

After The Resurrection, What Then?

By Tom Stephens

My intention in this teaching is not to be argumentative concerning spiritual truths but to show evidence from the Bible that Christ intended the infiling of the Holy Spirit and His gifts to be utilized in the Church today.

Preface:

I suppose the Church of Jesus Christ for the most part, is in agreement that prophecies of the end time are rapidly coming to pass, and we are truly at a time in history when all the evil Satan can spread will be spread. The Bible tells us that he (Satan) is as a roaring lion, seeking to destroy all that gets in His way. He is a thief and a liar, and he comes to kill, steal and to destroy.

I have respect for any entity who has power enough to destroy my body. But I have no fear of him who can only destroy my body. My fear must be for the One who can destroy both body and soul in hell. I know what the weapons of warfare are. I know how to use them. By God's grace, by His own beloved Son, and through the Holy Ghost, all these weapons are being utilized today by the Church in accomplishing the will of the Father.

The will of the Father relayed to the Son and in turn relayed to His Church for these days, wrapped up in one single sentence is, to "*destroy the works of the devil*". That's our goal today and tomorrow, Church; for as long as His church has breath, that's our goal. It soon will be accomplished in final judgment because Jesus is really *Who He said He is*.

Chapter one, Part One is a work I originally received while reading in the Pentecostal Evangel an article written by C.M. Ward, the Assembly of God's beloved Radio minister long retired, at least thirty years ago. Having lost the article long ago, I searched out notes I had made on the story. While the notes weren't very good, I felt I had enough information that, with the help of the Holy Spirit, I could give a relatively accurate account. Therefore, Part One was indeed compiled and formatted by the author of this book.

I also compiled and formatted Part Two. This information was garnered from a number of authors and works including sermons I have heard, mimeographed papers given to me by college and seminar instructors, along with hours of painstaking Biblical research.

God seemed to assign to me this task because of questions asked me by others who were seeking for answers. Much of His Church is sleeping today, not realizing just where she stands in this age and it is my sincere desire this very simple, easy to understand paper will be a means by which a few may find the real purpose for His Church before these final days actually come to a close.

Church of Jesus Christ, come alive!

Tom Stephens

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THOUGH HE WAS CRUCIFIED

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Unlike any other religion, Christianity centers on the cross and the empty tomb. They enable every Christian to say, “He took my place so that I might have life”. Not only did Christ die, but He was resurrected three days later, and because He was, you can be too!

What did Christ endure in our atonement? Crucified! His death was thorough, His shame complete!

“THE SCOURGING”

The scourging post the Roman soldiers used was two feet tall. An Iron ring, placed close to the top projected from two sides. The prisoner was stripped naked, The Roman “lictors” were professional. They could beat their victim till only the barest spark of life remained.

The wrists were firmly shackled to the iron rings. Then the victim was stretched, facedown, with the feet pointing away from the post. The Roman scourge was a “Flagra”, a short-handled whip consisting of several thin, iron chains which ended in small weights or iron or bone chips. Scourging was called the “little” death. It preceded the big death-crucifixion.

“Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged Him.” (John 19:1).

“(Jesus) for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God”. (Hebrews 12:2).

The tension of waiting was cruel. The body was rigid, with muscles knotted in tormenting cramps. The lips were drawn tight against the teeth. The chains cut “V” shapes across His body. The weights suspended from the “flagra” crashed into the ribs and bit into His chest, Sweat burst from the brow and stung His eyes. Each stroke caused His body to jerk like a beheaded chicken. Jesus was able to resist the high pitched wail of agony, though the flagra could flay a man alive.

Two executioners, working alternately, lash in cadence at His back, shoulders, loins, thighs, and calves, leaving livid furrows in the already sore muscular frame (from many small hemorrhages, affected by the sweating of blood). The weights begin tearing at the flesh and muscle tissue. Blood begins to pour out onto the ground. The skin is shredded as deep gashes are cut into His body. His strength begins to fail Him.

Under Hebrew law, lashes were limited to thirty-nine. The Roman punishment was not limited.

There was only one rule for the lictor. The victim must not die! A spark of life must be sustained for the cross. Men have bitten their tongues into under such beatings. Only blessed unconsciousness could bring relief. The limp body was then cut from the scourging post, the wounds washed.

A purple legionnaire's cape denoting royalty is thrown over His shoulders and a crown of thorns is plaited on His head. Nothing bleeds more than a scalp wound, pouring blood into His tangled hair.

The comedy of adoration begins. There are mock bows, more blows to the face and head, shouts of "Hail, King of the Jews!" But Jesus answers nothing. Exasperated, His mockers spit in His face.

Back to Pilate they go; scourging has not satisfied them. "Crucify Him," they cry. Jesus is Condemned to die. Then He was prepared for the long slow parade along public street to...

"THE CROSS"

"And they led him away to crucify him". (Matthew 27:31).

"And He bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of the skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha". (John 19:17).

"And there followed him a great company of people." (Luke 23:27).

"He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross". (Phil. 2:8).

The cloak, already sticking to the wounds, is torn from Jesus' back. The blood starts to flow once more. Then the cross is placed on His shoulders.

Barefoot and bound, with soldiers pulling His cords and wondering if He'll die before they get there, Jesus falls several times during the 650-yard journey. The cross slips and scrapes His back, again opening the wounds. Simon of Cyrene is finally pressed into carrying the cross.

At Calvary He is stripped and His coat is roughly yanked off. Excruciating pain, like millions of hot needles, shock the nervous system.

Wounds on the back, legs, and thighs are caked with dust and fine gravel as He is laid on His back at the foot of the cross. His shoulders on the cross piece, one executioner drove large five-inch square spikes into the center of His palm. Five, sometimes six strokes drove the spike solidly into the wood, then another turned the spike so that the hand could not slip free. A small projection resembling a rhinoceros horn, or a sedile, fitted through the crotch, taking much of the weight off the hands. After that, each foot was nailed solidly to the cross.

Jesus' knees are bent and the bottom of the foot is placed flat against the wood. With several blows, a spike is driven between the second and third metatarsal bones. The right foot is placed underneath the left and the spike is driven through both feet and into the wood.

Jesus is silent. His face is grossly contorted. The median nerve has been touched but not severed. His thumb is striking the palm of His hand. Inexpressible pain darts like lightning through His entire body. Man's most unbearable pain is caused by wounding the great nerve centers. Each movement of the body revives this horrible pain. Hand wounds sent fire down through the arms. Pain and darkness became excruciatingly real. The back, arms, hands, feet, and crotch were throbbing. Pain

continued to build and multiply. “When he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to Him who judgeth righteously.” (1Peter 2:23).

An anesthetic – gall and wine – is offered but Jesus refuses it. His arm muscles are grossly contracted and the fingers are cramped and forced sharply inward. Huge ridges of muscle stand out on the thighs and calves. Tetanus sets in. Stomach and neck muscles tighten, then the respiratory muscles.

“I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to My jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me; they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. Part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.” (Psa 22:14-18).

“THE AGONY”

Short breaths enter in a whistling sound but don’t come out. He thirsts for air like one suffering an acute asthmatic attack. His pale face turns purple, then blue. He is asphyxiating. His lungs, loaded with air, are unable to empty. Extreme thirst. Lips dry, mouth parched, blood hot, skin fevered. The greatest “need of a drop of cool water”, was denied.

“After this, Jesus...saith, I thirst.” (John 19:28).

The sun shone directly into the eyes of the dying man. Even with eyes closed, a red glare penetrated. The tongue thickened. Saliva changed to uncombed wool. Swelling in the hands and feet increased. The sedile dug deeply into the genitals. It was impossible to turn, or change positions. The muscles twitched. The back muscles and the muscles of the abdominal area knotted up, causing cramps.

After two hours, every muscle was knotted up beyond endurance. Men screamed themselves into insanity at this point. Lockjaw, tetanus both flooded the body. Death by crucifixion prolonged the horrible agony of tetanus to an eternal death.

Flies, insects, and dogs, with a smell of blood in their nostrils, swarmed and covered closely. Birds of prey, and scavengers of the skies circled lower and lower. Prayers seemed to mock a man, but he prayed...or else he cursed.

Tiny blood vessels began to close shut as muscles tensed, and a paralyzing numbness followed for lack of circulation. Mucous membranes dried up. The thin slippery tissue which lines and lubricates much of the human body, dried to the consistency of fine gravel. It scraped tender tissues of the anus.

It tore at a tortured throat, and lay like stones in the sinuses. It ripped layers of tissue from the eyes every time the pupil was moved or eyes blinked.

“And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” (Luke 23:46).

Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the last which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: but one of

the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith there came out blood and water.” (John 19:32-34).

The next hours pass in total blackness. His agony is greatest when God withdraws from Him. His pain, thirst, cramps, and asphyxiation have not drawn one complaint from Him. But separation is unbearable. Three hours later the sun returns and he cries,

“My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Matthew 27:46

In His sixth hour on the cross Jesus cries, “Into Thy hands I commend my Spirit.” With a final sigh the head drops slowly forward, the chin above the breastbone. He is dead.

Roman law required that any body claimed by the family or friends (Joseph Arimathea had asked for the body) must first be pierced to make death certain. This ruled out the possibility of a victim fainting, being claimed, and revived. A spear is thrust into Jesus’ body just under the breastbone, piercing the pericardial sack of the heart, and the heart’s right auricle which is always filled with blood. Water and blood gushed out.

“THE GALLOWS”

In ancient Persia, a gallows was not what we think of as in some Western “hang’em high” movie. The literal word means “tree”, or “pole”. There, they did not hang their victim, rather they impaled them. A stake was run through the body, and then the body was hung on a pole. The Romans learned their techniques from these Persians. The Romans developed the practice of driving nails into the hands. But the Persians simply impaled the body on a pole.

Jesus. His story is like none other. They put Him on a pole...to die. More people hated Him than loved Him. More cheered than wept. When He died, more applauded than sighed. Why do we sing to Him, worship Him then? Because He is like no other who had died. He rose from the grave. He lives today, and gives *us* a song.

Do you know why He died? Not because some men hated Him and decided to put Him on a pole. He died because you and I are sinners. And the only way to satisfy the demand of a holy God in dealing with humanity was to pay the penalty for sin. And that required the price of blood from the unspotted Lamb of God, Jesus. He gave His life for a lost world....will we?

Jesus said, “Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Mt. 12:28).

Paul said, “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (Romans 10:9-10).

Chapter One – Part 2

Though He Was Crucified

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The Roman centurions threw the hood over His head. They punched Him and slapped Him. One yelled in a deep, hoarse voice, “If you are a prophet, then tell me this! Which of us just slapped you?”

Tell me who was it that just hit you!”

Never has there ever been any power in all creation that could cause the Father to be separated from the Son until the day Adam fell and opened the door to the devil. At that time, every created thing fell under the curse. But in order to redeem you and I, He sent Jesus, His only begotten Son to the cross where Jesus cried out:

“My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46)

GETHSEMANE

“And being in agony, he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” (Luke 22:44).

What kind of pressure is a man under when blood will actually pour out of his sweat ducts and run down his forehead? When the stress is so great the nervous system will react in the muscles, and in the skin the tiny hair-line blood vessels will come under so much stress the vessels will break and literally leak into the sweat ducts. That’s the stress Jesus felt.

In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus was resisting the coming horror. He knew where He was going. It wasn’t the cross He was afraid of. You see, many have died terrible deaths. They’ve had their fingernails and toenails pulled out one by one; they’ve been nailed to crosses just as Jesus was; They have been forced to stand naked in below zero degree weather for hours on end...just to be drug back in to thaw, cast into a damp, rat infested dungeon, and finally dragged right back outside in freezing temperatures anew.

It wasn’t the long walk from Jerusalem to Golgotha that terrified Jesus. Not the intense scourging and beating, nor the six hours on the cross. That was the easy part of the penalty He was to pay for our sins. It was the three day trek that terrified our Lord. And He went the entire distance of Separation from His Father.

THE BLOOD

Blood is a strange substance. Never has man understood the life giving substance in blood. Man knows nothing about life. He cannot create life, though he continues to attempt it in the laboratories. God created man in His likeness. Psalm 139:14 states that man is fearfully and wonderfully made.

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood” (Leviticus 17:11).

The makeup of Jesus’ blood was perfect. Peter rightly describes it as “precious” blood (1 Peter 1:19). It is God’s price for the redemption of the whole human race. Picture in your mind the scene at Calvary. No artist has ever pictured Calvary as it really was. There was no loin cloth. No courtesy given there!

The crown of thorns was put roughly on His head. Many thorns, up to one-and-a-half inches long jabbed into His scalp, producing such serious wounds that blood spurted out and ran into His hair and beard, matting both in dark red. The spikes were driven into the palms of His hands, and His blood coursed down His arms and was literally sprinkled by His own fingers onto the ground beneath on behalf of the sins of the whole world . Later the spear was thrust into His side and His blood spurted out and ran down the sides of the cross to the ground below. His feet were driven through with spikes and more blood ran down the sides of the altar.

“As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man,
and his form more than the sons of men” (Isaiah 52:14).

Every bone was out of joint (Psalm 22:14). His face was dreadful to look upon. Those who looked on Him saw only blood. He was a spectacle of blood. His body was mangled so badly that He no longer looked human. His hair and beard were soaked in His own blood; His back from 39 stripes was lacerated and covered in His own blood; the cross was covered in His blood. The earth beneath the cross was soaked. It was blood, blood, blood. Every single type of the atonement was fulfilled in Christ that day. Jesus cried out, “It is finished”, and the veil was rent from the top to the bottom.

THE DESCENSION

The Godhead has no beginning and no ending. It has always been, and always will be. From the beginning, God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit enjoyed each others presence in sweet communion. In all eternity, there was never a force strong enough to separate the Father and the Son except for the time on the cross when the Father showed His intense love for all mankind. And when Jesus cried out,

“My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?”,

He knew His trek to the lower parts of the earth was the torment that man cannot describe.

“I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man *that hath* no strength: Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more: and they are cut off from thy hand. Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted *me* with all thy waves. Se’lah. Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them: I am shut up, and I cannot come forth. Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction:

Lord, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee” (Psalm 88:4-9).

David the Psalmist prophesied here that Jesus would be penalized for the sins of the entire world, that He would be laid in the very deepest part of hell (the lowest pit, actually was under submission to Satan for a portion of the three days and nights), and, being as far from God as possible, He saw the rejection by the Father as He (God) violently turned away from the Son in great wrath. The Son had become an abomination unto God!

THE ASCENSION/RESURRECTION!

I can see the scene in my mind. Jesus, standing in victory before Satan and all the hordes of hell. He rocks the lower regions as His voice echoes throughout the place of torment: “You lost the eternal battle, Satan! Look! I have the keys to hell and death, and have fully defeated you for all eternity. My lambs hear my voice and will follow Me. Satan, your day of reckoning is at hand, and you are eternally judged”.

“Fear not, I am the first and the last: I *am* he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, A'men; and have the keys of hell and death.” (Rev. 1:17,18).

Jesus enters the bosom of Abraham. He preaches Christ crucified. He gives each soul the opportunity to publicly confess the name of the eternal son of God. For their deliverance is come. No longer the blood of animals to cover sins, but the precious blood of Jesus which cleanses us from all sin. Hallelujah! Because He is forever, so are we also!

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls were saved by water.” (1 Peter 3:18-20).

As the Old Testament saints cheer in joyous victory, they begin to feel rapturously light. Yes! They are soaring through the air...millions of miles per hour into the zone where time does not exist, that is, all except for Five hundred, who wanted to stop on the earth to see their loved ones, dine with them and partake in their kind of salvation! Praise God.

He has obtained a glorious victory for you and I over the powers of darkness;

“*And*, having spoiled powers and principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (Colossians 3:15).

“Wherefore he saith, ‘When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)’” (Ephesians 4:9-10; Psalm 68:18).

He led captivity captive. The devil and all the powers of hell were conquered and disarmed by the slain redeemer. The first promise pointed to this; the bruising of the heel of Christ in His sufferings was the breaking of the serpents head (Genesis 3:15). The expressions are magnificent; Jesus conquered in His death. The crown of thorns became a crown of laurels. He spoiled them, broke the devil’s power, conquered and disabled him, and made a show of them openly - exposed them to public shame, and made a show of them to angels and all in the universe. Satan’s kingdom has never before seen such a blow as when the Lord Jesus Christ claimed victory for mankind. He tied them to His chariot wheels, and rode forth conquering and to conquer - alluding to the custom of a general’s triumph, who returned victorious - triumphing over them by His cross.’

“Wherefore he saith, ‘When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)’” (Ephesians 4:9-10; Psalm 68:18).

John 20:16,17 tells us when Jesus met with Mary soon after the resurrection, and she recognized Him, she approached Him. Jesus said, “Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God and your God”.

Because Jesus had not yet been with the Father, He could not have delivered His own blood to the heavenly holy place, as recorded in Hebrews 9:12-13:

“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, *but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.* For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”

The above verses state Jesus took His own blood into the heavenly Holy Place (the purpose was to present it before the Father as the High Priest did in the Old Covenant for His glory). Then, and only then was the full work of Calvary complete. His substitutionary work was not completed on the cross. Neither was it finished in the Resurrection. What did you say? Jesus Himself stated while on the Cross “it is finished?”

