

War, Peace, and Joy

By Tom Stephens

“And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.” (Matthew 11:12)

Police enFORCE the law with weapons, and FORCE criminals to surrender. “Force” in Matt. 11:12 means the use of the weapons *God has given us*. In Luke 10:17-20, The Lord Jesus comforts His disciples, and ensures they understand they have been given the power to conquer the spiritual enemy coming against the powers of Satan and his hordes of demons. While following Jesus takes spiritual courage, it also takes faithfulness, power and determination; it requires constantly seeking and encouraging others to come to Christ Jesus—realizing we will face opposition from the enemy. It involves maintaining the driving strength in our mission to reach others for Christ. Therefore, *“The violent takes it by force”*.

“And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, ‘I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.’” (Luke 10: 17-20 – KJV)

- **ONE: Some of Our Biblical Weapons of Spiritual Warfare: (Find More in the Scriptures)**

I. How Do We Win These Battles of Spiritual Warfare?

□ **Weapons Of Our Warfare**—*“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.” (2 Corinthians 10:3-6).*

□ **The "Armor Of God":** *“Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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 armor 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 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 6:11-18).*

□ **The "keys to the kingdom":** *“And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven: (Matthew 16:19).*

II. Fourteen of the Irresistible Spiritual Weapons God Provided For His Church

What are the keys God has given us that unleash heaven's power? What are these weapons that when used provide force enough to move the devil? Here is a list of 14 weapons in their scriptural context relating to spiritual warfare (no specific order):

1. Love: Understanding God’s love for you is the secret to an overcoming life. Many grow spiritually cold because they’re ignorant of God’s love for them. They don’t realize their greatest weapon against Satan’s attacks is to be fully convinced of His love, which can come only by revelation of the Holy Ghost.

Jesus prayed this final prayer on earth: —*Father...Thou lovest me before the foundation of the world* (John 17:24). Awesome! Christ was greatly loved before creation! Before anything was placed in the cosmos—before any planet was formed, before the sun, moon or stars came into being, before the earth was made, before the creation of man—Jesus was loved by the Father.

Then, Jesus prayed this prayer: —Thou, Father...*hast loved them, as thou hast loved me* (Jn. 17:21, 23); and also prayed — that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them (17:26). Christ was saying, —Father, I know You are going to love those I bring into my body, just the way You loved Me. If the Father loved us the same way He loved His Son, then we can know that nothing over, on, or under this earth can touch us without His permission! If we truly understand His Love for us, we can accept all the power...all the weapons and authority which was so passionately handed down to His church when He ascended to sit on the right hand of His Father.

2. Resistance: “*Resist the devil and he will flee from you* (James 4:7). We know we can use all our weapons of spiritual warfare against the enemy of our soul, Satan. Search the Word to see if you can find more spiritual weapons! Just Stop lying, stealing, gossiping, causing division in the Church and other evil temptations!

3. The Word of God: (this is the most important weapon!). "The Sword of the Spirit" (Eph. 6:17). —“*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*” (Heb. 4:12). Alive! (More – John 1:1-5; 17:5, 17).

4. Faith: "ABOVE ALL, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Eph. 6:16). "Whom resist steadfast in the faith" (1 Pet. 5:8-10)

5. Peace: In the Old Covenant, Our Lord was often called, —*The Lord of Hosts*, meaning He is a Warring God who stands alone. He lifts men up and He breaks them down at His own choosing. The Lord of Hosts was the protector of His people. But in the New Covenant, we often refer to Him as the God of Peace...who will shortly injure Satan under our feet! (Romans 16:20).

6. The name of Jesus: "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." (Mark 16:17,18).

7. The blood of the Lamb: "they overcame him (Satan) by the blood of the lamb" (Rev. 12:11).

8. The mouth (faith's confession): When Jesus was being tempted of the devil, three times he answered Satan with the Word, saying: "It is written" (Matt 4:4, 7, 10). (Rom 10:9, 10)

9. Praying in the Spirit: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" (Eph. 6:18).

10. Righteousness: "...having on the breastplate of righteousness" (Eph. 6:14; Zech. 3:1-5).

11. Praise: "Out of the mouth of babes ..." (Matthew 21:16). "thou hast perfected praise" (quoting and defining Psalm 8:2 which adds), "that thou mayest still the enemy". Praise is the weapon that stills the enemy. (See also II Chron. 20 and Acts 16:25,6).

