be given to explain these verses? _____

10. Give two (2) reasons why it is our responsibility to receive and proclaim the complete apostolic

experience, expecting to see the apostolic pattern repeated exactly. _____

11. What does the Bible have to say about what happens to infants and the mentally incompetent after death? _____

12. God will fairly evaluate every sinner's degree of responsibility and mete out punishment accordingly. Explain what each of the following Scripture passages has to say about this principle:

Luke 12: 42-48 _____

Matthew 12: 43-45 _____

1 Corinthians 3: 11-15 _____

Mark 12: 38-40 _____

Matthew 10: 40-42 _____

Chapter 13

Four Aspects of Salvation

***“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God”
(1 Corinthians 6:11).***

What I Have Learned

The salvation that God provides will cure every problem created by sin. Ultimately, it will restore everything lost by Adam and more (Romans 5:15-21) and will remake us in the image of Christ (Romans 8:29; 1 John 3:2).

This chapter discusses four major aspects of salvation:

- Justification,
- Regeneration,
- Adoption, and
- Sanctification.

Justification

Justification is the act by which God declares the sinner to be righteous. The sinner does not actually become righteous within himself at this point, but God counts, reckons, or considers him as righteous, without regarding his past sins. Justification is a legal term denoting a change of standing in the sight of God.

Justification consists of two elements:

1) God forgives the sinner, removing the guilt and penalty associated with his sins (Romans 4:6-8; 8:1).

2) God imputes (transfers) the righteousness of Christ to the sinner, so that he can partake of everything the sinless Christ is entitled to receive because of His righteousness (Romans 3:22; 4:3-5; 2 Corinthians 5:20-21).

As a result of this two-fold work, the justified man is fully reconciled to God (Romans 5:1, 9-10) and entitled to inherit all His promises, including eternal life (Romans 5:9; 8:30; Galatians 3:10-14; Titus 3:7).

Justification originates in God's grace, having been purchased for us by the blood of Christ: *“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood”* (Romans 3:24-25). It comes only through faith in Jesus Christ and not by works of the law:

- *“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law”* (Romans 3:28).
- *“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness”* (Romans 4:5).

The blood of Christ signifies His total redemptive work, including His death (which satisfied the requirements of God's law) and His resurrection (without which the death would have no effect). *“For us also, to whom it [righteousness] shall be imputed, if we believe on him*

that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification” (Romans 4:24-25). God’s grace is the source of justification, Christ’s blood (death, burial, and resurrection) is the ground of justification, and faith is the condition upon which we receive justification.

Since justification comes through faith, it occurs when a person fully exercises saving faith, which includes obedience to the gospel. Therefore, the full work of justification comes by faith as one repents, is baptized in Jesus’ name, and receives the Holy Spirit.

In 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 Paul listed ten categories of unrighteous people who will not inherit the kingdom of God. He continued: “*And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God*” (1Corinthians 6:11). In other words, justification occurred when they were baptized in Jesus’ name and baptized with the Holy Spirit. Although this verse does not specifically mention the word *baptism*, *Smith’s Dictionary of the Bible* explains it as referring to baptism: “It is generally believed that here is an allusion to being baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. . . [T]he reference to baptism seems unquestionable.” A Baptist theologian asserted that, “The voice of scholarship is unanimous in affirming the association with baptism.”

Further examination of the purposes of repentance, water baptism, and the Spirit baptism demonstrates that the work of justification takes place in all three. At repentance, man and God begin to form a personal relationship, which lays a foundation for water and Spirit baptism. At water baptism, God remits sin (Acts 2:38), which corresponds to the first element of justification.

The Holy Spirit imparts the righteousness of Christ, for the Spirit is Christ in us: “*That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*” (Romans 8:4). “*But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness*” (Romans 8:9-10). The indwelling Spirit enables us to receive future salvation (Romans 8:11). Through the Spirit we qualify for God’s blessings and promises (Romans 8:15-17; Galatians 3:14). In short, the baptism of the Spirit corresponds to the second element of justification.

The work of justification begins at initial repentance from sin and is completed at the time of water and Spirit baptism. Therefore, justification is instantaneous at the time of the new birth as a whole. It would be incorrect to identify justification solely with one aspect of the new birth, because the new birth must be regarded as a single whole. In one sense, however, justification is

available on a continuing basis for sins committed and repented of after the new birth experience.

Regeneration

Regeneration means a new birth. It is more than a reformation of the old nature; the regenerated man receives a new, holy nature that has power over the old, sinful nature. The new birth involves two elements:

1) Destroying the power of the old nature (2 Corinthians 5:17) and

2) Imparting a new nature, which is actually the nature of God Himself (Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10; 2 Peter 1:4).