You must remember that, even though Jesus did make that statement while on the Cross, He also made a similar statement while in the garden when He was praying. His statement at that time went something like this. “Father, I have finished all You have commanded of me”. Since Jesus had made this statement *before* He was actually on the Cross, we must assume He spoke in answer to a prophecy, for He was truly the Lamb of God slain before the very foundations of the world, and in that very powerful sense of the Word, it was finished.

Jesus did not allow Mary to touch Him just after His resurrection because He had not yet ascended to the Father. He had not yet presented His own precious and perfect blood in the Holy of Holies for His Father’s stamp of approval. As I previously stated, the fullness of the work of Christ came when this event in Heaven took place. Legally, that is.

And He sits at the right hand of the Father...until His time comes...to come.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus (Revelation 22:20).

In the first sermon preached after the resurrection of the Lord, Peter says these remarkable words,

“Him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay: whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.” (Acts 2:23-24)

A better rendering of the words, “pangs of death” is the “birth pangs of death,” suggesting that the church was born out of the birth pangs of the Spirit of Jesus.

We read in Acts 2:27: “Because thou wilt not leave my soul unto (in) Hades, neither wilt thou give thy Holy One to see corruption.” (In Joseph’s tomb), Peter’s message was striking. He spoke by revelation. He told them Jesus was then seated at the right hand of God, yet no intimation had been given him.

Jesus was actually delivered up by our trespasses, and He was raised when He had satisfied the claims of justice. The work of our salvation was finished, not at the cross, or in the pit, but it was completed when Jesus arose victoriously over the enemy and death and carried His own blood into the Holy of Holies of heaven, and the supreme court of the universe had accepted that blood and made our redemption complete (Hebrews 9:12).

So, if you do not have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and would like to, here’s how: Jesus said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my

yoke upon you. And learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

Its that simple. Jesus said if we would come to Him, He promised to cleanse us from all Unrighteousness. So if you feel that tug on your heart to come to Jesus, now is the perfect time.

Don't wait any longer. No matter how young or aged you are...if you want to live out the rest of your life knowing the peace only Jesus can give; and if you want your eternity to be within the family of God, please pray from your heart the following prayer.

Dear God, thank You for offering Your infinite grace to any and all who ask. Thank You for demonstrating that grace while Jesus Christ died on the cross for my sins. I want to receive Christ and gain the assurance of eternal life. Please forgive me for rebelling against You in the past. Come into my Life. I want to live for You and with You forever. Amen

Chapter Two **Jesus Is Risen!**

Psalm 16:8-11; Acts 2:22-36

Immediately after the resurrection, Jesus showed Himself to some of the women who followed Him. Early that first Easter morning they arrived at the tomb to complete the embalming process used by the Jews at that time. The tomb was empty. Confused, they ran to tell the disciples. No one believed Jesus was alive until he saw Him with his own eyes. No one expected to find Jesus alive.

They expected to find a dead man, a corpse ... but not an empty tomb. Scripture shows us the following events where Jesus presented Himself to His followers:

His First Appearance With Mary Magdalene

Mark 16:9-11; John 20:11-18

"Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils" (Mark 16:9). When she recognized Jesus she probably reached for Him.

Jesus said to Mary, *"Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, 'I ascend to My Father and to your Father, and My God and your God'" (John 20:11-17).*

Here Jesus prevented Mary from touching Him because He was about to ascend to His Father. This was prophesied in Hebrews: *"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Hebrews 9:12).*

The worth of any blood is measured by the character and dignity of the creature who owns it. Let me illustrate. A piece of cloth in a store may be worth three or four dollars a yard. To stick a knife through it would cost but little. But when a king wears that cloth on His own body, it is worth infinitely more. And to stick a knife through it then is murder. I'll say this to you plainly. You are insane when you treat, by word or act, the blood of the Son of God as a common thing.

"The blood of sprinkling" takes you back to the Old Testament. It takes you to the day of atonement.

The High Priest took the blood in a basin into the Holy of Holies, and with his hand sprinkled it,

before it coagulated, on the golden lid of the mercy seat, under the wings of the cherubim. He prayed to God. Suddenly the Shekinah light appeared. Then he returned through the veil to bless the people.

From the time he offered the sacrifice, to the time he placed the blood on the mercy seat, no person was allowed to touch him.

This is the reason Jesus said to the women, "Don't touch me..."

Christ took His own blood which He had shed, and went into the third heaven, in the blazing presence of the eternal Father, and sprinkled His own blood on the mercy seat of this universe before the Father. Then He returned. He appeared before the disciples and told them to touch Him – to handle Him and know that He was alive.

Have you asked yourself, "What became of the blood Christ shed?" The crown of thorns drew blood from His head. The mockers plucked His beard, and blood was drawn from His face. He was scourged with knotted cords, and blood was drawn from His back. That made three blood sheddings before He went to Calvary. Each hand was pierced and each foot. His side was opened. That adds five more blood sheddings. What became of all that blood?

Our Catholic friends assume that at His resurrection He acquired all that blood back into His body. Therefore every mass said means a fresh shedding of blood. This is contrary to the Bible. He shed His blood once for all, with "no more sacrifice for sins" (Hebrews 10:26). Where is that blood?

The ninth chapter of Hebrews tells us that Christ entered into the heavenly places – into the presence of God – and placed the blood there, as our High Priest. I'll read it to you.

"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands,... but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world bath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Hebrews 9:24-26).

The Bible says, His body "saw no corruption" (Acts 13:37). No corruption touched that blood. The blood remains upon the mercy seat. It was shed on the cross, but it was sprinkled on the mercy seat. It is there speaking for us.

He immediately presented His own blood before the Father in the Holy Place in heaven to have it ratified, so to speak, in legal terms. However, in Spiritual terms, Jesus died for our sins even from the foundations of the world.

If Jesus had not presented His own blood before the Father in Heaven's Holy Place till the ascension forty days after the Resurrection, the disciples would not have received salvation until Pentecost actually arrived. Friend, that's fifty days with absolutely no one having any opportunity to be saved!

Then also, the cloud of witnesses who were imprisoned in Abraham's bosom and delivered by Jesus on His Resurrection, though delivered, would not have been saved. That means this cloud of witnesses would have no place to go for another fifty days. Hell would have enlarged itself when

the great gulf was broken down, but `heaven' would not have been an option since they would not have yet been saved by the blood of Jesus.

Therefore, when the High Priest of the Old Covenant entered into the Holy Place of the Tabernacle with the blood of the sacrificial lamb, it was to finalize the "covering" of the sins of the Israelite nation for another year. Only then would the sins of the people be fully covered. But at Calvary, Jesus died one time for the sins of the world. So what we do henceforth, whether for the world, or through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ by His Spirit, will precisely define our eternity.

His Second Appearance With The Other Women At The Tomb

Jesus greeted other women who had arrived soon after Mary Magdalene. *"And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him."* Jesus said to them, *"Do not be afraid; go and take word to My brethren to leave for Galilee, and there they shall see Me"* (Matthew 28:8-10).

It's obvious Jesus left immediately after speaking to Mary at the tomb. He went to present His own blood before the heavenly Holy Place as an atonement for our sins. Only a short time passed when Jesus returned and spoke to the other women. So what's the difference here?

They *"took hold of His feet and worshiped Him."* These women were able to do this without restriction because Jesus had now been to the Father and presented His own blood in it's perfection for the fulfillment of our salvation. Yet, we must come to Him! I want to repeat this: Between the time Jesus met with Mary and when He later that same morning met with the other women, He had been to the Holy Place before the Father with His Own Blood in the Tabernacle made in Heaven.

Salvation has now been fulfilled legally as well as Spiritually! There were no more sacrifices for sin. Neither was there a waiting period of fifty days necessary in order for men to be saved.

Now that salvation was accomplished for all who would come to Him, Jesus planned to meet His disciples at Galilee, where He would, among other things, do the following: 1) provide for Himself a place in the hearts of His people forever; and 2) Build His Church, a church of love and unity impenetrable by the wiles of Satan; a clean, holy and righteous church unspoiled from the world.

His Third Appearance With Peter In Jerusalem

Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5

Peter was the next person to meet with Christ according to Luke 24:34, when the two Emaus travelers, after recognizing Jesus, mentioned this fact in passing. The incident of these two travelers is extremely interesting, and important. We should not miss anything from this great event as told by Luke. The story goes something like this:

His Fourth Appearance With The Two Travelers On The Road To Emaus

Mark 16:12-13; Luke 24:13-35

They were walking toward the town of Emaus discussing the tragic events of the weekend. All hope had been shattered because Jesus had been humiliated and crucified. A stranger joined them as they walked, so at the proper place, the men invited Him in for a meal. As Jesus broke the bread and blessed it *"their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight."* Amazed at the revelation of Jesus' resurrection from the dead, they turned back toward Jerusalem and headed for the place where Jesus would meet with them. Though these two were headed for Emaus, they turned around and went back to Jerusalem! The excitement was bringing joy to their souls. The disciples also told them, *"The Lord is risen, and has appeared to Simon."*

His Fifth Appearance With The Ten Disciples behind Closed Doors

Luke 23:36-43; John 20:19-25

After returning to Jerusalem, the two travelers were relating the story how they recognized Him in the breaking of the bread. Then "*Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, 'Peace be unto you.'*" "*He showed them both His hands and His side*" (John 20:19-20). They were "startled and frightened." Jesus said, "*See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself, touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.*" Jesus showed them His hands and His feet.

They gave Him a piece of boiled fish and He took it and ate it in their sight (Luke 24:33-43).

Jesus is strongly encouraging these disciples of the reality of His resurrection, and that He now has a solid body of flesh and bones. Yes, He is real ... and alive! He tells them to look upon Him and to see the wounds on His body. Jesus asked them to touch Him because He had now been before the Father in the Temple with His own blood in a sacrificial act of presenting this precious and perfect blood before the Father for His legal stamp of approval. It is finished!

Jesus then continued, "*Look, This is what I told you while I was still with you: everything which is written concerning Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.*"

Now read this: *Jesus then opened up their minds that they would understand the scriptures.* Why did Jesus encourage His disciples to examine Him by touch ... and open up their minds that they might understand the scriptures? Why would Jesus' actions at this meeting encourage the disciples to 'understand' so much? Don't stop reading just yet. Imagine the revelation beginning to infiltrate the minds of the disciples and all the followers of Jesus on that day.

Now, let's go to the very same incident in the book of John. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples she had seen the Lord, and he had spoken these things unto her.

"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained (John 20:19-23).

It was a terrible time for the disciples. First, Peter had denied the Lord those three times, and found himself weeping in grief. Then, all the others except John left Jesus alone and forsaken. They hid in a place that was likely isolated from those who would seek to imprison/kill them. (John 20:32-33). Full of the fear of man, and especially the Jews, the disciples had locked the doors and closed any windows. They may have been in a close circle attempting to make some kind of sense of what they had witnessed three days ago.

They had given everything that they might be numbered with the King of the Jews. They had grown to love Him with all their hearts ... but now all seemed hopeless. They had nowhere to go except back to their former lives. But how? How could they ever walk in the presence of other men again? Their hope for all eternity was destroyed in one day! Did Jesus forsake them? That would be the hardest thing they could ever imagine happening to them.

Then when things could not be worse, one looked up and saw Jesus standing in their presence. He said to them "*Peace be unto you*", while at the same time showing the disciples His wounds. "*Peace be unto you*". He said again. Then, "*Even as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you*". In other words, Jesus was telling them He loves them the very same way His Father loved Him; He was trusting them the same way His Father trusted Him, and the same authority and the same power the Father had given the Son was now to be in the hands of the disciples ... and His church. There was to be a great mission, the greatest mission ever in history. That mission was to carry on the will of the Father in the destruction of the works of the devil. There was joy in the camp.

Receiving Their Salvation

Jesus then breathed on the disciples and said, "*Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained*". Imagine this!

By many proofs in these meetings, we find the disciples did, this same day Jesus was Resurrected, find grace in the eyes of their Lord and Savior. There was no retribution, judgment, or condemnation. He 'blew' the breath of the Holy Ghost upon these unlearned men. He gave Himself that men might 'find' Him by the Spirit Of God.

Remember the question earlier? Why did Jesus encourage His own disciples to touch and examine Him; why did He open their minds to understand the scriptures? Simply because the breath of the Holy Spirit made them 'alive' in His Spirit. All things had passed away. All things had become new. They now had a friend Who gives abundant life by His Spirit.

Jesus told them they would have power to bind and power to loose (Matthew 16:19). If you remember the event with Ananias and Sapphira in the book of Acts (5:1-11) you may have an idea of the authority placed as an anointing upon the disciples. Here, Peter rightly judged the husband and wife team who lied to the Holy Spirit when he sent them both before the judgment throne of Christ. This is the authority Jesus was speaking about in verse 23.

In Genesis, Lord God breathed upon His new creation, Adam, and he received life and spirit. Later in the twentieth Chapter of John, Jesus breathed upon His newly created disciples, and they received life in the Spirit. The Hebrew word meaning 'breathe' in the Old Testament has the same meaning as the Greek word in the New Testament. Just as it was necessary for God to give life to Adam so he could have an intimate relationship with Himself, so it was also necessary to give Spirit life to the disciples of Jesus in order they too could build themselves up in the love of the Lord.

Some believe there would be no one saved during the fifty days between the resurrection and the day of Pentecost, but we see in the above scriptures Jesus did indeed breathe upon His followers and the Holy Spirit at that time entered into the believers in the form of salvation. Revelation came swiftly upon the saints. I believe they began to see who Jesus really was and why He had to die.

Immediately after Jesus breathed on His disciples, He began to open their minds that His beloved children would be able to understand the scriptures. Until now, they were ignorant and unlearned men. But the revelations they received in just a short period of fifty days are amazing! Imagine the things of the Word of God which literally belonged to them, including the teachings Jesus Himself attempted to minister them over the past three years.

Peter had already confessed to Jesus, "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*". However, before the day of Pentecost arrived, Jesus would reveal to His disciples many wonderful things concerning His Word. These revelations would be foremost in the coming of His Church!

The two most important things I would like you to notice and keep in your heart from the books of John and Acts are 1) the Lord breathed on the disciples, demonstrating to man salvation comes by His Spirit, in faith, and by grace; and, 2) the Lord Jesus commanded these very same disciples to remain in Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father "*which you have already heard Me teach*". "*For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence*" (Acts 1:4,5).

His Sixth Appearance With disciples and Thomas

Mark 16:14; John 20:26-31; 1 Corinthians 15:5

Thomas was not present that night. Of Jesus he said, "*Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.*"

Then, "*After eight days again His disciples were inside a closed room, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst, and said, 'Peace be unto you.' Then He said to Thomas, 'Reach here your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side; and be not unbelieving, but believing.' Thomas answered and said to Him, My Lord and my God!'" (John 20:24-29).*

Eight days later Thomas, by the urging of the Lord puts his hand into the wound of Jesus' side. He touched the wounds on the hands of his Master, Thomas' Lord and God.

His Seventh Appearance With 7 Disciples Fishing

John 21:1-14

This was the morning when the disciples were fishing on the Sea of Tiberias. Jesus, after He was risen from the dead, appeared there and taught the disciples. This is the passage which deals with Peter's sin and Jesus' recommissioning Peter (John 21).

His Other Appearances

On other separate occasions, Jesus appeared to Peter, to His half brother James, and to more than 500 people at one time, most who were still alive when Paul wrote his letter to the Corinthians. In Galilee, Jesus again appeared to the eleven, "*and when they saw Him, they worshiped Him*" (Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-18). Jesus then commissioned them to be His witnesses to all nations. "*And after He said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight*" (Mark 16:10,20; Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:3-9). They were gazing intently into the sky as Jesus ascended into the clouds.

This was 40 days after the resurrection of Jesus, and just ten days before the day of Pentecost. The last recorded appearance of the resurrected Christ was when He appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus in Acts. 9. Paul saw the Lord in a real resurrected and glorified body.

CHAPTER THREE

SAVED OR NOT?

At this point, I feel I need to correct a doctrine which states the initial experience of salvation came, not immediately following Christ's Resurrection, but came only on the birth of the Church, better known as The Day of Pentecost. Pentecost simply means "fifty". It was named that primarily because there were fifty days between the resurrection and the day of Pentecost. The reason some believe men were not saved until the day of Pentecost is that, on that day, God sent the Comforter to live in His people as He promised.

For those who *do* believe salvation came to the followers of Jesus on the day of Pentecost, I have just two questions. 1) Upon learning the Savior was 'alive', Jesus' many disciples and other followers needed a Savior right then, immediately after His Resurrection. So, why would Jesus make these 'lovers and saints of the Lord Jesus Christ' wait patiently till fifty more days passed before being allowed to receive the Holy Spirit in Salvation? And 2) If some of those followers had passed on during that fifty day period, where would they have spent eternity?