12. Fasting and prayer: Daniel's fast in Daniel 10, which bound the Prince of Persia. Also Matthew 17:17-21, "This kind (of demon) goeth not out but by prayer and fasting".

13. Wisdom: "Unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:10); The entire Chapter of Prov 8; "*by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war*" (Prov. 24:6); "*A wise man scaleth the city of the mighty, and casteth down the strength of the confidence thereof*" (Prov. 21:22). Get God's strategy for your war! It's called wisdom.

14. Bind and Loose: Jesus asked His disciples, —*Who do men believe I Am?* Simon Peter answered and said, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.* (Mt16:16-19; 1 John 4:15; and Revelation 1:17,18).

—*Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.*" (Mt 16:19; 18:18-20)

III. Some Benefits of Binding and Loosing:

1. The Keys to the Kingdom Of God: Jesus gave Peter, as representative of His supernatural Church, the keys to the Kingdom of God. These keys carried all authority over the enemy of our souls. Then, in Revelation 1:17, 18 Jesus said, —*Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death.*" Here, *Jesus comforted John the Revelator* in that He – being the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End, the Eternal One – is in full control of the times – today and forever.

2. Our Authority In Spiritual Warfare: Whatever we, the Church, bind on earth is already bound in heaven; and whatever we loose on earth is already loosed in heaven. Jesus, sitting at the right hand of His Father is agreeing to the Father this authority and power He gave His Own Church. Jesus stressed this truth in two chapters of Matthew!

3. Two in Agreement: As often as possible, we should have at least one prayer mate who will agree with us as touching anything that we ask on earth. Jesus promised His Father would accomplish these needs!

4. Two or Three Gathered in His Name: He promised to be there in their midst. Don't forget God's multiplication tables!

—*And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword* (Lev 26:8).

—*How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had shut them up* (Deuteronomy 32:30)?

—*These [are] they that went over Jordan in the first month, when it had overflowed all his banks; and they put to flight all [them] of the valleys, [both] toward the east, and toward the west* (1Ch 12:15).

—*A Thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee* (Psalm 91:7).

The next time you are under Satanic attack, go through this list of keys and weapons. One by one **take** each one of them in your hand and in your mouth and get **violent** in your warfare. The **force** (dunamis) inherent in each of them will with God's power enable you to see the promise fulfilled:

"And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Romans 16:20).

- **TWO: The Gifts Of The Spirit**

1. "For unto one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom." Because you have had the word of wisdom does not mean that you are the wise man of the church. But it does mean that you have a wise God within you that produced wisdom. Wisdom is the right application of knowledge; it means to say the right word at the right time under difficult circumstances. And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

"But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you" (Matthew 10:18-20). *"I am the vine, ye are the branches. he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing"* (John 15:5). *"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him"* (Jam 1:5).

2. "The word of knowledge." Paul is not saying that knowledge is given to us by a supernatural manifestation of the Spirit. We must study to get knowledge. It is the *word of knowledge* that is given to us by the Spirit. The *word of knowledge* means the ability to express what we know, so that others can understand. There are multitudes of people who have obtained knowledge, but cannot express what they know, so that others can understand. It may also mean a specific word which applies only to one specific situation.

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). *"And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another"* (Romans 15:14).

3. "Faith by the same Spirit." Great faith is not something we carry around with us. It is a manifestation of the Spirit and must be given each time something great is to be accomplished. The Apostles learned this secret from Jesus in the following lesson. A father brought his son to Jesus for healing (Mark 9:14-29). Jesus said to this father,

"All things are possible to him that believeth." The father said, *"Lord, I do believe, help thou my unbelief (or weak faith)."* The Lord Jesus gave him the faith that was needed, and his son was healed. The Disciples came to Jesus privately and asked Him, *"Why could not we perform this miracle?"* Jesus said, *"Because of your little faith. How be it this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."* Jesus is saying that it takes special faith for this kind of a miracle, and He is saying the extra faith only comes through special prayer. The Apostles remembered this experience and always waited for the moving of the Spirit before they attempted great things. All things are possible to him that believeth, but it is impossible to believe for great things unless God gives the faith.

4. "The gifts of healing by the same Spirit." This scripture teaches that healing is a gift each time someone is healed. It is God that performs the healing, and if He doesn't, there is not a man on earth who can. No man has a permanent gift of healing, so that he can heal anyone at any time. Contact must be made with God for the one who is sick, because healing is a manifestation of the Spirit. *"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal"* (1 Corinthians 12:7).

5. "To another the working of miracles." A miracle is that which is above the regular established law of nature. It takes the Spirit of God to perform a miracle. No man has a permanent gift of performing miracles. It takes a manifestation of the Spirit, and a manifestation must be given each time a miracle takes place.

6. "To another prophecy." To prophesy, one must speak under the impulse of the Spirit words of edification, exhortation and comfort, whether they are foretelling future events, preaching a sermon or giving

a testimony. What we call a testimony meeting, Paul called a prophecy meeting. *“But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification and exhortation, and comfort. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted”* (1 Corinthians 14:3, 31).

7. “To another discerning of spirits.” Many false spirits are in the world, and most of them are very religious. Therefore, John says, *“Try the spirits”* (1 John 4:1). Many religious leaders are possessed with the wrong spirit. That is one reason we have such erroneous interpretations of the Bible today! The way to try the spirits is by the Word and by the Holy Ghost.

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 the 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 anti-christ, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. (1 John 4:1-4)

Peter did not get discernment on Simon the sorcerer right away. The Bible says that Simon himself believed and was baptized and continued with Philip (Acts 8:13). Peter had to wait for God to give him discernment, for he did not have a permanent gift. When Simon tried to buy the gift of God with money, the Spirit moved Peter and he was given discernment (Acts 8:18-24).

8. “To another different kinds of tongues.” The Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 14:18, *“I thank my God I speak with tongues more than ye all.”* Anyone who has been filled with the Spirit to the extent of speaking with tongues realizes that *it is supernatural* and gives God all the glory. When I was filled with the Spirit, and spoke with tongues, it seemed that all Heaven had moved into me. While I was seeking and yielding myself to the Spirit, and spoke with tongues, it seemed to me that the Holy Ghost was a machine within me, making *“Hallelujahs”* faster than I could get them out. *The more spiritual joy you have, the closer you are to being filled with the Spirit and speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives the utterance.*

The Apostle Paul gives the only explanation of the tongue question that is in the Bible. No man has a right to put his own private interpretation on the examples of speaking in tongues. *For it is the examples in the book of Acts that the Apostle is explaining.* Paul uses the same scripture that was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. *“For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people”* (Isaiah 28:11). Then he said, *“This shows that the gift of tongues is intended as a sign, not to those who believe but to the unbelievers”* (1 Corinthians 14:21, 22).

A businessman does not have to look at the sign on his store to know that his store is stocked with merchandise. The sign is for the one who doesn't know. *On the Day of Pentecost they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them words to utter* (Acts 2:4). The Spirit giving them words to utter is what makes tongues a gift of the Spirit, for tongues are always Holy Ghost produced (if they are of God). The Spirit must give us the words we utter, whether we speak in tongues one time or a thousand times. No one can speak in tongues only as he is moved by the Spirit.

Speaking with tongues was given for three purposes:

- 1. For self edification.** *“He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all”* (1 Corinthians 14:4, 18).
- 2. For a sign to unbelievers.** *“In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe”* (1 Corinthians 14:21, 22).

3. To edify the church when a message is given in tongues which demands interpretation.

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? And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air. There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification. Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me. Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church. Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret. (1 Corinthians 14:5-13)

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. (Matthew 7:15-20)

Anyone who has been filled with the Spirit, to the extent of speaking with tongues, has one of the greatest experiences this side of Heaven. With this filling comes *more love, more joy, more peace, more freedom, more power to witness, more boldness, etc.* You do not get more of the Spirit, but the Spirit gets a greater possession of you. The Holy Ghost works like liquor. First one drinks the liquor and then it possesses them, (wrongly). It is the same with the Spirit. You receive the Holy Ghost first, and then the Spirit fills you as you yield yourself to Him (rightly). “*And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit*” (Ephesians 5:18). “*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit*” (1 Corinthians 12:13). The filling of the Spirit always comes from within.

9. “To another the interpretation of tongues.” To give a true interpretation of tongues, the interpreter would have to speak in his own language, as the Spirit gives him words to utter. Otherwise, it would only be an imagination of his own mind, and not a true gift of the Spirit. No one has a permanent gift of interpretation, for it is a manifestation of the Spirit, and must be given each time one interprets.

Churches or individuals that do not have these manifestations of the Spirit do not need the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians. These chapters were written to churches that were spiritual enough to have these gifts in operation. You do not need to tell a paralyzed child to stay out of mischief.

When Paul asked the question in 1 Corinthians 12:20, “Have all the gifts of healing, do all speak with tongues, do all interpret,” he is saying that they are not for all. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 14:4, 5, “I would that ye all speak in tongues.” He also said in 1 Corinthians 14:31, “For ye may all prophesy one by one.” James 1:5 says God will give wisdom to any man who will ask. God gives these manifestations severally as he will. “But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will” (1 Corinthians 12:11). That is, He may use you one time and me another time.

All of God's people can have one or all of these manifestations (or gifts) of the Spirit if they are filled with the Spirit to the extent that they can be produced.

- **THREE: Initial Evidence Of The Holy Spirit Baptism**

Isaiah prophesied, "*With stammering lips and **another tongue** will he speak to this people.*" Is. 28:11. In the great commission, Jesus said, "And these signs shall follow them that believe...they shall speak with *New Tongues.*" Mark 16:17.

"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the **sound** thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit." (John 3:8). As the sound of wind blowing is the evidence of its presence, so is the sound of speaking in tongues evidence of the Holy Spirit baptism.

*"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 initial evidence of the Holy Ghost, upon the 120 disciples, was witnessed by devout Jews, out of every nation. They said one to another, "*Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?*" (Acts 2:6-8). Then Peter preached,

"But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel (See Joel 2:28). And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh...Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he (Jesus) hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." (Acts 2:16-33).

Cornelius and his household spoke in tongues when they were baptized with the Holy Ghost. "They of the circumcision which believe were astonished...because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. **for they heard them speak with tongues...**" (Acts 10:45-48). Peter confirmed, "*...The Holy Ghost fell on them as on us at the beginning.*" (Acts 11:15).

The believers at Ephesus spoke in tongues when they received the Holy Ghost baptism. "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake in tongues, and prophesied." (Acts 19:1-6).

When the Samaritans received the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the apostles' hands, there was a miraculous evidence of God's power which exceeded the miracles and signs already experienced. This prompted Simon the sorcerer to offer money to buy this power: that on whomsoever he laid hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. According to the Biblical signs that follow believers, and the experiences received at Pentecost, Cesarea and Ephesus, there should be no doubt that the Samaritans received the Holy Ghost with the same initial evidence of speaking in tongues. (Acts 8:5-25).

The apostle Paul was filled with the Holy Ghost and spoke in tongues. (Acts 9:17; I Cor. 14:18).

And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. (Acts 9:17)

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History also proves that speaking in tongues was the evidence of the Holy Spirit baptism in the early church, and has not ceased to be a Biblical experience among believers today.

Encyclopedia Britannica, 1972 Edition, Vol. W, p. 75 - Tongue-speaking manifested itself early in the Christian experience. At Pentecost (Acts 2) the gift appeared as a sign of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit which marked the character of the earliest Christians...During later church history, glossolalia (speaking in tongues) occurred among the mendicant friars of the 13th century, little prophets of Cevennes, the Jansenists, and the Irvingites. Tongues were found also among the early Quakers, as well as among the converts of John Wesley and George Whitefield...In modern times glossolalia has been found chiefly among Holiness and Pentecostal groups.

The Saturday Evening Post, May 16, 1964, p. 32 - Praying in tongues has recurred at intervals throughout the Christian era, although it did not affect large masses until early in this century. Its advocates were quickly expelled from the established churches, whereupon they established the Pentecostal churches. For 50 years it remained the almost exclusive possession of the Pentecostal churches.

Newsweek, June 25, 1973, p. 80 - The Pentecostal phenomenon has spread with surprising speed through all of the world's major Christian churches.

Why did God choose tongues for the initial evidence of the Holy Spirit baptism? Note the following reasons: Isaiah asked, "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being His counselor hath taught Him?" (Is. 40:13). God is sovereign to choose as He will without being accountable to anyone!

Such a marvelous experience as the baptism of the Holy Ghost demands a marvelous evidence. So God chose to speak through the believer in a language foreign to him as the outward evidence of the marvelous infilling of the Holy Ghost!

The tongue is the most unruly member of the body and full of deadly poison, which no man can tame. It is a world of iniquity and is set on fire of hell. Therefore, the tongue is capable of defiling the entire body. (James 3:6). Before man can be fully sanctified, the tongue, which defileth, must be brought under control. Who can tame the tongue? James compares the tongue to the bit in a horse's mouth which gives the driver complete control. James 3:3. So whoever controls the tongue controls the person. How beautiful is this glorious truth! God chose tongues, as evidence of the Holy Spirit baptism, to symbolize His complete control of a believer. And this is important for the sanctification of the individual's body.

Although other signs were manifested at Pentecost, God chose tongues for the uniform sign of the Holy Spirit baptism. (Compare Acts 2:2-4, 10:46, 19:6.) Jesus said that this SIGN shall follow every believer of the gospel. Mark 16:16,17. The Jews were convinced that the Gentiles at Cesarea had received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, *for they heard them speak with tongues*. (Acts 10:45-47).

Gift Of Tongues In The Church

"For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body." (I Cor. 12:13). "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." I Cor. 12:4. The gifts of the Spirit are as follows: *"the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, the gifts of healing, the working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, divers kinds of tongues and the interpretation of tongues. But by one and the selfsame Spirit, God divides these gifts severally to every man as He will"*. (I Cor. 12:8-11)

Since the gift of tongues is a manifestation of the Spirit (I Cor. 12:7,11), it cannot operate in a person without the Holy Ghost being resident within him. Therefore this gift is only given to believers who have been baptized into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit evidenced by tongue-speaking.

The gift of tongues is different from the tongues as the initial evidence of the Holy Spirit baptism. Compare the following:

□ **1. These tongues differ in purpose.** The gift of tongues along with the gift of interpretation of tongues has been given unto some in the church to convey a message from God to the congregation as the need requires. (I Cor. 12:7, 27, 28). But the tongues as evidence of receiving the Holy Ghost, is the believers personal experience with God, and is not designed to convey a message to the church.

□ **2. Also these tongues differ in operation.** The gift of tongues in the church is limited to two or three messages and that by course: and one must interpret (I Cor. 14:27). But the tongues as evidence of the Holy Spirit baptism is an unlimited manifestation and requires no interpretation.

Paul said, "*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.*" (I Cor. 14:4,5).

Certainly the apostle did not try to discredit or do away with the importance of tongues. Because, in comparison, he illustrated that the less honorable members of the body are necessary, and receive more abundant honor. (I Cor. 12:22,23).

Each gift of the Spirit has as its proper time and place in the church, and when tongues is interpreted they become as important as prophecy! So Paul emphasized, "...Let all things be done unto edifying." (I Cor. 14:26). To edify the church, the gift of tongues must be coupled with the gift of interpretation of tongues. To avoid confusion, Paul gave instructions to follow for the use of tongues and interpretation of tongues in the church. (See I Cor. 14:27) He said, "If there be no interpretation let him keep silence in the church: and let him speak to himself, and to to God." (I Cor. 14:28). Also he said, "***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." (I Cor. 14:19). It is better for the edification of the church to speak five words of understanding than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue without a divinely inspired interpretation. However, lest anyone misunderstand the importance of tongues, Paul concluded, "Wherefore brethren, covet to prophesy, and ***forbid not to speak with tongues.***" (I Cor. 14:19).

"Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not..." (I Cor. 14:22). This Scripture deals with God's speaking to man. (See I Cor. 14:21.) Of course, the believer should know when the Lord speaks, whether by tongues or not. But as a proof to the unbeliever, or anyone who doubts the Word of God, tongues are manifested for a miraculous sign of His presence.

Paul asked the question, "Do all speak with tongues?" (I Cor. 12:30). The context of this Scripture requires a negative answer, because Paul is discussing Tongues as a gift of the Spirit only, and not as the evidence of the Holy Spirit baptism. (See I Cor. 12:28.) The gift of tongues is in addition to the tongues experienced with the baptism of the Holy Ghost. (By the same rule, the gift of faith is in addition to the measure of faith given a person to be saved, Compare Rom. 12:3, I Cor. 12:9.) So everyone may not receive the gift of tongues. But in every case, where the initial evidence of the Holy Spirit baptism is recorded, "***all***" spoke in tongues. (For examples see Acts 2:4, 10:44, 19:7.)

Personal Devotion to God

Tongues are also manifested in a believer's personal life of prayer and worship. They serve as a means of his secret communication with God in the Spirit. These tongues are not meant to be understood by men: therefore, they need no interpretation. "*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). "The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." (Rom. 8:26). Paul said, "*If I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.*" (I Cor. 14:14,15).

These devotional tongues are also for the personal edification of the believer. They are for self-encouragement and uplifting of his spirit. Paul said, "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself..." (I Cor. 14:4). So the apostle gladly stated, "I think my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all." I Cor. 14:18.

How long will tongues continue to be manifested?

"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." (I Cor. 13:8-10).

The phrase, "when that which is perfect is come," is translated from the Greek phrase "to teleion". The word "teleion" is a singular neuter term which refers to Jesus Christ. (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon, p. 618, defines the phrase "to teleion" as used in I Cor. 13:10): ***"The perfect state of all things, to be ushered in by the return of Christ from heaven."*** Paul said, ***"Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part: but then (when that which is perfect is come) shall I know even as also I am known."*** (I Cor. 13:12).

*When the church, having reached her state of perfection, stands face to face in the presence of God, there will be no need for prophecies, tongues and knowledge. But until that which is perfect (Jesus Christ) is come, that which is in part will remain. And as long as there remains prophecies and knowledge, tongues shall not cease. So Paul instructed the church to **come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our lord Jesus Christ.** (I Cor. 1:7).*

Believe the Truth! The Pentecostal phenomenon is for you today! If you desire the greatest experience God has offered to mankind, I urge you to repent, and be baptized with water in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost, evidenced by speaking in tongues! (Acts 2:4, 38, 39)

- **FOUR: The fruits of the Spirit are divided into three sets of three's:**

- 1. Love**

- 2. Joy**

- 3. Peace**

- These show the first evidence of the new birth.

- 1. Longsuffering**

- 2. Gentleness and**

- 3. Goodness**

- These are way we show our love for our brother and sister.

- 1. Faithfulness**

- 2. Meekness**

- 3. Temperance**

- These show our love for God.

It is impossible for a sinner to produce this fruit. Wherefore by their fruit shall ye know them (Mat. 7:15-20).

Blessings from Christ's Bondservants

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