The new nature brings a change of desires and attitudes (Ephesians 4:23-32) and power to live a new life (Acts 1:8; Romans 8:4). The new birth does not eliminate the sinful nature; the Christian has two natures, the flesh (sinful or carnal nature) and the Spirit. If he follows after the desires of the flesh or depends upon the power of the flesh, he cannot live an overcoming, holy life (Romans 7:21-25; 8:12-13; Galatians 5:19-21). If he lives after the Spirit, he can enjoy a life of victory over sin (Romans 8:1-4; Galatians 5:22-23; 1 John 3:9). No man can be saved without the work of regeneration in his life (John 3:3-7; Galatians 6:15).

Regeneration originates in God’s grace (John 1:13; Titus 3:5; James 1:18) and comes through man’s faith (John 1:12-13). We are begotten (conceived) by the Word of God, the gospel of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 4:15; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23). Hearing the Word plants the seed of our salvation, but for this to develop into the new birth we must respond in faith by obeying Acts 2:38. At repentance and water baptism our old man is killed and buried, which means our old lifestyle and the dominion of sin over us are destroyed (Romans 6: 1-7). The baptism of the Holy Spirit imparts the new nature and permanent power to keep the old man dead (Romans 8:8-9, 13). Thus the baptism of water and the baptism of the Spirit correspond to the two elements of regeneration; both are part of the new birth.

Regeneration, then, occurs at the time we repent, are baptized in the name of Jesus, and receive the Holy Spirit. The work of regeneration benefits us throughout our Christian walk by bestowing godly desires, spiritual guidance, and power to overcome sin daily.

Adoption

Adoption is the act of choosing and placing a child. *Regeneration* indicates that we are children of God by reason of a new, spiritual birth; *adoption* signifies that we become God’s adult sons and heirs by His conscious choice. Adoption, then, refers to our position as sons of God with all the rights associated with that status.

In Galatians 4:1-7, Paul contrasted life under the Law before Christ and life in the Spirit after Christ. Before the

death of Christ, people lived under bondage to the world. God's people lived under subjection to the Law, just as a child who has not yet reached the age of maturity lives under the control of guardians and tutors. After Christ's redemptive work, however, God's children came of age, received the Spirit of Christ, and became entitled to the inheritance God had planned for them all along. Paul used the word *adoption* to describe this change of status, since an adoption confers rights and privileges upon a person that he has never before enjoyed.

In Romans 8:14-17, Paul used the adoption analogy in a somewhat different way. At our conversion we were adopted in God's family, becoming younger brothers and sisters of the man Christ. As adopted children we obtain all the legal rights and privileges of a natural born son. Christ is the only begotten of the Father and the only One originally entitled to be an heir, but by adoption we, too, become heirs of the Father and therefore, co-heirs with Christ.

We have not yet inherited all the benefits of adoption; we are still awaiting the full revelation of our position as children of God and the redemption of our physical bodies (Romans 8:23).

Adoption originates in God's grace and choice (Ephesians 1:4-5) and comes through faith (Galatians 3:26). The Scriptures indicate that adoption occurs by water baptism and the Spirit baptism, for this is what places us into the family of God:

- *"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ"* (Galatians 1:26-27).
- *"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body"* (1 Corinthians 12:13).
- *"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father"* (Romans 8:15).

The Spirit is both the agent of adoption and the first benefit of adoption.

Adoption into God's family, then, occurs instantaneously at the new birth. In one sense, it is a past event since we are already called the sons of God (1 John 3:1). We already enjoy the first fruits of our inheritance, which is the Spirit of God (Romans 8:23; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14), and we have the assurance of a future inheritance. In another sense, however, adoption is still future. We are yet awaiting the revelation of our position before all creation, the redemption of our bodies, and the fullness of our inheritance, all of which we will receive when Christ returns.

Sanctification

Sanctification literally means separation. In the context of our present discussion, it is basically equivalent to holiness, which means separation from sin and consecration to God. Sanctification is the process of becoming righteous – actually becoming like Christ.

At the new birth, God sets us apart from sin (1 Corinthians 6: 11), but this is only the beginning of the process. God continues to work in us to perfect us and make us holy. The Bible teaches that we can attain maturity and perfection in this life (2 Corinthians 3:18; 7:1; Ephesians 4:11-15; 2 Peter 3:18). This is not absolute, sinless perfection as exemplified by Christ but a relative perfection, for the sinful nature and the possibility of sin still reside within.