I agree the Precious Holy Spirit was not sent in His fullness till the day of Pentecost. However, I must disagree with the belief all men were unsaved before the birth of the Church. Here's why:

Abraham's Bosom

God had a special place called "Abraham's bosom" which held all the Old Testament saints when they died. (See the story of Lazarus and the rich man to learn something about Abraham's bosom. [Luke 16:20]) There they were preserved next door to hell, with a great gulf separating Paradise from Hades.

Many of the Old Testament saints had their hearts fixed on a dwelling place with the Lord for eternity. David, in the twenty-third Psalm, said he would live in the house of the Lord forever. Abraham looked for a city afar off; one not made with men's hands. God had shown these Old Testament faithful their future dwelling in Heaven.

A Historical Refresher

Look with me at the Savior the three days just before the Resurrection through David's prophetic utterance in the Psalms:

"I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." (22:14-18)

and Psalm 88:4-9: "I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath no strength: 5 Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more: and they are cut off from thy hand. Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. Selah. Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them: I am shut up, and I cannot come forth. Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: LORD, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee.

He finished His physical work in His suffering for a lost world, and literally paid the ransom for

us when He suffered for the sins laid upon His back. Even the Father turned away from the Son! The sin was a disgusting odor in the nostrils of God. Jesus submitted Himself in agony to the enemy for at least a portion of the three day period to bear the punishment for our sins.

The scriptures tell us, before the three days were up, Jesus made an open spectacle of Satan and his hordes in hell, captured the keys to hell and death from the enemy, and delivered the Old Testament Saints from the bosom of Abraham. I personally believe Jesus preached His own gospel just to give them the same chance to accept Christ all men since have had. Of course they accepted, and are now residing in their eternal home with the only begotten Son of God. Previously, they had blood applied to their lives through the law and by the animal sacrifices; their sins were simply postponed from year to year until the final sacrifice, that is Jesus Christ, should come.

In the 5 Chapter of Isaiah, the th prophet, in God's name, shows the people of God their Transgressions; even the house of Jacob, their sins and the judgment likely to be brought on them for those sins. They should be dislodged; the land should spue out these drunkards (v. 13): My people (so they call themselves, and were proud of it) have therefore gone into captivity, are as sure to go as if they were gone already, because they have no knowledge; how should they have knowledge when by their excessive drinking they make sots and fools of themselves? Because they regard not God's controversy with them, nor take any care to make their peace with him, they may truly be said to have no knowledge; and the reason is because they will have none; they are inconsiderate and wilful, and are therefore destroyed for lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6).

Multitudes had been cut off by famine and sword (v. 14): Therefore hell has enlarged herself. The grave has opened her mouth without measure, never saying, It is enough (Proverbs 30:15-16). This was to be the place of the damned; luxury and sensuality fill these regions of darkness and horror; there those are tormented who made a god of their belly, Luke 16:25; Phil 3:19.

It is my personal belief that, when Jesus entered into the lowest pit as spoken of in Psalm 88:4, and preached to the Old Testament Israelites in Abraham's bosom, the great gulf spoken of in the Parable of Lazarus and the rich man was broken down. Jesus never said this incident was a parable. He said, "There was a man." That's why I believe this was a real event. So, on release from Abraham's bosom, the great gulf which separated it from Hades broke down and "hell did indeed enlarge herself."

If no man was saved before Pentecost, what about the Old Testament saints who were released from Abraham's bosom at the Resurrection? What about the disciples who loved Jesus? What if they had died during that 50 day period? There was no longer a "bosom" of Abraham, so they couldn't go there; and they would not have entered into Heaven's Courts if they weren't saved already.

Let's consider the possibility I am wrong as to the means by which hell enlarged herself. It would make no difference because we have already seen verses that state Jesus did preach to the subjects in hell. When they actually accepted Jesus by His blood, and not by annual sacrifices, they would have at that time, been released from Abraham's bosom. Therefore, if it were true they (and Christ's disciples) could not receive their salvation before the birthing of the Church, they still would be awaiting the gift of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost in order to find their Savior in Jesus Christ. Can you see how salvation must have come to this 'cloud of witnesses' by the blood of Jesus after they received His ministry to them?

When Jesus left hell in great victory, that meant you and I can also live in this same victory over the

power of hell. Even though Satan was officially declared loser, this may not be fully enforced till after the 2nd return of Christ, even though we have been given power and authority over the wiles of the Devil. Why? Because we, His children, will be tested to become strong. God wants to use Satan and His hordes to make a mighty army of His church in these last days. Though we don't see a mighty force in the Church today ...soon we will see how the Lord wants to use His body to crush the head of Satan (Romans 16:20). The church is on her feet now, and beginning to realize who she is in the Son ... and who He is in the church.

The Armor Of God

This is not to say the church will be a militant force over mankind. Not at all. The church will, however, turn the heads of magistrates and governments around the world because of what God is doing in her. She will be the world's hospital. She will show the world what real peace is, that the fear of mankind no longer exists among her ranks. She will willingly care for the poor, sick, possessed, and handicapped in the face of terror and destruction. She will become the greatest spiritual force on this earth very soon, only because of the Son of God slain before the foundations of the world. Her peace is that peace man cannot understand. It's a peace only given by the Lord of Hosts. But the Lord of Peace shall soon crush Satan under our feet.

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints (Ephesians 6:12-18).

Jude exhorts the church to pray always in the Holy Ghost (Jude, vs. 20). That's where and when we receive our power in spiritual warfare. Our battle is not against men and women. Our weapons are not those used by men, but spiritual to the pulling down of strongholds (2 Cor. 10:4). This is where we need the ministries of the Holy Spirit. We as Christians will be following the example given by John in Revelation 12:11:

"And they overcame him (satan) by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death”.

If we are ‘bond servants’ of the Lord, we will gladly give our lives for Him. There's a special reward for all those martyred for Christ! And if we are obedient to the Lord Jesus Christ, we not only will be obedient unto death, but we'll do it joyfully by the blood of Him who died for our sins as we show His testimony through our lives as well as our tongues.

Jesus knows we are made from flesh, and still have the original curse on our heads. He knows we are unable, without His special gifts and His power, to come close to making correct decisions and accomplishing the feats necessary to endure to the end. Remember, Jesus said *those who endure to the end shall be saved* (Matthew 24:13); and, *many are called but few are chosen* (Matthew 22:14).

The more we know of Him and the closer we are to Him... and the more knowledge revealed to us by His Spirit, the more responsibility we have in our walk with Him. We will be held responsible for the things we know and ignore. That's not to say laziness will cause us to lose our salvation, but it might; we are warned as Christians over and over again about what we do (or don't do) for God. Read chapters 2 and 3 of the book of Revelation. God gives His Church (we who belong to Him)

warnings about our refusal to fast and pray and know His Word in our hearts. I encourage all believers to be serious with Him. Read his word daily, pray, fast, and intercede for the nations.

Born Of The Spirit

The disciples did love the Lord Jesus and therefore Jesus did not allow a day to go by after the Resurrection before they experienced what 'born again' means. This was true of all the followers of the Lord Jesus at that time. How do I know? Because, that's what Calvary was. It was the blood of the Lord spilled to insure eternal life for all who will come to Him – not at a later time, but now. The day of Pentecost was an infilling... all the way to the top of the head. He's our special Comforter and Friend. He intercedes through us when we are hurting. He loves to minister to others through us, whether they be in our own home, or far away. But we cannot be effective witnesses for the Lord in winning souls without the gift of the Holy Spirit. That's why He's a gift. Our focus and our desires should be for more of Him. Jesus wants us to partake in His fullness. Jesus specifically gave this fabulous ever reaching gift of the Holy Spirit to His church. *That's a promise for all who will reach out for more of Him, and diligently seek Him.*

In closing this chapter, I want to illustrate the most basic proofs I have found in the Scriptures concerning the wonderful baptism of the Holy Spirit and the speaking in tongues by the Church Age.

Beginning with the prophecy of Joel in the Old Testament, find chapter 2, verses 28 through 32. After reading this, then find the second chapter of Acts, reading the entire chapter with emphasis on verses 1 through 21 and then verses 38 through 43.

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 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). Motivation for my Christian growth into deeper levels of spiritual manifestations is the image of Jesus, my Lord, as He hung on the cross dying for me – an image that is indelibly printed on my soul.

CHAPTER FOUR

RECEIVING FROM THE MASTER

Many people believe the Holy Spirit was given to man once, and that was on the day of Pentecost at the birth of the Church of Jesus Christ. They believe once a person is saved, he already has as much of God as he can ever have. However, if you read in the 20th chapter of the book of John you will find Jesus, on the same day of His Resurrection, presented Himself to Mary Magdalene and His disciples, Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her. Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, "*Peace be unto you*". And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, "*Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you*". And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, "*Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained*" (John 20:18-23).

It was a terrible time for the disciples. First, Peter had denied the Lord those three times, and found himself weeping in grief. Then, all the others except John left Jesus alone and forsaken. They hid in a place that was likely isolated from those who would seek to imprison/kill them. (John 20:32-33) Full of the fear of man, and especially the Jews, the disciples had locked the doors and closed any

windows. They may have been in a close circle attempting to make some kind of sense of what they had witnessed three days ago.

They had given everything that they might be numbered with the King of the Jews. They had grown to love Him with all their hearts...and now all was lost. They had nowhere to go except back to their former lives. But how? How could they ever walk in the presence of other men again? Their hope for all eternity was destroyed in one day! Did Jesus forsake them? That would be the hardest thing they could ever imagine happening to them.

Then when things could not be worse, one looked up and saw Jesus standing in their presence. He said to them “*Peace be unto you*”, while at the same time showing the disciples His wounds. “*Peace be unto you*”, He said again. Then, “*Even as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you*”. In other words, Jesus was telling them He loves them the very same way His Father loved Him, that He was trusting them the same way His Father trusted Him, and the same authority and the same power The Father had given the Son was now to be in the hands of the disciples...and His church. There was to be a great mission, the greatest mission ever in history. That mission was to carry on the will of the Father in the destruction of the works of the devil. There was joy in the camp.

Receiving Their Salvation

Jesus then breathed on the disciples and said, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.*

If the disciples weren't already saved by the blood of Jesus, they were now. In fact, Jesus told them they would have power to bind and power to loose (Matthew 16:19). If you remember the event with Ananias and Sapphira in the book of Acts (5:1-11) you may have an idea of the authority that was placed as an anointing upon the disciples. Here, Peter rightly judged the husband and wife team who lied to the Holy Spirit when he sent them both before the judgment throne of Christ. This is the authority Jesus was speaking about in verse 23.

In Genesis, Lord God breathed upon His new creation, Adam, and he received life and spirit. Later in the twentieth Chapter of John, Jesus breathed upon His newly created disciples, and they received life *in the Spirit*. The Hebrew word of the Old Testament meaning ‘breathe’ has the same meaning as the Greek word in the New Testament. Just as it was necessary for God to give life to Adam so he could have an intimate relationship with God, so it was also necessary to give Spirit life to the disciples of Jesus in order they too could build themselves up in the love of the Lord.

Some believe there would be no one saved during the fifty days between the resurrection and the day of Pentecost, but we see in the above scriptures Jesus did indeed breathe upon His followers and the Holy Spirit at that time entered into the believers in the form of salvation. Revelation came swiftly upon the saints. I believe they began to see who Jesus really was and why He had to die. Immediately after Jesus breathed on His disciples, He began to open their minds that His beloved children would be able to understand the scriptures. Until now, they were ignorant and unlearned men. But the revelations they received in just a short period of fifty days is amazing! Imagine the things of the Word of God which literally belonged to them, not including the teachings Jesus Himself attempted to teach them over the past three years.

Peter had already confessed to Jesus, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”. However, before the day of Pentecost arrived, Jesus would reveal to His disciples many wonderful things

concerning His Word. These revelations would be foremost in the coming steadfastness of the newly birthed Church of Jesus Christ.

The two most important things I would like you to notice and keep in your heart from the books of John and Acts are 1) the Lord breathed on the disciples, demonstrating to man salvation comes by His Spirit, in faith, and by grace; and, 2) the Lord Jesus commanded these very same disciples to remain in Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father “which you have already heard Me teach”. *“For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence”* (Acts 1:4,5).

In other words, when we experience true salvation we also receive the Holy Ghost (Spirit); and then by separate experience, on faith we receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. For the disciples that came 10 days after Christ’s ascension when the 120 disciples of Jesus meeting in the upper room in Jerusalem, were gloriously and powerfully filled with the Holy Ghost and spoke in tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Every man (from at least 17 named nations) heard the disciples praise and worship the Lord in their own tongue.

Receiving The Baptism In The Holy Ghost

Forty days after the resurrection, and just before the ascension of Jesus (Acts 1:4-11), He ordered these very same followers to *“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.”*

On the day of Pentecost, Peter proclaimed to the large crowd what was happening when they all heard the disciples praising and worshiping the Lord in “their own languages.” Toward the end of Peter’s message, he said, “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 to as many as the Lord our God shall call”* (Acts 2:38,39).

Remember, the disciples received the Holy Ghost (salvation with great promise) on the third day after the crucifixion (Resurrection day). Now here they are (120) in the upper room (Acts 2) proclaiming the wonderful works of the Lord in tongues many heard “in their own language”.

The Lord Hath Anointed

It was for good reason Jesus told His children they needed not only the Spirit dwelling in them, but also the Holy Spirit baptism with fire previously spoken of in the gospels. That reason was to flood the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ in great power, preaching the gospel to the poor, healing the brokenhearted, preaching deliverance to the captives, recovering sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord (Luke 4:18,19), and to destroy the works of the devil.

Even though that’s a very big order to fill, this is not everything the Holy Spirit does through Christ’s people. Intercession in prayer for our cities, our nation, and world will always be the cry of His Spirit in our lives.

Joel’s Prophecy

Shouldn’t we remember Jesus also told us He had been given all power and authority in heaven and

in the earth, and under the earth? Didn't He tell us He sent us to do the works of the Father, that even as the Father had sent Him, that's the same way He is sending us?

“And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. 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 24:46-49).

The power Jesus spoke of was the power of the Holy Spirit prophesied in Joel, and the same was quoted by Peter while preaching to the multitudes on the day of Pentecost, in Acts 2:15-20:

JOEL 2:28-32

28 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: 29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. 30 And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. 31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. 32 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call (Joel 2:28-3:1).

ACTS 2:15-20

15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. 16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; 17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: 18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: 19 And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: 20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: (Acts 2:15-20).

Joel, God's prophet in the Old Testament, wrote concerning these very last days. Peter proclaimed this same utterance to the crowd in Jerusalem was because the Lord taught that even then, in their day, was strong evidence they were already in the last days. Today, I believe we are in the closing days before the return of Jesus. That makes this the greatest era in the history of the world.

I would love to see the old patriarchs in heaven, to talk and visit for eternity, but I also know they are looking down on God's faithful with joy in their hearts because they know we are going to be faithful to the end. They know God's church is about to come alive in the Spirit...and no resistance from the enemy will ever stop us. God's full anointing is here now, and He's leading His church to greater victories.

Jesus' Prophecy To His Disciples

Many times in Jesus' ministry, He stopped on the trail, tired and worn, yearning to talk to the disciples about the future, and the things He had prepared for them. Once He was speaking to them and said, *“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come”* (John 16:12,13).

Prior to the time Jesus breathed upon the disciples and told them to receive the Holy Ghost, they

were as carnal men, without a master. And true it was. For it was only when the Lord spoke to them, “*Receive ye the Holy Ghost*” could they find true salvation. Jesus wanted all who belonged to Him to receive the Holy Ghost. They received Him at that time, legitimately placing them into the family of God.

All the things Jesus had accomplished in His ministry, and the seeming tragedy of His final days finally began to register in their hearts. Revelation began to come to them. They were amazed at the truths of the crucifixion and resurrection that touched their hearts. For revelation begins in the heart of man. Jesus intended for that to happen.

He had told the disciples He had much to tell them, except they weren’t yet ready to receive those things. They were the very basic things you and I were struck with when we went to the cross. A beautiful experience at the altar of the Lord Jesus sent shivers up and down their spine. They began to see and understand the things of the Lord. Little did they realize at that time, practically everything they would learn in the future of their own ministries would come by revelation. Amazing was salvation. But revelation building upon revelation in their individual ministries only continued to amaze them, while at the same time the word exploded from their hearts by a power natural men didn’t understand. That’s why men said about Jesus, “He speaks with authority, like none we’ve ever heard. Even the winds and the storms obey Him!”

Hence, the Word of the Lord in the form of the New Covenant began to be written by the Holy Spirit through Holy Ghost filled men.

Peter Sees By The Holy Spirit

One of the most powerful events after the resurrection is found in John 21. Shortly after the Lord breathed on His disciples, He met them again at the sea of Tiberias. There was Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, the sons of Zebedee, and two other of His disciples.

Peter said he was going fishing and the others decided to go also. They worked all night long and caught nothing. Early in the morning hours, Jesus watched from the shore. But the disciples did not recognize Him.

When Jesus learned they had nothing, He told them to cast on the right side of the ship. They did, and when they attempted to bring in the net, it was completely full. Then John (the disciple Jesus loved) knew the Lord and told the other disciples. For Peter it was a poignant moment for always in his thoughts was the night he had denied the Lord those three times just as Jesus said he would. He remembered how he had wept in shock at what he had done. And though he had been with the disciples when Jesus appeared and breathed on them, no mention had been made of that terrible night. For days now, Peter had been most miserable! Did Jesus still love him? Did he still have a place? He really didn’t know.

The scripture tells us Peter grabbed his fisher’s coat around himself, and threw himself violently into the sea, arriving on the shore before the others.

But Jesus had not forgotten Peter. Remember at the tomb the day of the resurrection, Mary Magdalene, and the two other women with her were very frightened when they entered the open tomb to find a young man sitting in the sepulcher dressed in a long white robe.

The man said, “*Don’t be afraid. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified: he is risen: he is*

not here: behold the place where they laid him...but go, tell his disciples, and Peter that he is going before you into Galilee.”

The young man said, “...and Peter..” We see here that Peter was not forgotten. Think of it. Jesus cautioned the angel as He left the tomb, “Remember, tell them about Peter...that I have forgiven him. I have seen his heart.”

Peter must know! Even the angels in heaven awaited Peter’s reaction to the good news! They wanted Peter to know it was not all over for him. The message came loud and clear from the Throne Room of the Almighty God. But Peter was still uncertain.

But that would soon change. As they sat on the shore eating breakfast, Jesus said to Peter three times, “*Feed My sheep.*” Peter’s life was changed that day. He would never be the same man again. Peter had a second chance, and he knew it. He understood that now! What revelation it must have been to Peter to know His love is from everlasting to everlasting, that each morning can be brand new when men are willing to fall on their face in repentance before a loving God. It can be new every morning.

In Acts 1, verses 15-26, another emotional time came upon Peter shortly after Jesus’ ascension. The disciples were in the upper room, when the Lord revealed to him King David had centuries earlier prophesied that one day Judas would betray the Lord and sell Him out to evil men:

“And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,) Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Acedama, that is to say, The field of blood. For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishopric let another take. Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,.....”

You can see Peter’s face and hear the trembling in His voice! I suppose this revelation concerning the final days of Jesus’ life on the earth, and the grave sin of Judas caused the tears to begin running down his face. The power of the Holy Spirit on Peter must have stirred the 120 in the upper room. Every single new revelation received by the disciples, now called “apostles”, would only serve to inspire these men of the Most High God to become more and more starved for the things of the Master. Of this there would be no more doubt!

You see, what Peter saw in revelation here is even more confirmation of the final events of Jesus’ life on the earth. Peter must have stopped to worship, for he could now see how each minute, hour and day was ordered of the Lord Jesus. Even as Peter quoted David’s prophetic utterance that day shortly after entering the upper room, he and his friends were at that very time fulfilling that prophecy, as they cast lots to replace Judas!

Then finally, remember in Acts 2 when Peter stood up with the other apostles on the day of Pentecost, and lifted up his voice declaring what had just happened was not because they were crazy or drunk, but it was a demonstration of the prophecy given in the Old Testament book, Joel. There’s

no way Peter could have known what was to take place in the upper room. Jesus only told them to

tarry in the city of Jerusalem till they be endued with power from on high.

There were at least 17 nations with their diverse languages gathered together hearing the 120 worshiping and praising the Lord in tongues! And every man heard the disciples praising and worshiping God in their own language! “This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel...”

At that time Peter delivered one of the most powerfully inspired messages ever preached by the Holy Spirit, full of the prophetic notations of the New Testament. The brand new body of Christ had begun. By continuing after Jesus with all her heart this new body of Christ would grow not only in numbers, but in power, wisdom, and the divine agape love of the precious Holy Spirit.

Think About This!

Toward the end of Peter’s message, he said, “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 to as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2:38,39).

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ACTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

And he (Jesus) said unto them... [17] And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; [18] 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 (Mark 16:15-18). You don’t have to be a student of the Word to understand speaking in other tongues was not an unusual occurrence in the early church. John wrote in his Gospel concerning all the things Jesus did while He was on the earth, “*And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen*” (St. John 21:25).

The best illustration of the above scripture verse I have ever had the privilege of reading was written by Scott Hagen who at the time pastored Harvest Church of Elk Grove, California. I copied the article several years ago from The Pentecostal Evangel of the Assemblies of God.

How Big Is Jesus

Imagine standing at the brink of the great Egyptian desert. Somewhat like Moses on the day of his inauguration to exile from Pharaoh’s presence. Your toes nestle into the warm sand beneath your feet. Your eyes confront, but fail to comprehend the vastness of the burning bronze ocean that mounds and angles before you. Your eyes strive in vain to absorb the sheer massiveness as they reach for the border of the earth...where the horizon and the grid of creation kiss. With such an image before you, I offer a simple question. Actually, it is an assignment.

Blanketed By Books

How many books would it take for you to completely cover the Egyptian desert? To map out and mask every square inch of exposed sand? You are to lay down book after book, side by side, until no desert is showing. You’re free to use hardbacks, paperbacks, periodicals, or encyclopedias, but not a single space can remain uncovered. Now, how many books did it take?

Wait, before you give your answer, there’s more. After completing the Egyptian project you’ll need to move on to the remaining deserts of the world and cover those with books also. From the Sahara to the Mojave. No matter the intensity or insignificance, every inch of sand on planet Earth must be covered...and this includes the beaches. Finished? How many books did it take to complete your assignment?

Wait, there's a bit more. After blanketing the sandy portions of the planet, now go do the same with the jungles and civilizations. Cities, plains, valleys, and peaks – everything gets overlaid with a book. Remember – no space between the books.

Did you forget the Yukon Territory? From Iceland to Cyprus, Seattle to Sri Lanka: books, books, nothing but books. How many books have you used?

Wait, I have one final request. After you have covered the dry portions of the planet, drain all the oceans, seas, rivers, lakes, ponds, streams, and creeks. Dry them all out to the last drop...and cover them with books. There, you're done. Every square inch of the globe is packaged in books. How many books did it take? Do you think I'm the first to pose such an annoying analogy? I'm not. I borrowed the riddle from another source. Let me quote it:

“Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written” (John 21:25, NIV).

Not Enough World

The Bible doesn't say, “There's not enough *books* in the world.” It says, “There's not enough *world* to hold the books,” if everything about Jesus were committed to parchment. The apostle John's intention wasn't to dazzle you and me with the enormity of planet Earth, but to showcase the glory and girth of Jesus Christ. Isaiah once called the earth a mere “footstool” for the Father. (See Isaiah 66:1). But the earth shrinks even smaller than a footstool when John calls for it to become the vault for Emmanuel's archives. Confining Jesus to a library would be worse than trying to confine the Library of Congress to a matchbox.

Some might accuse the apostle John of hyperbole, but the only real fool is the one who views Jesus as Anything Less than inexhaustible. When it comes to Jesus, there are no experts.

Huge, Major Huge, and Infinity Major Huge

In our home we have three ways of measuring life. We use these three measurements for determining the size of presents or the severity of paddlings. My oldest son developed these definitions as a 5-year old. The rest of our household soon adopted them as a part of our ongoing family jargon. They evolved one day when my son had just discovered something marvelous and so spectacular that his limited vocabulary struggled for the tidings to describe it. He finally erupted with, “Dad it was *huge*.” To my 5-year old son, the grandest thing in the world was huge.

But the following week, he discovered something that outdid huge. After laboring again to express the splendor of his discovery, he blurted out that his new finding was *major huge* - a major huge being slightly bigger than a huge. Then, a few days following, he made yet another new discovery. And this one was larger than a major huge. After several hours, he came into the family room and announced that his latest treasure was the ultimate. An *infinity major huge*. In a 5-year old's world, that's as big as it gets.

One day, however, my prayer is that my son will make his final new discovery. A discovery that there are really four - not three - ways to measure life. My son made the first three discoveries on his own. His final discovery will be by an act of revelation grace. The four ways to measure life are huge, major huge, infinity major huge, and *Jesus*: “And He put all things in subjection under His (Jesus') feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church.” (See Hebrews 2:8, Ephesians 1:22)

The next time your well of worship is yielding dust, pause between the notes and reflect upon how many encyclopedias it would take to cover the Sahara desert. Or if you find your thirst for more of Jesus satisfied, ponder again on how many billions of paperbacks it would take to cover the Yukon. The splendor of Jesus is inexhaustible.

In heaven I think we'll need a few millennia at the feet of Jesus just to catch up on the rest of the Story.

The same may be said of many great proofs of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. However, every prominent report of conversions in the apostolic church either plainly states or else strongly implies the convert *did* speak with other tongues upon being filled with the Spirit of God (See Acts 2:1-4, Acts 8:12-18, Acts 10:44-48, Acts 19:1-6). To this, most Bible students would agree.

Not everyone is in agreement on the subject of tongues. Even Pentecostals and Charismatics disagree with each other in much of their interpretations concerning Tongues. I see three general lines of thinking on this subject: 1. Tongues have ceased. 2. Tongues are optional. 3. Not all who receive the Holy Ghost speak with tongues.

Seeing these positions are opposed one to another, it is required of every sincere person to "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." (John 5:39) . . . "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (Phil. 2:12) We all must stand before the judgment seat of Christ. We all must give account of ourselves to Almighty God, and since every individual is responsible to God alone for his salvation, we should cast aside the opinions of men and consider each of these positions in light of the scriptures.

Tongues Have Ceased?

We have chosen to examine this position first because if this be true, there is no need to investigate the doctrine of "speaking with tongues" any further. The advocates of this doctrine agree the Apostles actually did speak in other languages under the influence of the Spirit of God. It is also conceded that those with whom the Apostles had contact also received what is sometimes called the "miraculous gift of the Holy Ghost" (speaking with tongues).

It is dogmatically asserted by those supporting this view no one after the Apostolic era could possibly receive the Holy Ghost with the initial evidence of speaking with tongues. The reason given for the sudden halt to this glorious experience is: All miraculous manifestations of God to the church ceased upon the death of the Apostles and those with whom the Apostles had contact. The lone scripture given to support this theory is I Corinthians 13:8:

"Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: But when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as I am known" (I Cor. 13:8-12).

Notice verse 8 is a prophecy that some day tongues will cease. Yes, There will be a time according to the Bible when men will no longer speak with other tongues as the spirit gives utterance. The question we must answer is: "When did this prophecy actually state that tongues would cease?"

Verse 10 identifies the time as ". . . *when that which is perfect is come.*"

Those who contend tongues have ceased teach "that which is perfect" refers to the New Testament scriptures, and upon completion of the New Testament all speaking with tongues ceased. There are several problems with this argument. Notice in verse 8, Paul taught at the same time tongues are to cease, some other things are also to be discontinued.

". . . *whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.*" Whenever tongues are to cease, knowledge is also to cease. If knowledge has not yet ceased, then tongues have not ceased. You and I know that

knowledge has not ceased. We still have colleges, seminaries, Bible studies, and as long as man lives on this earth under the rulership of other men, we will continue to learn. And as already noted, we, the chosen of the Lord, will eternally learn of the things of the Lord and Savior, Jesus.

". . . *whether there be prophecies, they shall fail..*" At the same time tongues are to cease, prophecies are to cease. Now if tongues have ceased already, that means prophecy has also ceased never to be resumed. But this cannot happen:

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, *prophets*, and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:" (Ephesians 4: 11:12).

So, you see, Jesus Himself gave to the Church through Paul instructions concerning the prophetic works to be established by the Spirit. Paul taught the gift of Prophecy is a part of the five-fold ministries of the Church, and unlike prophecy used in the Old Testament for foretelling, and judgment against sin, Paul instructed the Church to carefully "...*speak unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort*" (1Cor. 14:3). So, we find there really is some *meaning* change to the New Testament office of *Prophet*.

And please do not forget the scriptures teach that during the tribulation, a time yet to come, two witnesses shall prophesy for three and a half years (Rev. 11:3). Since prophecy has not yet ceased and since knowledge has not yet been discontinued, neither have tongues ceased.

It must be true then the "that which is perfect" referred to in I Cor. 13:10 is not the New Testament. Jesus Christ was and is perfect, and He did not cause a halt to speaking with tongues. I have no alternative than to believe the statement, "when that which is perfect is come" refers only to Jesus. I know. I have experienced this gift of tongues.

In this connection let us look closely at verse 12: "*For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.*" Now, seeing through a glass darkly refers to our present mortal state. Then face to face speaks of the time when "that which is perfect" is come. We shall see Jesus face to face when he returns to earth for His church, whereupon we shall be changed from mortal beings to immortal beings (I Cor. 15:50-54; I Thess. 4:13-18). This is when we shall see Him face to face, and this is when we shall know even as we are known. We do not know Him that fully now, but we shall some day know as we are known.

In view of the above we can see ". . . when that which is perfect is come" refers to the time when we have received our immortal bodies and are in the presence of the Lord forever. It is at this time tongues shall cease, knowledge shall vanish, and prophecies shall fail. Tongues will cease because the fundamental function of tongues is to speak mysteries unto God. "*For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.*" (I Cor. 14:2) When we stand face to face before the throne of God, there will be no need to speak mysteries in the spirit. Tongues remain very relevant for the Church today.

Tongues Are An Option

There are two principal schools of thought among those who believe speaking with tongues should be in the Christian's life today. The *first* view states that some people who receive the Holy Ghost do speak with tongues, while others who receive it do not. The *second* teaching holds that all who receive the Holy Ghost do speak with tongues. Tongues is the sign a person is filled with the spirit.

I ask you, "In the early church did all who received the Holy Ghost speak with tongues?" Examine with me the historical record given to us in the book of Acts. There are four in-depth accounts of people receiving the Holy Ghost. The first of these is found in the second chapter:

"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 *first* thing to note here is that every single person in the upper room that day, when the cloven tongues sat upon them, spoke in other tongues (see Acts: 2:1-4). The *second* instance is found in Acts 10:44-46: "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God."

Here again, all who received the Holy Ghost did speak with tongues. Further, this scripture teaches the way they knew these individuals received the Holy Ghost was "*they heard them speak with tongues.*" Speaking with tongues was the sign people had been filled with the Holy Ghost. The *third* instance is found in Acts 19:1-6: "*And when Paul laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.*" Again in this record of the Holy Ghost outpouring, we see those receiving the Holy Ghost did speak with tongues.

The *fourth* account of people receiving the Holy Ghost which we would like to discuss is found in Acts 8:14-19: "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). They laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. When Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost" (Acts 8:14-19).

This is the only full account of conversion in the book of Acts (the history book of the early church) which does not specifically state those who received the Holy Ghost did speak with other tongues. However, if we will study the above passage we can show they did in fact speak with tongues when they received the Holy Ghost at Samaria. The author of the book of Acts merely did not directly say they spoke with tongues because by this time it was an accepted fact tongues was the accompanying sign of the Holy Ghost.

Notice here the setting. The Samaritans had believed and had been baptized. (Verse 12.) Yet Peter and John came down from Jerusalem to pray for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost. ("For as yet he was fallen upon none of them:") Now the question is, "How did they know the Holy Ghost had fallen upon none of them?" Was it not because they had heard them speak with tongues? Then verse 17 emphatically declares, "Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost." How did they know they had now received the Holy Ghost? There was a sign.

Follow with me in verses 18 and 19. This passage states Simon *saw* through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given. Now, if there were no visible manifestations accompanying the Holy Ghost, what did Simon see? Also notice what Simon the sorcerer did. He offered the apostles money, saying, "*Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he*

may receive the Holy Ghost." Why would Simon offer money for the power to lay hands on people that they might receive the Holy Ghost? Simply because he had watched the apostles lay their hands on the people and had seen them begin to speak with other tongues as the spirit gave utterance.

He thought within himself. "If I could lay my hands on people and they would speak in languages they had never learned, that could be turned into quite a money-making proposition." So we see even though Acts 8 does not say they spake with tongues when they received the Holy Ghost, it is very evident they actually did. If you ask a shoe clerk to bring you a pair of shoes, you don't say, "And be sure to bring the tongues." You know when you get the shoes you get the tongues of the shoes along with them. The same is true with the Holy Ghost. Acts 8 did not say they spoke with tongues because the author assumed by this time everyone knew when an individual receives the Holy Ghost, he does speak with tongues! Hooray!

Remember, John said the world could not hold the books of all the mighty feats done by Jesus if they were recorded. I am sure there were hundreds, even thousands of instances where the baptism of the Holy Spirit was poured out on men and women who spoke in tongues, though not recorded. Jesus used a formula He knew would establish factual proof when considering legal and spiritual problems. Paul supported that powerful doctrine:

16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established (Matt 18:16).

13:1 This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established (2 Cor 13:1).

Therefore, where the Word of God is concerned, facts requiring proof will be by two or three witnesses. The book of Acts presents three positive witnesses and one other very strong witness that everyone who was filled with the baptism in the Holy Ghost spoke in tongues as initial evidence of that filling.

There are those who believe the Spirit begins to live in us when we are saved. Yet we have already determined the disciples were saved only when Jesus breathed on them (John 20:22). Salvation is when He come to us as the Comforter, Spirit of Truth, and Guide.

Then we remember that He also ordered the same disciples to remain in Jerusalem until they received power from on high (Acts 1:4). So we find there are two separate occasions of men receiving the Spirit of God: 1) At salvation, He comes automatically to live in us, and 2) our own day of Pentecost comes in a subsequent experience, sometimes minutes after salvation, and sometimes a month, or longer.

Others contend the spirit comes when an individual is baptized. Those holding the above view insist we must accept by faith we have received the spirit with no outward manifestation or definite spiritual experience. Can these teachings stand the test of scripture?

Acts 8:12 records: *"But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."* Notice! These Samaritans had believed and had been baptized. According to the foregoing doctrines, these people should have now had the baptism in the Holy Ghost. Yet Acts 8:14-16 plainly tells us that Peter and John *"when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them;)"* They hadn't received the Holy Ghost. Even though we may

have believed and also been baptized, this does not mean we have received the baptism in the Holy Ghost.

How then can we know we have received the baptism? How did the apostles know when Cornelius' household received it in Acts 10:46? "*For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.*" When you receive the Holy Ghost you will know it; for you will speak with other tongues as the spirit gives utterance. It's that simple.

A source of great confusion on the "tongues question" is not being able to differentiate between tongues as the initial sign of the infilling of the Holy Ghost and for self-edification in private prayer, as opposed to the Gift of tongues given for the edification of the church.

Tongues, A Gift...And Evidence

In the 14th chapter of I Corinthians Paul teaches extensively concerning the operation of tongues in the Christian's life and the operation of the gift of tongues in the church (Remember that the Gift of Tongues is only one of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit).

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

The Corinthian Church abused the gifts of the Spirit. Paul had addressed a specific problem in the church at Corinth; namely, spontaneous utterances in tongues in an assembly of believers without accompanying interpretations. He equaled this with disorder and confusion (1Cor. 14:13,32,33).

I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue (1 Cor 14:18-19).

He purposely exaggerated ("five intelligible words...then ten thousand words in a tongue") to make his point. His exaggeration was not made to invalidate the benefit and use of tongues, but to bring order to the church. Actually he encouraged the exercise of the spiritual gifts of tongues and interpretation of tongues by explaining in some detail how they should operate (I Corinthians 14:26-33). Also he placed great value on tongues in the believer's devotional life when he said, "*He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church*" (1 Corinthians 14:4).

Paul was not opposed to tongues, for in verse 18 he says, "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all." His point was if someone speaks in tongues in public assembly, it is essential there be an interpretation so the listeners will be instructed, and therefore, edified.

Paul spent the 14th chapter instructing in the proper exercise of the gift of tongues coupled with the gift of interpretation as it is to be used in the church. The gift of tongues is an extraordinary operation of tongues in a believer's life. It is one of the nine gifts of the spirit listed in I Cor. 12:8-10, and is specifically designed for use in the church. Paul emphatically taught that *everything always* be done to the edification of the church; and to be done decently and in order.

"How is it then, brethren? When ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. If any man speak in an unknown tongue, (in the church) let it be by two, or at the most be three, and that by course; and let one

interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church: and let him speak to himself, and to God (1 Cor. 14:26-28).

What about tongues outside the church and in the believer's private prayer life? There are two ways for an individual to pray: (1) with the spirit, (2) with the mind or understanding. Jesus said that they that worship God must worship him in spirit and in truth, or by the Spirit and by the mind. "For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful." (I Cor. 14:14).

I Cor. 14:2 verifies this: "For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries."

There are at least four purposes of unknown tongues, according to the New Testament: 1) As the initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4; 10:46; and 19:6); 2) as a gift to edify the church when the tongues are interpreted (I Cor. 12:10; 3) as a sign for unbelievers that they might believe (I Cor. 14:22); and 4) as a God-given provision for effective prayer and praise in the building up of the saved individual (I Cor. 14:2,4; 14:8). In all these cases, tongues are the same in essence, but different in purpose. The misunderstanding concerning these distinctive purposes has brought confusion among Christians. All believers, when baptized in the Spirit, will speak in other tongues.

Isaiah prophesied concerning this source of strength, "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." (Isa. 28:11-12).

All people who receive the Holy Ghost will speak with tongues, not only once, but again and again. The Holy Ghost is our spiritual fuel that gives us power. It is like gasoline in an automobile. You burn it, and then you need to be refueled. Not only is receiving the Holy Ghost and speaking with tongues the rest, but it is also the refreshing (Isa. 28:11-12). Though the outward man perish, the inward man is renewed day by day. The manna given to the children of Israel in the wilderness was a type of the Holy Ghost. The quail was a type of the Word of God.

Titus 3:5 tells us we are saved, "*by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost;*" So we see God chose speaking with tongues as a sign a person is being filled with the Holy Ghost, whether for the first time or for the one-hundredth time. Paul taught the infilling of the Holy Spirit is continual, meaning 'to stay filled every day'.

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; (Eph 5:18)

Why God Chose Tongues

First of all, God is sovereign and can do anything he chooses to do. As the Bible states, "*Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?*" (Romans 9:20)

Secondly, the Bible teaches us the tongue is an unruly member of the body, set on fire of hell; and no man can tame the tongue, for it is full of deadly poison (James 3:6-8). In order for a person to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, he must totally yield his body, soul, and spirit to almighty God. The tongue is the most unruly member of the body. God chose to use the tongue as a sign the individual had totally submitted his will to the will of God. If an individual will speak words he himself does not understand in obedience to the urgings of the Spirit, this is a sign the person has given himself totally unto God. So we see there is a deep spiritual reason behind God's choice of

tongues as a medium of spiritual communication with Him.

Some Objections

Tongues were given in the apostles' days so the gospel could be conveyed to men of other languages. We don't need this today, since we can learn other languages through education.

Answer: While it is true tongues were used by God for communication in one incident in the Bible, (Acts 2) this was not the primary purpose for tongues. Paul said in I Corinthians 14:2' "*For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.*" Paul positively states the primary purpose of tongues is not to speak unto men, but unto God.

Tongues is of the Devil.

Answer: Jesus, teaching His disciples to pray, said: "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 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 11:11-13). *Paul said not all spoke with tongues.*

Answer: The scripture here referred to is I Corinthians 12:30 "Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?"

We must always remember to keep all scripture in the proper context. Paul was speaking to the church at Corinth which had serious problems with the abuse of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Everyone was giving messages in tongues and attempting to interpret them all at the same time; they were all praying in tongues together in a church service, and they were not in unity with the Spirit of the Lord. Paul was simply telling them to keep everything in order.

The very next verse leads into the love chapter, 1 Corinthians 13, when Paul states, "*But covet earnestly the best gifts; and yet I show unto you a more excellent way.*" Therefore, Paul had no intention whatsoever of encouraging the church to restrict the ministries of the Holy Spirit. It's never about men, or words. It's about the Lord and the agape love He had and gave to the Church; a church destined to glorify the Master in all she does as His beautiful bride.

Because of that love from the Savior, we the church, will continue to search out all that can be received of the Master; to diligently seek after Him. That includes all the authority and power He has liberally given to His body. The following is from "One Distinctive Doctrine" by Rev. Richard Dresselhaus of the Assemblies of God.

Throughout the history of the Church, the wind of the Holy Spirit was never still. From Tertullian in the 2nd century to Symeon in the 10th, John Wesley in the 18th, and American revivalists in the 19th, the people of God experienced mighty manifestations of the Holy Spirit.

But one of the greatest outpourings of the Spirit began early in the 20th Century. Several small holiness groups whose members were seeking a fuller experience with God witnessed a renewal of the Holy Spirit's gifts. In their meetings they saw miracles similar to those recorded in the book of Acts. Those who experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit spoke in tongues, gave prophecies, prayed for the sick with miraculous results, and began a new surge of missionary ministry that soon reached around the world...

During the last century, wave after wave of revival over different parts of the earth have manifested the mighty moving of God's Spirit among His people. In the 60's another wave of revival spread the blessings of Pentecost. Many Lutherans began speaking in tongues and praying for the sick. Many Roman Catholics raised their hands in worship and prayed in the Spirit. Upon Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, Brethren, Disciples of Christ – the wind of the Spirit was blowing across the entire spectrum of the Church.

Today believers from all fellowships who are serious about their faith are looking again at the "promise of the Father." This experience, distinct from and following salvation, brings the believer into the richness of the Spirit-filled life.

CHAPTER SIX

THE GIFTS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH IN EDIFICATION, EXHORTATION AND COMFORT

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit, to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues - 1 Corinthians 12:4-10

Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.... But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. . . . I would that ye all speak with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying. . . . Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order. - 1 Corinthians 14:1,3,5,39,40

The gifts of the Spirit are divine communications, transmitted from the Holy Trinity through the channel of the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity, into the church – the body of Christ. The number of divine perfection is three. All things in this universe being perfect is stamped with this "3", The 3-fold nature of God: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (1 John 5:7), and the 3-fold nature of man: spirit, soul, and body (1 Thes. 5:23).

Note the mark of divine perfection in the gifts of the Spirit. They divide themselves naturally and spiritually into three primary categories: the revelation gifts, the power gifts, and the inspiration gifts.

Each category is separated from the others by the work God does through it. It is through these three vast areas – revelation, power, and inspiration – the Church of Jesus Christ becomes an invincible force, stronger than any power known on the face of the earth.

The three categories of Spiritual Gifts are as follows:

1. The Revelation Gifts: The infinite God, Creator of the universe, is revealing His truth to man. These truths are not available to the natural man. To receive these gifts is a miracle from the precious Holy Spirit (Matthew 16:16,17).

- A. Word of Wisdom
- B. Word of Knowledge
- C. Discerning of Spirits

2. The Power Gifts: God imparts His own divine powers and abilities to man. These involve the supernatural power and authority man does not possess.

- A. Gift of Faith
- B. Gift of Healing
- C. Working of miracles

3. The Inspiration Gifts*: God brings His blessings and Spiritual anointing in the Church for edification, exhortation, and comfort (See 1 Corinthians 14:3).

- A. Gift of prophecy
- B. Gift of tongues
- C. Gift of interpretation of Tongues

*This portion of the study deals only with the inspiration gifts.

A Great Army

God does not need the strength of man to win battles; He only needs those who are dedicated and hungry for more of God, and who have their hearts fully turned to Him. In this case, to win a total victory over Satan and his army, He needs those who have received the endowment of the gifts of the Spirit to function in their lives and ministries.

The body of Christ is an advancing army; we do not retreat (Joel 2:1-11). Our victory is complete. Our warfare is spiritual and we use spiritual weapons, not carnal weapons of man. We don't fight with men and their doctrines. We war in the Spirit of God, pulling down strongholds in high spiritual places. The gifts of the Spirit of the Lord are necessary to carry on successfully in this coming warfare against all that is of this world. It is our gear. We must never be without that. It is the power of God flowing in His army that will overcome in this last day.

We are living in prophetic times. Jesus Christ will soon be returning for His Church, and He does not want to come back for a Church that is sick and sad and defeated. He wants to come back for a Church that is holy, righteous, and glorious – winning victory after spiritual victory and setting men free by the power of our God.

Edification, Exhortation, And Comfort

The inspiration gifts include the gift of prophecy, the gift of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues. 1 Corinthians 14:3 gives the total blessing of these 3 gifts: edification, exhortation, and comfort. These are the three most desired (needed) ministries in the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Edification means to build up. The gift of prophecy, and tongues with interpretation will build up the church. Tongues will benefit, or edify the individual members, bringing unity and love to the body of Christ. The body becomes fully edified. We should not forget that the individual believer may feel free to pray in tongues to the Lord anytime, just because he desires to have a closer, more intimate relationship with Jesus. Praying in the Holy Ghost for the believer is a wonderful way to intercede either in groups or alone.

In 1 Corinthians 14:18, Paul wrote: "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than you all. No

doubt, when Paul edified himself in tongues, he knew he would be ministering by the blessed Holy Spirit while speaking to God's saints. He realized that he himself, could do nothing to edify, or build up Christ's body in the Lord, but only by God's Spirit. His greatest desire was to be and to do exactly what the Holy Spirit intended him to do.

Exhortation is encouragement. The Holy Spirit encourages His church to be holy, consecrated, and separated from the world. As the devil discourages us, this gift of prophecy will encourage us many times over. The Spirit reminds us of who we are in Christ, and Who He is in us. He exhorts us to keep ourselves built up in the Holy Ghost, even as He spoke through Jude 20:

But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost. Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life (Jude 20,21).

The Greek word for comfort is consolation, which would include the healing of distress, of sorrow, of persecution, and of suffering.

We live in a world of broken lives, broken homes, and broken ambitions. People today do not necessarily need sympathy or pity; they need comfort. The Church needs divine comfort from the Holy Spirit to bring heaven's healing into their hearts. It is our duty and our privilege to come to church and say, "Lord, we want the tenderest of the gifts to function. We desire to see prophecy continue, and rightly done by Your Spirit".

Many come to church with saddened spirits. Some have been considering suicide. The Holy Spirit knows how to comfort. We, in ourselves, can do nothing, But the miracle of the working of the Spirit of God is that He can comfort mankind through us.

The ministries of the Holy Spirit in prophecy – edification, exhortation, and comfort – should be functioning in every prayer group and every church who is named after the Son of the Living God, Jesus Christ. Since prophecy is not mystical at all, and is the most tender of the nine gifts, why can't we as His children, obey & seek after all the gifts, but especially that we might prophesy (1Cor. 14:1).

Unity And Love

The greatest thing about the gifts of the Spirit are the two foundation stones on which they are laid: Unity and Love. If the gifts of the Spirit are to function in any church body, these two elements must be present.

The 12 chapter of 1 Corinthians deals with unity in the Body of Christ. It takes an entire chapter to reveal how important it is for you to have, not just a nose, but a nose and an ear; not just an arm, but an arm and a leg. The Body of Christ is one complete structure, and there must be unity there. I am not better than anyone else; and you are not better. We are 'one' together in the Lord Jesus Christ. On the day of Pentecost, the people were all together in one place and in one accord, not divided or separated. The church was born in unity, and the church can only be great in continued unity.

The Lord wants the gifts to operate through the entire body – all His people everywhere – all denominations who stand for His Name. Each of us was chosen of God. No one who is being used of the Holy Spirit is unique in himself; he is only unique in that he is permitted to be a part of His body, and is inspired of the Spirit to move according to his position within the body. We are all part of His glorious body (Study for Unity in the church – 1 Corinthians 12).

The thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians drives home the most important point of all: There must be love, pure love. Without this selfless love, spiritual gifts cannot function.

When studying the nine spiritual gifts from 1 Corinthians 12-14, it is best to ignore the chapter divisions. Paul wrote this epistle as a continuous letter. If you would read it with that in mind, you would see what we view as chapter 13 is not specifically a dissertation on love, but an amplification of the gifts of the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, please try to see Paul is not condemning the Spiritual gifts at all – rather he is emphasizing love is indeed a very solid foundation for the gifts of His Spirit.

Jesus gave the disciples His will for His church to conquer our enemy through Him, to destroy the works of the Devil. He also promised He would send the comforter to prepare us. He stated all that He did, we would do, and greater things than He did will we do. He guaranteed to support us by giving to us all the authority and power His Father had previously given to Him...But nothing can be accomplished by His Spirit without the Love Jesus Himself brought to the world.

The very significance of Paul placing this Love Chapter ‘between’ the twelfth and fourteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians must indicate to us in a very strong way that the Agape love Jesus spoke of so many times in His gospels is the exact same love He placed within His Church. The Baptism in the Holy Ghost cannot operate properly through the body of Jesus Christ without this ‘agape’ love! Please allow me to paraphrase this thirteenth chapter in the following manner:

1. We may have a million dollar Temple to serve Him in. Without love it is worth nothing. (But if we prosper in health and love and spirit, that’s His will).
2. My minister may be the finest orator in the world. Without love, he is nothing. (But its God’s perfect will that His minister is led of the Holy Spirit).
3. Your choir may be the most glorious ever recorded. Without love they can’t move the angels. (But its ok to have a fabulous, glorious choir by His Spirit).
4. Your wisdom may attract the world to your ministries. Without love, it’s all in vain. (But it’s God’s desire that we have His wisdom).

Therefore, the ‘key’ factor, His agape love, is absolutely necessary for the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the Church (the body) of Jesus Christ in these last days!

What Is Love?

It suffers within you for a lengthy time, and is kind and gracious...
Does not envy...Does not promote self...
Is not puffed up...Does not behave unseemly...
Always acts the righteous way...Does not seek her own...
Not easily provoked...Thinks no evil...
Does not rejoice in iniquity...Does rejoice in truth...
Love bears all things...Endures all things...

Love Never Fails....

“And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love” (vs13).
In the next verse Paul continues, “Follow after charity (love), and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy (1Cor. 14:1). Here Paul says, “I’ve just told you about ‘agape’ love. Continue in this, desire spiritual gifts, and seek prophecy!”

Remember This!

39 Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and *forbid not to speak with tongues**.

40 Let all things be done decently and in order (1 Cor 14:39-40).

*Paul was saying in these verses, “Do not forbid to speak in tongues, but be very careful that all things are done decently and in order according to the instruction you have received from the Holy Spirit through myself.

Prophecy, Tongues, and Interpretation

14:”1 Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying. Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?” (1 Cor 14:1-6)

Continue In Love...

In verse one, Paul encourages the church to continue in the love received from the Lord Jesus Christ. That agape love is like the peace that passes all understanding. Man cannot understand this type of love. Only when the Holy Spirit dwells in man can he begin to know it’s different. The Lord freely covers us with His love and that makes it possible for you and I to share His love with a dying world.

...Seek The Best Gifts

“However,” Paul continues, “Do not forget to seek after the best gifts, and especially seek after the gift of prophecy” (vs.1). For he that speaks in unknown tongues speaks to God and not to man, because man cannot understand him. However, in the spirit he speaks mysteries. That means when we speak in tongues unto the Lord, even Satan cannot understand (see 1Cor. 2:7-10). That’s the reason Satan hates those who operate in the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Paul continues, “But if you prophesy you speak in English (or whatever the language of the congregation) the things of God, thereby edifying (building up) the body of Christ. But not only edifying His church body, but also, by His Spirit, exhorting and comforting that same body.” How could I ever believe the gifts of the Spirit are not for us today? Remember, the Spirit of the Lord revealed to Peter in Acts 2:38,39 the truth that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is for “...you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” If the ministry of the Holy Ghost is not ministering edification, exhortation, and comfort to the body, then we need to fall on our faces before our God in humble repentance. For Paul teaches to us how to operate rightly in the Holy Spirit.

Therefore Paul, writing to the church at Thessalonica, continued to walk in the same revelations given to him by the Holy Spirit concerning unity in the church:

11 “As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory. For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe (1 Thess 2:11-13).

In verse 4, Paul wants us to know when we speak in unknown tongues, we edify ourselves. In other words, we as individuals, are edified, exhorted, and comforted by the Holy Spirit, but the church isn't. In order that the church be edified, exhorted, and comforted, then the body of Christ must be able to understand what the Spirit says through the pastor, teacher, etc. You see, when I am edified by speaking in either known or unknown tongues, I can then come into God's house and fill my rightful place among the saints in the process of our edification, exhortation, and comfort simply because I have an intimate relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Ghost."

Edify The Church

Paul continues by saying the person who prophesies edifies the entire body of believers. That's because the body can receive revelation directly from the Spirit given in their own language. However, the gift of tongues is equal to prophecy whenever they are interpreted. Interpretation does not mean word for word translation. But rather, an accurate interpretation of the meaning given in our own words, imitating our own personality. That's how the Spirit of God uses His people.

"I desire that every one of you speak in tongues, but I would rather that you prophesied: for greater are you who prophesy than he that speaks with tongues, except he interpret that the church receive edification (a building up)," said Paul.

"For what good does speaking in tongues do in church unless I also speak to you by revelation, knowledge, prophecy, or by doctrine?" Paul is saying in another way the importance of teaching in English by knowledge, prophecy, or doctrine, and when an individual speaks out in tongues, he should pray that he himself interpret, or know there is another one called to interpret. Paul knew if he himself spoke in unknown tongues, it would be interpreted. In that case, his tongues with interpretation would be the same as prophecy. Verses 7-11 simply build upon the above teaching. Then in verse 12, Paul again exhorts the body to "be zealous to seek all the spiritual gifts, and seek them that you may be excellent in the edification of the church."

Tongues Is Speaking To God

Verses 13-17 continues the above teaching. Then, in verse 18, Paul says, "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than all of you. Yet in the church, I would rather speak five words with understanding so that by my own voice I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." Remember Paul taught that we do not speak to man when we pray in tongues, but to God. When we speak to God, He Himself protects us by His Spirit from the wiles of Satan, who cannot interpret the prayer connection with the Lord. But in the church, the body is established unto edification, exhortation and comfort by the Spirit.

Finally, Paul states to the Corinthian church, "Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor 14:39-40).

Edification of the church of Jesus Christ must come the same way we receive revelation concerning all things of God -- only by the Holy Spirit.

The dividing line between those who enjoy the power of God and those who don't is in the eighth operation of God, the diversities of tongues.

"Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, **diversities of tongues**" (1 Cor 12:27-28).

Jesus' intention for His church was the above. Only by the fullness of the operation of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit can the church successfully battle the enemy. As John spoke and taught the men and women of the Lord, He emphatically stated, "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the begin-ning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8).

Jesus told His disciples shortly before He ascended:

21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained (John 20:21-23).

Therefore, we know the body of Christ is to continue the works Jesus began, destroying the works of the devil. Why do some continue to insist those who speak in tongues are crazy? The mysteries of the Lord come to His church through revelation of the Holy Spirit. And tongues are a magnificent means by which the child of God can come boldly before the throne of the Lord, receiving mercy and comfort. 'Boldly' simply means we are among His family and we can stand before him without feeling defeated, or condemned.

We are not mystical, nor crazy. The plan of God is drawing men everywhere to receive all Jesus has reserved for them. If I pray in tongues a lot in my personal prayer time, God isn't going to train me to be a more skillful carpenter or to perform brain surgery on someone. Those professions are not my calling. He is going to equip me with the graces and gifts of the Spirit I need to fulfill my calling.

I may not speak with a special anointing before men at a banquet, but when I am in a place of ministry, wherever or whenever that may be, God can pour upon me special revelation of His Word and His love while teaching others. This in turn, as promised by the Lord, will bring a spirit of unity and edification among the body of Christ.

That's why the devil is so afraid of this 8th operation (1 Corinthians 12:28). The enemy doesn't want you to pray in tongues. In fact, the less you find out about this foundational operation, the better he likes it. He doesn't care if you play at being an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, or teacher – as long as you never qualify for these offices through the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Dave Roberson stated: "He (Satan) even rather enjoys deceiving men into building massive organizations of their own making, separate from the calling of God. Men put themselves in charge of these organizations so they can hand down doctrinal rulings as to what is and is not God. With self-deceived pride, they proclaim great, swelling mandates, such as "Tongues are not for today" or "It is now acceptable for homosexuals to be ordained."

...What is it about tongues that scares the devil so badly? Why has he worked so hard to surround this gift with so much confusion? Paul himself dedicated an entire chapter, First Corinthians 14, to straightening out the error and confusion within the early church concerning this gift. No other gift or operation has an entire chapter dedicated to the explaining its proper use.

...If anything is ever going to build within us an understanding of spiritual matters and to quench our hunger to know Jesus in an intimate relation-ship, it is this foundational operation of diversities of tongues. And...this operation is the supernatural means God has provided for us to become spiritually qualified for any of the other operations that make up His government. Therefore, Satan is very, very fearful of a people

who will relentlessly pursue God through praying in tongues.

RECAP

- Prophesied In Joel 2:28-32, and fulfilled in Acts 2:17-21: The Lord shall pour out His spirit upon all flesh in the last days.
- Acts 2:38,39: Peter preaches to the people representing about 17 nations that salvation comes by faith through repentance, and that qualifies them to receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost. *The gift of the Holy Spirit is for them, for their children, for those called afar off, even to as many as will come to Him.*
- I Corinthians 13: Tongues is worthless without the selfless Love of the Lord called “Agape” love.
- I Corinthians 14:1: Paul tells the church to continue after charity (love), and desire spiritual gifts, but rather to prophesy.
- I Corinthians 14:1-5: He who speaks with unknown tongues: is exercising a spiritual gift from God the Father.
- speaks not to man, but to God.
- speaks mysteries to man, but communication to God.
- edifies himself, not the church except it be interpreted.
- Paul desires that all speak in tongues for self edification.
- But rather they prophesy, unless tongues is interpreted.
- Prophecy is greater than tongues when they are not interpreted.
- I Corinthians 14:18,19: Paul is happy he speaks with tongues more than all the church, but not during the church ministries of preaching/teaching.
- I Corinthians 14:39,40: Yearn to prophesy, forbid not to speak with tongues, but let all things be done decently and in order.
- Acts 6-8: Great growth of the church through miracles of the Holy Spirit by men filled with prophesied power and anointing; Stephen, Philip.
- Acts 10: The Holy Ghost filling and worshiping in tongues of Cornelius’ household (Acts 19 also)

CHAPTER SEVEN

BIBLICAL PROOFS OF SPEAKING IN TONGUES

In studying the writings of Paul, Peter, James, Luke, Jude and others, I have yet to find any teachings or examples which even suggest the possibility the administration of the gifts of the Holy Spirit would be ended in the Church Age (dispensation of Grace). Instead, I find numerous teachings and examples that indicate just the opposite. The book of Acts verifies the miracles of the Holy Spirit followed each believer who ministered in the early church and many great works were accomplished through their hands by the Holy Spirit. These miracles accomplished in the brand new church cannot be denied. If you do not believe in the great miracles of the Bible and the continuing works of the Holy Spirit, then what will become of you on the day you face Jesus? Do you really believe in a God who refuses to accomplish all He said He would do through His on people?

Now, if I had to serve a God Who was not in the miracle business, I would just as soon die on the spot; I would have no further means for living. But He is in the miracle business, and I do have great determination to continue because I serve a God Who is able to do all things. He dealt in miracles in creation, the flood, in dealing with the Pharaoh of Egypt. He worked miracles through prophets such as Isaiah, Elijah, and Elisha. He accomplished many miracles during the infancy of the church to get her started in His ministries.

Christians will always believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ, His humanity in the flesh, His ministries on this earth, the persecution and crucifixion. We believe He arose and destroyed the manifestations of all evil; we believe He broke the curse; that He sits at the right side of the Father.

It may sound ridiculous, but we believe in the great miracles in the Old Testament, the New Testament, and through the entire church age. We serve a God Who changes not! We serve a God who is personal to His own, and does great feats in our behalf. Yet, I am prepared to determine in the midst of all evil doers and all unbelievers who ever lived the fact that Jesus Christ died especially for *my* sins. When I accepted Him as my Savior, I realized it was not just a decision to be made. My life was made literally brand new from the toes of my feet to the top of my hair; from the innermost part of my being to the outermost parts. No entity from hell can ever change that fact!

The greatest miracle ever achieved on or off this earth was not the creation of billions of stars in the universes. It was not Him holding these universes between His thumb and pinky. The greatest miracle ever produced was when He, the Lord Jesus Christ, through His Cross, and His *perfect and precious* blood, touched the lowest, meanest, and most depraved man who ever lived, and changed that man's stony heart to a heart of flesh. That 'touch of the Master' caused man to see the miracle of 'change'; as all things of the past was forever gone, and all things had become new.

Yes, Jesus' virgin birth was the greatest miracle ever up to that point in time. His growth in wisdom was stunning to the teachers of His day. He openly showed forth all the majestic works of the Father in His life, death and resurrection. He proclaimed victory over Satan and the beasts of hell. All the rulers of this earth made themselves the enemy of God. Jesus declared His victory, and He declared victory for His Church. What kind of God would create a people to love and cherish, then walk away and leave them alone for the evil one to destroy. Not ours!

The church will cannot continue to exist in victory without the authority God gave her through His own Son, Jesus Christ. We are literally helpless in ourselves. He has given to us mighty tools to accomplish the work He left for the church. And friend, He's returning soon to claim this earth and this people, and the original curse will be cast away along with Satan and His angels.

These unlearned men Jesus commissioned to "turn the world upside down" (Acts 17:6) did not do that great feat alone. Only hours before Jesus was captured, illegally tried, persecuted and finally bludgeoned and nailed to the Cross, He told His disciples, "*..I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; 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" (John 14:16-18; 15:26; and 16:7). Though the disciples were already become children of the most high God, they did not receive the fulfillment of this promise till the church was born on the day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit (Comforter) came to work inside the person of man to initiate the power from God to complete the Commission of the Lord in the destruction of the enemy. Church, please rise up and fight spiritual battles!

The Church was multiplied in miraculous ways beginning on the day of Pentecost. In Acts six, the disciples determined that some who had been serving tables would cease this activity and spend

time *continually in prayer, and to the ministry of the word*. It was determined these chosen men would be of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom. The standard was high. It would take the strength of the Holy Ghost to make these men giants in prayer and the Word of God. Included in the seven were Stephen and Philip.

The scripture tells us that Stephen, “full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.” Many of the synagogue tried to discredit Stephen but their arguments were feeble compared to his “wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke.” In the court proceedings, they set up Stephen by hiring false witnesses, who testified, “*This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law; For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered unto us.*” (Acts 6:8-15) Then God’s Spirit began ministering through Stephen the wonderful works of God from Abraham through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus on the cross. When he had finished preaching, the elders, and the scribes were inflamed with hate for Stephen:

“When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man’s feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep” (Acts 7:54-60).

While at the right hand of the Father, Jesus stood in honor of a faithful child who was not afraid for his life to the death.

Saul, later Paul, consented unto Stephen’s murder. He continued to make havoc of the church, entering every house, and took men and women who loved the Lord to prison, sometimes killing them. But that’s another story.

Philip was called of God to preach Christ unto the Samaritans. The scriptures tell us many who were possessed with evil spirits were delivered. Cancers and other sicknesses were healed miraculously. The lame were walking. There was great joy in that city.

The Apostles who were at Jerusalem came down to the great revival in Samaria, prayed for those recently saved and laid hands on them. They all were filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 8:17), clearly a separate experience from salvation.

Simon, a mystic who had deceived the people of Samaria because he had bewitched them, observed the Apostles when they laid their hands on the people and prayed for them to receive the baptism in the Holy Ghost. He offered them money, saying, “*Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost*”. Because Simon had not been saved, but was only an observer, he wrongly discerned the Spirit of the Lord. Peter rebuked him harshly, and promised he had no part in this gift (Acts 8:20-23).

It is obvious Simon saw something different than the miracles of healing and deliverance that had been taking place. When he observed men being filled with the Holy Spirit, something unusual was happening and it was something Simon could clearly witness. That could only be the evidence of

speaking in tongues. It so astounded Simon, he wanted to purchase the ability to convey the gift of the Holy Spirit to others. So far, all who received the gift of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit spoke in this new language of God called “unknown tongues”.

When Peter was sent by the Holy Spirit to the household of Cornelius, in Acts 10, he preached salvation through Jesus. Here’s what happened to that household:

“While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. *And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.* Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days “(Acts 10:44-48).

Much later, Paul, who was in the process of becoming one of history’s greatest missionary evangelists, journeyed to the city of Ephesus (Acts 19:1-7) and met with approximately a dozen men, strangers until that day. He asked them if they had received the gift of the Holy Ghost since they believed. In response, they said, “*We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost*”.

They had been baptized “unto repentance”, after the teaching of John the Baptist. Paul told them about Jesus, the one John said should come after him. Their decision was an easy one – they accepted Jesus as savior and were immediately baptized again, this time in the name of Jesus. Paul then laid his hands upon their heads and they became filled with the gift of the Holy Ghost and they spoke in tongues, and prophesied (Acts 19:6).

Bobby, A Testimony

Converted from an old military barracks, this church in the North Texas town where I lived my pre-teen years has been a place of good memories for me through the years. Fact is, the best thing I remember of that Spirit-filled church is that *it was* Spirit-filled. The singing was always greatly anointed, but in the revivals, a family of “colored” folks joined us. They enjoyed being around the piano during worship service, because that’s where they did best. We kids giggled and danced around in front of our pews as we watched these beautiful Christian folks dancing in the Spirit and singing with all their might. Even our giggling must have been somewhere in the Spiritual realm. I know, because I felt such a joy in this awesome atmosphere.

It was one such night I remember well. The service was over, and most had gone home. The pastor and his family were there. Also my aunt and uncle with their children were there. The person lost in the Spirit was one very important to me. It was my brother, Bobby. The adults were all praying in the Spirit around him. Our cousins were out playing. I was squatted down with my arms around my knees, tears running down my face while watching my brother, my face close to his.

If ever I doubted the gift of tongues from the Holy Spirit, this was the night that I absolutely, without *any doubt* whatsoever, had this eternal truth embedded into my heart forever. Bobby was lying flat on his back, his arms raised and tears running down his face. With the adults, I stayed by his side from beginning to end.

The most awesome thing I felt that night was the pure love relayed by the Spirit of God. Bobby was speaking in tongues! A beautiful heavenly language. The Holy Spirit’s presence radiated the love of God as we witnessed this astonishing scene. The adults looked intense, concentrating on the scene

before them. Not much conversation took place while Bobby was in the Spirit. Finally, after more than two hours, he began to come to himself.

It was after midnight when our aunt and uncle took us home. I remember nothing else about the service that evening. Nothing about the worship and praise. Nothing about the ministry, or the altar service. I don't remember the next day, or week. I only know that the Lord got hold of *my* brother that night. It's as if it were yesterday. I can see the sweet and loving look on his face in my heart. I know then that Jesus called him to be one of His. And I still know it now.

You know, the entire Word of the Lord speaks in a very positive way about the supernatural moves of God. If it weren't for the Biblical knowledge that Christ *is that* kind of Lord, we would be of all men most miserable. Our hope is in a God Who is able to perform that which He promised. I am overwhelmed and in awe at His greatness, even from eternity through eternity!

CHAPTER EIGHT

NATURAL ENEMIES OF THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Jesus' parable of the persistent widow and the unjust judge (Luke 18:1-8) is sometimes used to illustrate the opposite of what Jesus really intended. The widow pestered the judge until she wore him out. Finally, he gave in and granted her legal protection. Jesus' point was that the Father, who is a righteous judge, is not like that judge. Jesus concluded, "Will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see they get justice, and quickly" (vs 7,8).

Wrong perceptions of the scriptures can lead us to unfortunate negatives: *Firstly*, some people beg and plead, and cry out to God in prayer meetings to such an extent it reminds us a little of the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel. In this account of God's power, pagan priests were attempting to entice their idol god to send fire down to consume the sacrifice (I kings 18). From morning until sundown, they cried out with loud voices, leaped around the altar, and did all they could to get Baal to "move." They believed they could force their idol to answer.

Elijah's God Defeats Baal

Elijah was standing on the side urging them on. "Shout louder!" he said. "Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened." (vs. 27). And with that they gathered themselves and doubled their efforts. Finally, they began cutting themselves with their swords. If we were that dedicated to our God, I suppose we would have already been raptured with Elijah.

On the other hand, having doused the altar's wood and sacrifice with water, Elijah prayed, and God consumed it with fire, even to the last drop of water! All the people fell on their faces and said, "The LORD – he is God! The LORD – he is God!" (Verse 39).

It's not the length of time we pray, or the desperation we are in when we pray. We can stand on every promise of the Lord, believing, and know that answer is already on the way.

Secondly, the above negative attitude of prayer, and our perception God is stingy may cause others to give up, even though they love Jesus. They may even believe in the present day gifts of the Spirit. But they consider the required degree of faith, dedication, and personal righteousness to be far beyond their abilities. They view themselves as normal; so for them, there's no use in trying. James wrote to the churches about enduring difficult situations, saying that God, "*gives generously to all without finding fault*" (James 1:5).

If Spiritual gifts are that easy, why don't we see them in operation in all Jesus' churches? God's salvation is given as a free gift. We think of these gifts as easily received. But think of all those who believe forgiveness is not possible for them. The gift of righteousness is not frustratingly hard to obtain. Men make it hard for themselves, probably because they believe God cannot see them around their horrible sins. This desperate need of mankind to be free and fulfilled seems to further separate them from God. Jesus said "It's not my will that even one should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

It is no harder to receive the gifts of the Spirit than it is to receive the gift of salvation. We don't twist God's arm to manifest Himself in us. We must put away the attitudes that have kept us bound up as His children. We all need to live our Christian lives for the Lord and Him only; to desire Him as the Disciples did after Jesus breathed on them, gave to them His peace, and opened their minds that theirs would become like His. That's why Jesus saw fit to fill these previously unlearned men with His Spirit, even as Joel prophesied. Wow!

The Enemies

1) *Unbelief* is the major enemy of the Spiritual gifts. Many neglect to read and understand for themselves what the Word of God says concerning His gifts of the Spirit. These same folks may also feel a spiritual repulsion for those who teach and seek after these same gifts prophesied in the Old Testament for the last days. These attitudes are amazing to me, knowing Jesus did prepare His church for the full operation of the Spirit. He spoke concerning a river flowing from one's innermost being and emphasized a powerful baptism by fire. Peter explained this supernatural manifestation of His Spirit was the same as prophesied by Joel. All the apostles witnessed this wonderful power of regeneration of the soul, healing, deliverance, and the ministries of tongues and prophecy, And Paul taught the church how to be edified, exhorted and comforted by the Spiritual gifts.

I have found no place, absolutely no place in the Word of God that gives any indication whatsoever the gifts of the Spirit would end before the Lord returns.

We live in the most dire age ever, and approaching the most horrible times to come on the earth because of evil. God has already conquered evil, but He wants you and I to seriously seek after everything He has for us. And what He has for us will get this Church on her feet in a way that will overwhelm this world. God's plan is to do this by His Spirit, in such a fullness that all men will desire Him in these last days.

Other enemies of the gifts of the Holy Spirit include:

- 2) fear of the supernatural; God wants His people to embrace His supernatural acts, both around us and in us;
- 3) fear of other men; as long as we continue to fear governments and kings, we will never be where God wants us to be;
- 4) Crushing fear of the devil and his imps; demon possession is very real, and the deliverance comes only by the power of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit;
- 5) Not socially accepted;
- 6) Worship should be quiet and private, and we should not cry out in church! The Lord loves His people's praises. Our praises and worship float unto the Lord as a sweet savor into His nostrils;
- 7) A carnal mind. Though he be saved and love Jesus, his love is not strong enough to desire more

of Him. His mind remains that of the natural mind, and he faces harsh judgment if he does not repent (see Revelation 2 & 3; the book of Romans).

8) Desire for full control of our own lives;

9) No desire to go against the teachings of the skeptics who teach Pentecost is of the devil. This could edge on grieving the Holy Spirit to the limit, and

10) Lack of discernment of spirits.

While many in the church reject the supernatural, the world is making a fortune promoting toxic spiritual experiences of one form or another. Commercials flood the television daily, advertising psychics who can provide you with supposed divine guidance on relationships, career, and the lottery.

The Word of God warns His people about the dangers of seeking after witches, warlocks, or any other psychic phenomena (Lev. 19:31). The reason television ads are so common is because so many are responding. The 'modern' church holds up a banner against all supernatural manifestations. This includes the manifestations of the Holy Spirit of God, because they have not the gift of discernment of spirits.

The Apostles used a different approach. The early churches, as the one in Ephesus, was in the midst of pagan mysticism and every kind of occult practice. If these wrong spirits were discerned to be infiltrating the church, they used the same principle teaching John gave, *“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is in the world.”*

God wills that all His children operate in the gifts of the Spirit in a natural manner. If we feed our faith, the enemies, yes the really real ones, will be starved into submission.

“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life (Jude 20-21).

CHAPTER NINE

LOVE, WHAT'S THAT?

Mom and Dad are gone. Dad passed in December, 1971 in Arizona. Mom followed approximately thirty years later in Abilene, Texas. I have a brother who is about 16 months older than I, and a sister who is six years younger. Add me to the picture and you see my family - photographically, that is.

The story I'm about to tell is true, and though it opens up some wounds, I'm sure mom and dad would understand, because my brother and sister would find at least an ounce or two of healing through this; they each have stories of their own I know little of. Mother (she always insisted we children call her “Mother”), I pray you understand what I am doing. Dad (he learned from Mother, and determined we should call him “Father”), you died believing not a soul in the family loved you. I pray both of you (if you can see and hear) understand what I'm doing in the sake of “love”.

We were a dysfunctional family, and no one gets more blame than the other, except when the three children were little. Mom and Dad are always to blame when little children are concerned. But the

thing I want to instill in the hearts of my readers is this: Children *always* feel and accept all the blame. Let me say that again..."Children always feel and accept *all* the blame".

Nightmares

I'll be sixty-two this year and have only recently seen much healing from terrifying nightmares depicting awful demon-like beasts. In the darkness these beings would chase me through the house, and out the front door where the terrain would suddenly be a huge "knee deep" body of water.

When I tried running through this shallow lake, I would become even more frightened. Terrified, I would scream with all the power of my lungs as I struggled against the water. My legs would not carry me fast enough and the awful beings closed in around me!

I would awaken, sitting up in my bed screaming so loud I would frighten myself. This dream became my personal enemy and I always felt only inches away from death. I was just a little child not more than five or six years old.

As the years passed, I learned this evil would be my continual accuser. I met him in my youngest days; I remember witnessing his horror during my teens; In the military, I remember waking myself up screaming, "Why doesn't anyone love me!" While men stirred around me, not one of my army peers ever mentioned this embarrassing incident.

After the Army tour, I found Jesus anew and entered college where I met my wife Linda. Believing everything was finally over and I had found peace, I relaxed and attempted to find the healing I knew I needed for my soul. But it wasn't to be that easy, as those same familiar beasts were still lurking around the corner wanting my victory...even my life!

Linda would gently waken me when my terrifying screams would startle her. Concerned, many times as I would attempt to fall off to sleep once more, I could feel the prayers of my wife going up to heaven. Healing delayed as more years passed us by.

Finally, we had children of our own...and I had not found my healing...mainly because I hadn't been serious enough with the Lord. My own children found themselves in a deadlock just as I had while growing up.

It was late in the night. I believe I was around five years old. During the terrible fight, I observed my brother's face. It was knarled up. His hands were shaking in front of him, and he was jumping around near the corner of the room where mom and dad were in physical battle. There was blood on dad's face and back. It looked to me like he was simply trying to protect himself from the belt buckle mom was swinging at him.

My brother was panicking. Now he was running in circles with his hands around his head, and in his hair. He ran out the door. Then seconds later, dad and mom followed, but went another direction...toward the car. Seems mom wanted the keys to get away, but dad opened the car hood and ripped some wires from the motor. Again they fought in the yard, ceasing when a neighbor and my brother returned.

Over the years, I determined I would not allow myself to be so emotional as my brother. I would not allow anything to hurt me again, ever. I needed healing, and hardly a day passed I didn't recognize the condition of my heart and soul.

There was plenty of fear in my home growing up. Both my older brother and my younger sister, from their youth, were in and out of trouble with the law. Though he is settled down now with a lovely wife who loves him dearly, my brother is still in denial over his ever existent grief from his past. My sister knows what living in the world will do to a person physically and emotionally.

So then, what *is* love? True Love is not a thing, but a Person. Love is Eternal.

Before I go further, may I ask you a question? Why did Paul, in I Corinthians 13:1-3, write: “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity I am become as a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.”

Love Is Not Fear

The story above is only one incident of a dysfunctional family. God showed me recently the biggest problem in my life was fear. Fear and love are enemies. I didn't realize the love of God can destroy that kind of fear in a person's life until I was ready to accept healing from the Master.

The following exhortation may be very radical to you, though what I'm saying is true by the prophetic and lovely Word of God:

“If you do not believe we are living in the day of the supernatural gifts from God whereas His people continue in ministries of healing and deliverance, prophetic ministries, Word of Knowledge, speaking in other tongues, and other ministries as delivered to the New Covenant saints on the day of Pentecost, then you have never received a true and full revelation of Who Jesus Christ really is. If you will continue with me, I will show you why I make this statement.”

Assuming you identify with the above doctrine, I have one question to ask you. Hopefully you will meditate just a little while before giving the answer:

“Do you read and study the Words of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to learn at His feet the things closest to His heart; or do you read the Bible only to learn facts and contend for the faith?”

The Great Commandment Of The Law

Taken in Part From Dave Roberson's July, 2004 Newsletter

It seems very important to God that the new nature He has given His people flows through us in the form of “Agape” love. God looks for those who will allow that kind of love to be manifest in their lives.

The importance of this truth is confirmed by Jesus' words in Matthew 22. In this passage, the Pharisees heard Jesus shut down the Saducees, so no one really wanted to ask Him any questions. Finally, a lawyer who thought he knew something spoke up. He must have thought, “Well, the others were Saducees, and I'm a Pharisee, so maybe I can tempt Jesus to make a mistake.” Of course, it didn't work, but let's follow this conversation for a moment and see what Jesus had to say about agape love.

But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all

thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matthew 22:34-40).

Note Jesus likens the second commandment - “to love our neighbors as ourselves” - to the first and great commandment, which is to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, with all our souls, and with all our minds. We are to love others with a love that is like our love for God. In fact, Jesus said we only truly love God as we walk in love toward our brethren, for the second commandment is like unto the first one. We can't love God more than people, because it is the same kind of love!

These verses used to be a mystery to me because of Jesus' statement in verse 40: “On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” That didn't make sense to me. When the lawyer tempted Jesus with the question, "Which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus responded by quoting what He called "the first and great commandment." It sounded like He was isolating a commandment out of the original Ten Commandments, such as "Thou shalt not steal."

The problem was, when I went to the Word, I couldn't find the one Jesus was referring to.

Then Jesus quoted the second great commandment - we are to love our neighbor as ourselves. But I couldn't find the second great commandment in the Ten Commandments either!

As I prayed and meditated on the Word, I'd go through the Ten Commandments one by one in my mind. First, there must be no other gods before Him. Second, we are not to worship anything created. Third, we must not take God's name in vain. Fourth, we are to remember the Sabbath and keep it holy.

After these four commandments, the next six change in nature, addressing sins against our fellow man. The fifth is the first commandment with promise - to honor our fathers and mothers. The sixth states we shall not murder; the seventh, we shall not commit adultery. Finally, there are the last three commandments: We shall not steal, lie, or covet what belongs to another.

The more I meditated on these Ten Commandments, the more I realized the two great commandments Jesus referred to in Matthew 22 were hidden there all along! The initial grouping of four commandments cover the first great commandment: to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, our minds, our souls, and our strength. This is true even of the fourth commandment - to remember the Sabbath and keep it holy. The last six commandments are all summed up in the second great commandment: to love our neighbor as ourselves, which includes doing no harm to him. Everything hinges on these two great commandments that deal with our love for God and our love for each other. Nowhere is this truth emphasized more than in the book of First John.

Agape Love And The New Nature

Taken In Part From Dave Roberson's July, 2004 Newsletter

Every time I read the five little chapters in First John, I see more clearly how the apostle John considered the new nature and agape love to be synonymous terms. We are born of God and saved with love, which is the core nature of our Father. God doesn't HAVE love; He is love.

That's why Paul said in First Corinthians 13 love never fails, even though prophecies will cease and tongues will be done away with (v. 8). Why is this? Because prophecy and tongues are two revelation gifts. We only need these gifts here in this life while we are being taught how to walk in

the Spirit instead of in the flesh. Prophecy and tongues are not going to Heaven with us because we won't need them there.

On the other hand, love is eternal and never fails. Love crosses the barrier between this life and the next because it is the core nature of what we received when we were born again. God considers agape love as the most lethal weapon we possess - and if we will allow the Holy Spirit to cultivate that love nature in us, our days of failure will become a thing of the past!

So as we look in the book of First John, we see the apostle John freely interchanges the concepts of loving God and loving our brother. This fits with Jesus' words to the lawyer in Matthew 22:39 when He said, "The second commandment is like unto the first." In other words, if we love the Lord our God with all our hearts, minds, souls, and strength, we will also love our neighbor as ourselves, for that is what makes the second like the first. That means if we are NOT loving our neighbor, we are also not fulfilling the first great commandment to love God.

Let's look at one passage in First John and see if we fit the description of those who truly love God. "Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth" (1 John 2:8).

John is explaining here we don't have spiritually dead spirits any longer. We have a new nature, and the true light now shines within us. Then he says abiding in this new nature is synonymous with walking in love.

"He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes" (1 John 2:9-11).

Even if we are not spiritually dead, we still act like spiritually dead people when we don't walk in love, for we cannot see where we are going. This leads to the apostle John's conclusion: Once we are born again, we are to walk in love with others. It is as simple as that.

Someone might say, "Yes, but that poor man lived about a hundred and five years. He must have gotten senile along the way to actually think all those who are saved should love their brother. John was probably about a hundred and two when he started talking like that!"

But God is the One speaking to us through the apostle John, and He has more to say on the subject. Let's look a little further.

"And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4:16,17).

Why can we stand boldly on the Day of Judgment? Because our love is being perfected. How does our love get perfected? Through the realization AS JESUS IS, SO ARE WE IN THIS WORLD.

John is talking here about Jesus' humanity. Jesus glorified humanity when He sat down at the right hand of the Father, for Jesus possesses a human spirit with the same divine love nature we possess

as new creatures in Him.

We are standing on this planet; Jesus is at the right hand of the Father. But as Jesus is with His divine love nature, so are we on this earth, walking through life with that same new nature. And if we will perfect the love the Holy Spirit has planted in our hearts, we will have boldness in the Day of Judgment.

John explains the nature of that love in I John 4:18: "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

There is no fear in agape love. In verse 19, he says, We love him [Jesus], because he first loved us. Then comes another reference to the synonomous nature of our love for God and our love for each other: "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also" (1 John 4:20,21).

Why is a man a liar if he says, "I love God" yet hates his brother? Because the second commandment is like unto the first! Verse 21 talks about this truth when it says, "This is the commandment we have from Him - he who loves God loves his brother also." John did not say, "MAYBE you will love your brother." He said, "If you love God, you WILL love your brother as well!"

Someone obviously convinced John our love for God is synonymous with our love for our brethren. We can't have one without the other, for they are the same kind of love.

Search The Scriptures

During a feast in Jerusalem at the Pool of Bethesda, Jesus met an invalid who had been sick for 38 years, and bedridden much of that time. Note here the Lord entered the city to be there for the feast, but He went to the hospital first. You know the story. It's found in St. John, 5th chapter. Yes, for all intents and purposes, the Pool of Bethesda was a hospital, and Jesus knew where He was going. He said He came to this world to heal and to save those who needed a doctor; not those who did not need the doctor. Jesus healed the man, told him to go and sin no more, lest a worse thing happen to him. Then...

When the Jews learned what Jesus had done at the pool, they accused Him, and wanted to kill Him. Among other things, Jesus' response included: "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. I receive not honour from men. But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only" (John 5:39-44).

These Jews who faced Jesus that day were learned in the scriptures. They knew them so well they could quote much of the prophetic old covenant. Yet they did not know the Man Who wrote the book! The book spoke of Jesus throughout its pages, yet not one of these Pharisees and scribes could find the Savior there.

Jesus healed a man with terrible physical ailments, and we ask why. Everything Jesus did on the earth in meeting every need of mankind was to glorify the Father. Remember, His meat, or spiritual

nutrition, was to fully complete His Father's will.

Scripture tells us Jesus died on that Cross at Calvary even from the foundations of the world, Why? Because of a great love for mankind. Why did He create the heavens and earth? Because of His majestic love for all men. Though you were not in existence 6,000 plus years ago, He knew you and desired to have you as a part of His Bride. The scripture tells us all things were created with man in mind. He held all the stars and all the universes between His thumb and little pinkie.

To God, man is no bigger than a mite that must be magnified 10,000,000 times just to be seen by the naked eye. Maybe that's the reason King David, while in worship, cried out, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?"

God sent His Son to make man like Himself; to have a Christ-like mind; to minister the way Christ did on the earth. Fact is Jesus insisted His Church would glorify His Father just as He had. He therefore authorized His disciples to carry the same burden of love in the administration of their ministries. Jesus' ministry was founded on "Agape Love".

John, the disciple who loved the Lord above the others, said about Jesus shortly before the day of Pentecost, "And there are so many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (John 21:25).

I like the way Reverend Scott Hagen put it:

"The Bible doesn't say, "There's not enough *books* in the world." It says, "There's not enough *world* to hold the books," if everything about Jesus were committed to parchment. The apostle John's intention wasn't to dazzle you and me with the enormity of planet Earth, but to showcase the glory and girth of Jesus Christ. Isaiah once called the earth a mere "footstool" for the Father. (See Isaiah 66:1). But the earth shrinks even smaller than a footstool when John calls for it to become the vault for Emmanuel's archives. Confining Jesus to a library would be worse than trying to confine the Library of Congress to a matchbox."

Every miraculous feat accomplished by Jesus in the Word of God can all be numbered and proven by Agape Love. It is not reasonable for humanity to be able to get a handle on that sort of love. It is simply impossible for man alone to realize the kind of love it took for the Father to dare take that kind of risk with us. But what Jesus wanted was to glorify His Father, and His Father's heart was enmeshed with mankind. He loved mankind so much He continued century after century babying the evil minded, murmuring Israelites, and now us.

The Father even built Himself a house on the earth in the midst of these people. He taught them to worship and have sweet communion with Him; He showed them through the law a picture of the Cross. That plan was carried out, and for the first time in history, God the Father was able to pack up His bags and move out of that earthly house. He ripped the curtain from top to bottom to show He was the One who broke down the barrier between Himself and man.

Earlier, the Lord Jesus looked over Jerusalem and cried out:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall

not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” (Luke 13:34, 35). KJV

Jesus showed His awesome love for a generation of malcontents. What I see here is a Father who loves His children so much He broke down all barriers so He could have close communion with them. Israel killed all the prophets and stoned those sent to give the message of His deliverance. Finally, He gave His own Son on the Cross so men could come to Him simply because of the “Agape” word.

Yet, men still rejected Him, so He told them their house, meaning the Temple, would be left desolate. He was moving out and they would no longer find Him there. The cloud by day and the fire at night would be no more. Israel would not be able to come to Him through a building again. They now must come through Jesus. That’s why He told them they would not see Him again till they proclaimed, “Blessed is He that cometh in the name of they Lord.”

One day during the tribulation, Israel will finally see and know who Jesus is. They will call Him their Messiah, and will worship them. They will mourn for the things done against Him (See Isaiah 52:15).

Conclusion

If you, the reader made it through this exhortation on love, Let’s answer the question I asked earlier, “Why did Paul write the first three verses of I Corinthians 13:

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity I am become as a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.”

Since all three verses are emphasizing the identical same meaning, Let’s use only the first verse. Paul said, “Though I speak with the tongues of men..”, meaning he does in fact, speak in tongues. Then “..of men..”. Paul taught he at times spoke in human languages, “..and of angels..”, and at other times Paul spoke in unknown tongues unto the Father only (this would normally be in private worship).

When Paul completed his sentence “..and have not charity (love) I am become as a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal”, he wasn’t teaching “tongues” was not God’s perfect will for His Church while on the earth. What Paul did say was:

“Brother and sisters, if we do not possess this agape love by revelation of “Who Jesus Christ is in your heart”, we may never accomplish *anything* within His will. He may not even hear us; He may not see us, or acknowledge us in any fashion whatsoever! Without that love we do not belong to Him; and whatever on this green earth we do will be in our own selves, and that stinks! Why? Because our righteousnesses are still today as filthy rags.

And “Brethren, seek for yourselves as ministries all the gifts, but especially the very best ones – but you must never attempt to operate in these gifts without the love of God in your hearts!

***Characteristics Of Agape Love (I Cor. 13)**

Love Suffers Long – Love is patient, forbearing, and even-tempered, especially toward persons who provoke or injure us. It does not allow resentment to arise even toward repeated wrongs. It goes the second mile, turns the other cheek, endures insult, and bears with those who disgrace, mock or jibe. It cannot be short-tempered with those for whom Christ died.

Love Is Kind – Does not stop with a patience that puts up with abusers; is actively kind, returns good for evil, seeks out things it can do for others, graciously puts itself at the service of others.

Love Envies Not – Is never jealous, never expresses ill-will, malice, or peevishness. Its heart is too big to engage in littleness or jealous rivalry. It sees the good in others and desires to promote the good of the body.

Love Vaunts Not Itself – It is humble, truly humble. It never shows off, never parades its own virtues, and never calls undue attention to itself. After love does its work of kindness it steals back into the shade so that Christ may receive all the glory.

Love Is Not Puffed Up – Some people may appear very humble, but inwardly feel how important they are. Love is never inflated with pride, never self important, nor is it ever anxious for honor. It does not "Lord it over" those less fortunate, nor does it treat others as inferiors. It is never self satisfied, arrogant, conceited, or overbearing. It never demands its rights nor feel recognition for faithful service is its due.

Love Does Not Behave Itself Unseemly – It is never rude, unbecoming, or indecent. Jesus was a perfect gentleman. His love is always considerate, polite, and gentle, never coarse or vulgar. It never knowingly or needlessly embarrasses, injures or humiliates another but is always courteous.

Love Does Not Seek Her Own – It is never selfish, grasping, or greedy. God so loved the world that He gave. The same divine love in us will make us more concerned about giving than getting.

Love Is Not Provoked – The word "easily" is not in the Greek. Love is not provoked, irritated, or angered by affliction or by any circumstances, however bad they may be. Any irritability that arises comes from a different source, not love. Love keeps the victory even when everything seems to go wrong.

Love Thinks No Evil – It is not resentful of evil done to it. It is forgiving and never holds a grudge. Actually, there is no limit to its forgiveness. Love takes the one who has wronged it into its heart, forgetting the past.

Love Rejoices Not In Iniquity – It is not happy at injustice and unrighteousness, nor does it gloat over and make fun of the weaknesses of others. Negativity and gossip is not a part of its speech pattern.

Love Rejoices In The Truth – It delights when right and truth prevail, and focuses on those things which are of good report in others. It speaks well of others and has a positive confession.

Love Bears All Things – It bears up under anything and everything that comes. It works through every difficulty and looks for the solutions.

Love Believes All Things – It is ever ready to believe the best of others. It has faith in others as

well as in the Lord. It keeps pressing on in faith knowing that, "faith ...works by love." Gal 5:6
Love Hopes All Things – When it cannot see how things are going to turn out, when circumstances are against it, it keeps a confident hope that is fixed on Jesus and loves His appearing.

Love Endures All Things – It bears up under all things, and stands its ground like a courageous soldier. It bears up instead of giving up. It sees where help is needed and gets under the load without being asked or begged. It provides sincere and real encouragement.

Love Never Fails – It never fades out, becomes obsolete or comes to an end. It always wins. Whenever faced with a difficult situation or individual ask the question "What would love do?" The answer will pull you through to victory!

*Victory Life Church * P.O. Box 1834, Folsom, CA 95763 * (916) 608-1512 *

ADDENDUM

3 TESTIMONIES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT INFILLING

In my research for this book, I came across several testimonies of people who had received the Holy Spirit, some in extraordinary ways. I share herewith just a few of them.

BELIEVE AND RECEIVE

A testimony of Mahesh Chavda

I received the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior many years ago. He was gracious to me as a young aristocratic Hindu gentleman. At the age of 16 I experienced a mighty touch from the Lord wherein after reading the Bible my spirit was taken to Heaven. I describe this experience at length in my first book, *Only Love Can Make A Miracle*. In my vision I saw Heaven, walked the streets of gold, heard the most heavenly singing, and saw the most glorious array of rainbow-hued lights, and flowers with colors I didn't even know existed. There in that heavenly place I met the Lord Jesus Christ and because of that experience, the next day received Him as my Savior.

Years passed but no one ever told me that I could receive the infilling of the Holy Spirit. I had received Jesus, but had not been filled with the Spirit. I believed in the Bible, I had been baptized, and I was aggressively serving the Lord.

Slowly I began to move into intellectualism and gradually walked away from a committed life in Christ. I was still a Christian, but I was not enthusiastic about the Lord and had become very disappointed in the Church.

One day I received the news that my mother was dying of a terminal disease. I was a graduate student in Texas and my mother was in England. She was dying and I had no money to go see her. We had not parted on the best of terms, which made matters worse. She was a proud Hindu lady, raised up in the royal houses of India, and her son had left the Hindu faith to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

She was not very pleased with what I had done. Now, years later, she was dying and asking to see me, but I could not afford to go. Any money I made went to pay for college and food. I was broken, defeated, and at the end of my resources. My heart deeply saddened, I wept uncontrollably for three days. I felt so ashamed.

On the third night, when I went to sleep I was suddenly back in that same heavenly place enveloped in the presence of the Lord. Surrounding the Lord was the Shekinah glory, like golden glory all around Him. Living beams of light emanated from Him. Songs of glory surrounded Him like anthems of worship and holiness. As Jesus came towards me, He put His hands on my shoulders, and I found myself singing anthems of praises to Him in a language I did not understand. For hours I was in that presence, singing.

When I woke up the next morning, my hands were folded tightly in an attitude of worship. It felt as though the atmosphere of glory still surrounded me, and I started worshiping the Lord Jesus again. As I did so, a gust of wind came into my room and blew the door open. I began taking deep breaths of this wind. Something was pouring into me like liquid love. I was bubbling over in my innermost being to the point that I had to open my mouth and let it out. It came out as a song in a language I did not understand.

At this time in my life I was very proud of being an intellectual, so I began to argue with myself saying, "This is crazy. What are you doing? You're speaking in a language that you don't understand!" Then I said back to myself, "It feels so great. I have never felt like this before in my life. I'm going to sing some more." I sang for about an hour and 20 minutes without a break. I was in the glory, saturated in a love that I had never felt before.

In those days the only other spiritual person whom I knew and respected was a Catholic nun who was taking graduate courses with me. I remember running up to her the next day and saying, "Sister Marsha. Am I going crazy?" As I described my experience to her she opened her eyes wide and started jumping up and down and saying, "Praise the Lord brother. You've been baptized in the Holy Ghost." She was a Spirit-filled nun!

Two days later, the word of the Lord came. As I was praying in tongues I had a strong impression that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." Again the word came on the song, "Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever." I started to sing that and then I said, "Lord, what do you mean?" The Holy Spirit answered, "It means, pray for your mother's healing. Jesus is the healer, the same yesterday, today, and forever."

I started arguing the intellectual points again, "He doesn't do this anymore." I desperately needed that word. I could have approached it in an intellectual manner, or I could receive it like a desperately hungry person. I chose to receive it as a desperately hungry person.

I began praying earnestly for my mother, and a few days later I received the news that she had been healed completely of her bone cancer; from the top of her head to the tip of her toes. She lived for another 23 years, during which I had the chance to see her and lead her to Jesus Christ.

If you are trained in the kind of thinking that says, "The Lord doesn't do this anymore," I would say to you, "Stop arguing and receive." You will never be able to understand or fathom the mysteries of God. Jesus is a mystery. The cross is an awesome mystery. Just receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Believe and receive your miracle.

The fire has been real in my life. Our first son, Ben, was given up for dead after his birth. There was little hope he could live due to a congenital birth defect in his urinary system. I saw him suffering in the most terrible way. After his last surgery he was screaming in terrible pain. After hours of Ben's suffering in agony, suddenly the nurses, Bonnie, and myself saw the glory of the Lord come.

A glorious golden light surrounded Ben's crib as God literally recreated his nearly dead kidneys. Today he is a healthy, active 23-year-old in graduate school who loves the Lord and wants to serve Him. My wife and I have seen the real fire fall, where the presence of God has come and gloriously healed and delivered our children. I don't need someone to tell me God's supernatural fire does not fall any longer. The fire of God is real and those who are hungry and thirsty will seek out that fire. Regrettably, there is a school of thought that causes people to be afraid of the Holy Spirit by instilling a mistrust of the heavenly Father. How unfortunate! Our Heavenly Father is the most trustworthy person in the universe. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." In Matthew 7:9-11 Jesus says, "Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!"

His Mysterious Ways MORE THAN COINCIDENCE

My husband, John, and I were traveling in Europe back in the days of the Iron Curtain. In Vienna we'd been given a trove of small personal treasures--photos, letters, a few bars of chocolate--to take to an address in Prague. The sender was a Czech evangelist who'd been forced to flee his country, leaving behind a wife and three daughters. He explained through an interpreter how much this contact with his family, though secondhand, would mean to them all.

We arrived in Prague on a cold January day, and we parked our rented Citroen – a novelty in those parts – far from our destination so as not to draw unwelcome attention to the family we were going to visit. My full-length American coat drew even more attention than the French car, so I had to leave it behind as well. We set out on foot. My legs were numb by the time we reached the address.

"What if they're not home?" John asked as we climbed the staircase. "We could leave a note," I suggested, then thought better of it. Writing in English wouldn't be safe, and John and I didn't know what other language they might understand. But to our relief, the wife and one of the daughters answered the door. Their excitement at receiving the few things we'd brought was wrenching to see.

As the woman served us a coffee-colored drink, she pressed us for every detail about her husband's health and spirits. She and I talked excitedly for almost an hour. It was a wonderful conversation. When we left, she gave us messages to pass along and a hastily written letter with the girls' school reports and photos of a nephew's new baby to bring back to her husband.

Outside, John asked, "What happened in there? What did she tell you? What did you say?"

I looked at him in surprise. "You were there. You heard everything."

"Sure, but I couldn't understand," he said. "You were speaking German."

But how could I have been? *I* don't understand German, let alone speak it. – ELIZABETH SHERRIL

THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES TO A CHILD

By Linda Stephens

I was about nine years old when I gave my heart to the Lord in a Baptist Church. My parents did not attend church but I went with my friends.

A year or so later a newly-established pentecostal church about 20 miles from us was in revival. The evangelist was an elderly lady, but full of Holy Ghost fire. In this church, they prayed for the sick and believed God would answer. In one of these services, an aunt went forward for prayer. She had broken her neck four years earlier in a car wreck and it had never healed right. She had to wear a neck brace 24 hours a day to support her head. When she was prayed for, she was healed instantly . . . some would say it was a miracle.

Everyone in our family and most in the rural community where we lived knew about the accident so when my aunt was healed, there was no doubt in any of our minds God had moved. We knew it was not a fake healing and it had an immediate impact on our family.

My mother began attending the revival and took us with her. My dad was a little too Methodist to feel comfortable with the clapping, shouting and other manifestations of the pentecostal experience so he stayed home most of the time. Mom, however, got saved and a work was begun in her life.

We continued to attend the revival and when my folks couldn't go, I would ride with my aunt and uncle. One night as people were praying around the altar (those were the days when we "tarried" for the Holy Ghost), I was sitting on the front pew just taking it all in. The evangelist sat down beside me and asked, "Would you like to have the Holy Ghost?"

I answered affirmatively and she stepped forward with me to the altar. We began to pray and within minutes I was speaking fluently in an unknown tongue. So much for tarrying as far as I was concerned.

I've often felt the reason the infilling was so quick for me was because I was a child with none of the inhibitions or preconceived ideas adults often have. It seemed the most natural thing in the world. I never lost that fluency. In fact, for the next several hours and even much of the days that followed, I spoke in tongues, aloud when I could and under my breath when speaking aloud would have been inappropriate.

As we left the church that evening, I was speaking in tongues. English was far from me. When I arrived at my home, I was so excited and, still speaking in tongues went into my parents bedroom.

My dad knew his little girl couldn't do that in herself and that was the deciding factor. He too attended the revival and gave his heart to the Lord. My parents were soon filled with the Spirit and, though well up in years, are still serving God.

We often quote the Scripture where the Lord tells us to "become as little children," yet too many times we bypass our children when we invite people to receive the Holy Spirit. I have seen children as young as four and five years old speaking in tongues. If a person is old enough to love the Lord, they are old enough to receive the Holy Spirit. Since the night I received, there has never been a time I could not speak freely in tongues. For that experience and the prayer language it brought, I will always be grateful.

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