We can all be equally perfect in a relative sense even though we may have attained different levels in an absolute sense, just as two children at different stages of development can both be perfectly normal and healthy. God evaluates our lives on the basis of where we have come from, what our abilities are, what He has given us, and what our potential is (Matthew 13:23; 25:14-20). He expects us to undergo a growth process (Mark 4:26-29). If we have been born again, grow at the proper rate in our relationship, use everything God had given us, live a repented life, and progressively become more Christ-like, we can be perfect in His sight. The goal He has given us to strive for is absolute perfection (Matthew 5: 48). If we submit to the sanctifying process, ultimately Christ will transform us into absolute, sinless perfection at His coming (Philippians 3:12-14; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 1 John 3:2).

Our sanctification comes by grace through faith on the basis of Christ's sacrifice (Acts 26:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 10:10). The initial act of sanctification comes at the time of repentance, water baptism, and Spirit baptism (1 Corinthians 6:11). The continuing work of sanctification comes by the operation of the indwelling Spirit (2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2) as we live daily by faith (Romans 1:17).

In sum, sanctification is first of all an instantaneous work that takes place at the new birth, when we are first set apart from sin to God. Sanctification continues progressively throughout the Christian's life and will be completed at Christ's coming for the church.

God's Eternal Plan of Salvation

Romans 8:28-30 describes five steps in God's eternal plan of salvation for fallen mankind:

1) *Foreknowledge*. God foreknew man would sin and would need salvation. He also foreknew that when He provided salvation, some would accept it.

2) *Predestination*. Because God foresaw this response, He planned from the foundation of the world to provide salvation through Christ's atoning sacrifice (1 Peter 1:18-20; Revelation 13:8). Those who choose

God's plan are predestined to be conformed to the likeness of Christ. The church is ordained to be successful, but each individual must choose whether to be part of this foreordained plan or not.

3) *Calling*. Acting upon His plan, God has extended a call to all mankind ("whosoever will") to be part of it. Romans 8 speaks of an effectual calling; only those who respond to God's universal call actually become part of the church (Greek *ekklesia*, literally meaning "the called out ones").

4) *Justification*. God then justifies those who accept His call. He declares them to be righteous, which entitles them to all the benefits of salvation.

5) *Glorification*. The last step is glorification, which is the ultimate work of sanctification. Romans 8 speaks of it in the past tense because in God's mind it is an absolutely certain, predestined event for His church. At that time we will receive glorified bodies with absolutely perfect and sinless natures. When God's plan is complete, we will have complete, eternal deliverance from all the power and effects of sin.

Summary

This chapter has investigated four important aspects of our salvation:

- 1) Justification, the act by which God declares us to be righteous
- 2) Regeneration, the act by which we are born again and receive a new nature
- 3) Adoption, the act by which we are placed into God's family and chosen as His heirs, and
- 4) Sanctification, the act by which we are separated from sin; and the process by which we actually become righteous.

All these works of salvation originate in God's grace, are purchased by Christ's blood, and come to us through faith in Christ. Furthermore, all four occur when we repent, are baptized in the name of Jesus, and are filled with the Holy Spirit. Thus our study has reaffirmed two basic truths:

- 1) Salvation is by grace through faith.
- 2) Both water baptism and Spirit baptism are part of the salvation experience.

Justification, regeneration, adoption, and the initial act of sanctification all occur simultaneously at the new birth experience. We have described them as instantaneous, in recognition of the fact that God considers the new birth to be a single whole. Since the Bible teaches the unity of water and Spirit baptism, we believe the work is not complete until both baptisms take place. The normative pattern in Acts is for both to occur together (Acts 2:38; 10:44-48; 19:1-6).

If people have faith and are taught to expect the Spirit baptism at the time of water baptism, it will happen just as it did in the days of the apostles. Either they will be baptized in Jesus' name and receive the Spirit when they come up out of the waters of baptism (Acts 19:1-6), or they will receive the Spirit and immediately obey the command to be baptized in Jesus' name (Acts 10:44-48).

In view of this, we have based our discussion on the typical case of one who repents, is baptized in water, and is baptized with the Spirit, all at the same time. It is marvelous to see how God has designed it so that all the various aspects of salvation will be fulfilled when we obey the simple message of John 3:5 and Acts 2:38.

What Have You Learned?

1. Give a short definition of each of the following terms, as the four aspects of salvation:

Justification _____

Regeneration _____

Adoption _____

Sanctification _____

2. List the two (2) elements of justification. Give Scripture reference for each. _____

3. List two (2) results of the work of justification. Give Scripture reference for each. _____

4. Where does justification originate? _____

5. What is justification purchased by? Give Scriptural support for your answer. _____

6. How does justification come to us? Give Scriptural support for your answer. _____

7. Where (or when) does the work of justification begin and end in a believer's life? _____

8. What are the two elements involved in regeneration? Give Scripture to support each. _____

9. How are we begotten (conceived) spiritually? Support your answer with Scripture. _____

10. How does the baptism of water and the baptism of spirit correspond to the two elements of regeneration?

11. When does regeneration occur? _____

12. List three (3) benefits of regeneration we can enjoy throughout our Christian walk. _____

13. Write out, with reference, three (3) Scriptures that indicate adoption occurs by water and Spirit baptism, as this is what places us in the family of God. _____

14. How is adoption considered a past event? Give Scripture to support. _____

15. How is adoption considered a future event? Give Scripture to support. _____

16. What is meant by the term "relative perfection" as related to a Christian? _____

17. When will our sanctification be completed? _____

18. According to Romans 8: 28-30, what are the five (5) steps in God's eternal plan of salvation for fallen mankind? Briefly explain each one. _____

19. What are two (2) basic truths reaffirmed by studying the four aspects of salvation? _____

Chapter 14
An Honest Answer

What I Have Learned

At the close of this book we return to our original question: *"What must I do to be saved?"* The New Testament answer is to exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, by repenting from sin, being baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins, receiving the Holy Ghost with the initial sign of speaking in tongues, and continuing to live a holy, separated life by the power of the indwelling Spirit.

All avenues of biblical study lead to this answer. The Bible presents this answer in response to direct questions about salvation. This is the biblical definition of saving faith. This is the gospel of Jesus Christ, since it applies His death, burial, and resurrection to our lives, and it is the gospel proclaimed by all the New Testament preachers. This is the new birth, which consists of water and Spirit.

Repentance is a turn from sin to God, involving the intellect, the emotions, and the will, and it includes recognition of sin, confession of sin, contrition for sin, and a decision to forsake sin. The proper mode for Christian water baptism is immersion in water, and God remits the sins of the repentant believer at that time. The proper formula for Christian water baptism includes an oral invocation of the name Jesus, since Jesus is the only saving name and the highest name by which God has revealed Himself to mankind. The baptism of the Holy

Ghost is a part of salvation, since God imparts His Spirit to the believer at that time. The biblical evidence of the Spirit baptism is speaking in tongues. Tongues is also available as a gift to Spirit-filled believers for both personal and congregational edification.

Not only did the apostles preach this message, but the early post-apostolic church also preached it; moreover, it has appeared throughout church history, and it has enjoyed a remarkable revival in the twentieth century.

The Bible presents no clear-cut exceptions to this full gospel message; as a result, we should not be satisfied with receiving or preaching anything less.

The various works of salvation, including justification, regeneration, adoption, and sanctification, all manifest themselves in our lives when we obey the gospel completely. However, the new birth experience is only the beginning of a Christian's relationship with God; thereafter he must continue to walk by faith and live a holy life separated from sin in order to enjoy eternal salvation in the future.

We do not reject those who have not received the New Testament experience, but we simply encourage them to receive what God has for them. Instead of dwelling on negative questions such as, "Do I have to receive this?" we should ask "Is this available for me today?" and "Does God want me to receive this?" Living for God should not be a question of minimum requirements for salvation; instead we should actively seek to please Him in every way possible and to do His perfect will.

Our experience and doctrine should conform to the complete biblical, apostolic pattern; those who serve God without fulfilling this pattern will answer to God. Our responsibility is clear: we must act on what we know to be the truth.

Sometimes people ask, "Am I going to hell if I have not received the New Testament experience?" We do not presume to play God or to judge anyone's ultimate salvation on our own authority. However, we can and must present the Word of God. When we analyze the Word of God, we find that God has instructed everyone to obey the simple message of salvation. The words of Peter still ring true today: *"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call"* (Acts 2:38-39).

In conclusion, we have honestly presented our understanding of the biblical doctrine of the new birth. In everything we have studied to ascertain the true message of God's Word, and we have prayed that His Spirit would illuminate His Word. Our doctrinal presentation affirms that the atoning death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the only necessary and sufficient basis for our salvation and that we are saved by

grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The application of grace and the expression of faith come to us as we obey from our hearts the doctrine delivered to us from God's Word, and experience the new birth of water and the Spirit.

What Have I Learned?

1. After completing our study of *The New Birth*, what is the only answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" _____

2. After the new birth, what must a Christian do to continue his relationship with God? _____

NOTES: