

What You Should Know About

The Holy Spirit

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To the memory of my late father and mother, Walter and Della Jepson

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Have You Heard?

Near the banks of the Cayster River, about a mile from where it flows into the Aegean Sea, sat the ancient city of Ephesus. A center of Greek culture and Roman power, it flourished as one of the most important cities of Asia Minor. There the magnificent Temple of Artemis (Diana) rose proudly in pagan splendor as one of the seven wonders of the world.

The city was enjoying a time of prosperity when God's apostle to the Gentiles arrived. Fully aware of the city's strategic location, Paul had long desired to confront Ephesus with the gospel of Christ. Earlier, he had stopped briefly at its Jewish synagogue as he hurried through on his way to Jerusalem. Though he did not stay, his friends Aquila and Priscilla did. Later, the eloquent Apollos arrived and taught the "things of the Lord" to the best of his knowledge. Aquila and Priscilla clarified his theology, and he went on his way to Corinth.

But now God's time to lay the foundation of a permanent church in Ephesus by apostolic ministry had arrived. The Bible describes what happened in Acts 19.

When Paul arrived, he found a group of disciples. About twelve of them were men, which could have meant as many as two or three dozen people altogether. But the apostle sensed that something spiritually important was missing in the lives of these disciples. So he asked them a point-blank question: "Having believed, did you receive the Holy Spirit?"

Their answer is astonishing: "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." Something spiritually important was missing!

Now, even if you think you are like these people, let me jog your memory about the Holy Spirit. Perhaps you read something in the catechism about Him. Maybe you have been by that noisy church down the street and have wondered just what was going on inside. You went in once, but somebody started saying something in a strange language, and you said you would never go back there again. Or it could be that you have read about Roman Catholic charismatic services, or about Presbyterians, Baptists, and other Protestants speaking in tongues in quiet (and sometimes not so quiet) services in churches and homes.

Maybe you know only what someone else has told you. You might be pleased, upset, or just plain indifferent about it. But one thing is likely — you have heard *something* concerning the Holy Spirit and what He is doing today. But have you really heard?

Let's suppose, on the other hand, that you have been filled with the Holy Spirit and you speak in tongues. You haven't just heard; you've experienced. That's wonderful! But did you know that the baptism in the Holy Spirit, including the evidence of speaking with other tongues, is only the beginning of the Spirit-filled life? A good beginning is important, of course. But the work of the Spirit in and through the believer from that point on is even more important.

So don't be satisfied with only a good beginning. Learn all you can about the Holy Spirit. Know what He desires to do in your life so you can cooperate with Him intelligently in faith. Experience Him in His fullness.

So then ask yourself: "What do I *really* know about the Person and work of the Holy Spirit?"

Am I experiencing the dynamic, abundant, Spirit-filled life?"

Your understanding of the Holy Spirit right now might be great or it might be small. Whatever it is, you want to learn more. So do I. The best place to start is at the beginning. Let's proceed together, one step at a time. Remember, be prayerful. Keep your heart open. Be like a hungry man reading a dinner menu, not an IRS agent scrutinizing a tax return.

Ready? Let's begin.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

Let's begin by observing what the Holy Spirit is *not*. In that way we'll dispose of the negative so we can go right to the positive.

The Holy Spirit is not a "thing," or an "it." He is not an impersonal force, or energy, such as electricity or radiation or magnetism. He is not a quality, such as "goodness" or "love" or "morality." He is not an abstract idea, such as "the force of nature" or "life."

The Person of the Holy Spirit

Who then, *is* the Holy Spirit?

First, He is a Person, a real Being. He thinks, acts, wills, feels, loves, speaks, and does all the other things that can be said of persons. He has qualities, both natural and moral. He has position, rank; He has rights and privileges. Acts 13:2 says, "The Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'" Notice that in referring to himself, the Holy Spirit used "I" and "me," words of personhood.

The Holy Spirit is God. As such, He is the Third Person of the Godhead, the Holy Trinity. This does not mean the Holy Spirit is one-third of God; God cannot be divided. And it does not mean He is one of three Gods; God is one, eternally self-existing in three distinct Persons: the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Each of these Persons is fully God, possessing all the qualities and representing and expressing the fullness of the Godhead (Trinity) as a whole.

In Acts 5 the Bible relates an amazing event. Many of the early Christians were selling their property and bringing the proceeds to the apostles to be distributed among the poorer saints. The motive behind all this was very commendable. The economics of it, however, might not have been very sound. Anyway, some of the benefactors were held in high esteem by the recipients of these acts of good will.

But a real problem arose when a man named Ananias and his wife, Sapphira, decided to get some glory for themselves. Their scheme was very simple: (1) sell some property, (2) contribute part of the proceeds, and (3) report that as the total selling price.

Of course, nobody forced them to sell. And nobody required them to contribute a penny when they did sell. The whole program was a voluntary movement generated by Christian love. But Ananias and Sapphira had set their hearts on gaining esteem in the church, even if it meant lying to get it.

Now, what they did might slip past the IRS, but it did not get by the Holy Spirit. And Peter was a Spirit-filled apostle. He said to Ananias, "How is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit? ... You have not lied to men but to God" (Acts 5:3, 4). In other words, when Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit, he lied to God, because the Holy Spirit *is* God.

Here are some more Scripture passages that teach that the Holy Spirit is a Person of the Godhead:

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19).

“The Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (2 Corinthians 3:17).

Sometimes the Bible will state in one place that God said certain things. Then, in another place, it says the Holy Spirit was the One who said them. For example, Exodus 17:7 says that Israel tempted the LORD (Jehovah). Hebrews 3:7-9 refers to that event and says that they tempted the Holy Spirit. Also, Jeremiah 31:33 says the LORD (Jehovah) spoke the promise concerning the new covenant; Hebrews 10:15, 16 tells us the Holy Spirit spoke that promise. Such references strongly infer the deity of the Holy Spirit. Compare these Bible passages:

Isaiah 6:8-10 and Acts 28:25, 26

I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “...Go and tell this people: ‘Be ever hearing, but never understanding...’”

The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your ancestors when he said through Isaiah the prophet: “Go to this people and say, ‘You will be ever hearing but never understanding...’”

Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Hebrews 10:15-17

“The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD.

The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says: “This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.” Then he adds: “Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.”

Luke 2:26 and Luke 2:29-30

It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah.

“Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation”

Acts 1:16 and Acts 4:24, 25

[Peter] said, “Brothers and sisters, the Scripture had to be fulfilled in which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus.

When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. “Sovereign Lord,” they said, “you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David...”

Even though they refer to two different events, a comparison of Acts 1:16 with Acts 4:24, 25 demonstrates that the Holy Spirit speaking through David is the same as the Lord speaking through him.

Qualities of the Spirit

Indivisible

Because the Holy Spirit is God, He is One — indivisible. Ephesians 4:4 says, “There is one body and one Spirit.” True, the Book of Revelation speaks of the “seven Spirits of God.” (See Revelation 1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6.) However, we must remember that in the Bible *seven* is the number of divine perfection. In the verses in Revelation just mentioned, “seven” is a symbolic expression of the completion and perfection of the One Holy Spirit.

Eternal

Also, because He is God, the Holy Spirit is eternal. That means He always was, is, and ever shall be. He has no beginning or end. He is eternally self-existent. Hebrews 9:14 says that Christ “through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God.”

Omnipresent

And because He is God, the Holy Spirit is omnipresent. That is, He is everywhere present at once. Psalm 139:7-10 says: “Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.”

No one can get away from the Spirit of God. He is everywhere. A sinner under conviction might move from the community to get away from a particular church or preacher, only to discover that he or she could not escape from the Spirit. Wherever the sinner goes, the Holy Spirit is there, faithfully reproofing of sin and pointing the soul to Christ. The Christian is never alone, either. The Holy Spirit is always present to strengthen, chasten, encourage, and do whatever else is needed to keep us victorious.

Omniscient

The Holy Spirit is also omniscient. That is, He is all-knowing and all-wise. Isaiah 40:13, 14 asks, “Who has understood the Spirit of the LORD, or instructed him as his counselor? Whom did the LORD consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge or showed him the path of understanding?” The answer to these questions is obvious. Nobody directs, counsels, or teaches the Holy Spirit. As God, He is perfect in knowledge and understanding.

First Corinthians 2:10, 11 declares that the deep things of God are always open to the Holy Spirit: “The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For whom among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.” He knows all things in detail as well as in general. He knows far more about each one of us than we know about ourselves.

Omnipotent

The Holy Spirit is omnipotent. That is, He is all-powerful. In Micah 2:7 the Bible asks another question with an obvious answer: “Is the Spirit of the LORD restricted?” (NKJV). Is He less than all-powerful? The answer of Scripture is no. The Holy Spirit is totally adequate for every situation. He is fully able to meet every need.

In Luke 1:35 the Holy Spirit is referred to as “the power of the Most High.” He is fully God. Through Him and by Him the power of the whole adorable Godhead is fully expressed and exercised. And God desires every believer to be filled with that power.

Names of the Spirit

Names are important. They identify; they characterize; they describe. Often they tell something about the nature or position of their owners, as is the case with many names found in the Bible. So it is with the names given in the Scriptures to the Holy Spirit. His names reveal His character and His works. They tell who He is and what He does.

He is “the Spirit of Christ,” also referred to as “the Spirit of [God's] Son.” The unity and close interrelationship of the Persons of the Godhead are involved here.

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” (Romans 8:9 KJV) “The prophets ... searched intently ... trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow” (1 Peter 1:10, 11).

“Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out 'Abba, Father’” (Galatians 4:6).

Spirit of Judgment

He is the “Spirit of judgment” and the “Spirit of fire.” “Judgment” suggests justice, law, and order. “Fire” indicates consuming, purging, and purifying. He is holy. He will not tolerate sin. He is the moral Policeman of the universe, the Chief Agent of the justice department of God's kingdom, as it were, eternally opposed to sin — exposing it, reproving it, and turning people away from it.

“The Lord will wash away the filth of the women of Zion; he will cleanse the bloodstains from Jerusalem by a spirit of judgment and a spirit of fire” (Isaiah 4:4).

Spirit of Grace

But He is also the “Spirit of grace, and “of supplication.” He is God's Messenger carrying to the soul of man the divine invitation to come, and earnestly soliciting an RSVP in the form of the sinner's prayer for God's grace through Christ.

“I will pour upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication” (Zechariah 12:10).

“How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?” (Hebrews 10:29).

Spirit of Wisdom

The Holy Spirit is also the “spirit of wisdom and revelation,” the “spirit of understanding,” the “spirit of counsel and might,” the “spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD” (Isaiah 11:2). He reveals, illuminates, gives spiritual insight and direction, and awakens reverence in the heart of man. The Scriptures themselves are the product of His inspiration and revelation.

“So you shall speak to all who are gifted artisans, whom I have filled with the spirit of

wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments" (Exodus 28:3, NKJV).

"Joshua the son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him" (Deuteronomy 34:9).

"The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him — the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD" (Isaiah 11:2).

"I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better" (Ephesians 1:17).

"You will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets" (Ephesians 3:4, 5).

Jesus called Him "the Spirit of your Father": "It will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you" (Matthew 10:20).

Spirit of Truth

He is "the Spirit of truth." There is no error in the Holy Spirit. He will never lead us to do anything contrary to or inconsistent with the Scriptures. No variance exists between the Spirit and the Word. The Word of God is "the sword of the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:17). As the divine Author of the Bible (2 Peter 1:21), the Holy Spirit will never contradict or deviate from His own Word. The directions of the Bible are the leadings of the Holy Spirit. He will always guide us according to those directions.

"I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever — the Spirit of truth" (John 14:16, 17).

"When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me" (John 15:26).

"When he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13).

"This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God ... We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood" (1 John 4:2, 6).

"It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth" (1 John 5:6).

Spirit of Holiness

Accordingly, He is the "Spirit of holiness." He is the *Holy* Spirit. Obedience to Him always results in purity in heart and conduct.

"Who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 1:4).

Spirit of Life

Also, the Holy Spirit is called the "Spirit of life." His law, the law of faith and love, liberates us who are in Christ from the law of sin and death. Living in the Spirit is living in victory over sin.

"Through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2; see also Revelation 11:11).

Spirit of Sonship

He is the "Spirit of sonship," generating in the believer conscious fellowship with God. Jesus

reconciles us to God. The Holy Spirit makes God real to us. We respond, "Father! Father!"

"You did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father'" (Romans 8:15).

"Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba, Father'" (Galatians 4:6).

Spirit of Glory

As "the Spirit of glory and of God," He rests upon us, preserving our joy even when we are reproached for the name of Christ.

"If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you" (1 Peter 4:14).

The Comforter

Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as our Comforter. "Comforter" comes from the Greek word sometimes translated "Paraclete." The word means "one called alongside." The Spirit is the divine Counselor, Helper, the Heavenly Assistant, whose continuous presence and power provide the aid necessary in our lives.

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever" (John 14:16 KJV; see also John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7).

By comparing Luke 11:20 with Matthew 12:28, we discover that Jesus spoke of the Holy Spirit as "the finger of God." That is, He applies God's power at the point of need.

"If I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Matthew 12:28).

"If I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you" (Luke 11:20).

And finally, let's not forget two names of the Holy Spirit mentioned previously: "the power of the Most High" (Luke 1:35) and "the eternal Spirit" (Hebrews 9:14).

Symbols of the Spirit

We move on now to the symbols of the Holy Spirit found in the Bible. Often these are called types, because the properties of the symbols themselves illustrate something about the nature and work of the Holy Spirit.

Remember, these *symbols* are not the Holy Spirit; they are only *types* of the Holy Spirit. The symbols themselves are not mystical, or objects of worship. They are not intended to provide the trappings for religious ritualism. Their purpose is to illustrate, not mystify; to illuminate, not obscure.

Oil

The symbol used most often, perhaps, as a type of the Holy Spirit is oil. This is usually olive oil or a compounded oil. It is mentioned frequently in the Old Testament as a prefigure of the fullness of the Spirit in the believer. When the Israelite priests were consecrated to their office, oil was poured over their heads. (See Exodus 29:7; 30:30; Leviticus 8:12; 21:10-12.) Psalm 133:2 says that it flowed down Aaron's beard and completely saturated his robes.

When oil was poured on the head of a king or king-to-be, it signified that the crown was

conferred on that person with divine sanction. It was a reminder, too, that the office belonged to God, that it was His to give and take away, and that the king was responsible to God for the conduct of his administration.

For example, Samuel the prophet poured oil on the head of Saul, anointing him king over Israel (1 Samuel 10:1). Later he anointed David to replace Saul (1 Samuel 16:13; Psalm 89:20). After the death of David, Zadok the priest anointed Solomon to be king (1 Kings 1:39). During the divided kingdom, the prophet Elisha sent a representative to anoint Jehu king over the northern tribes (2 Kings 9:6).

When a person who had recovered from a disease of the skin came to the priest to be examined and declared clean, the priest put oil on the tip of the right big toe, the tip of the right ear, the right thumb, and on the head of the person to be cleansed (Leviticus 14:17, 18).

Oil was included in the meal offerings presented to the Lord (Leviticus 22), but not in the sin offering (Leviticus 5:11).

Oil was also the fuel for the lamp in the Holy Place (Exodus 27:20).

In the New Testament, Jesus talked about virgins whose lamps ran out of oil as they waited for the bridegroom (Matthew 25:1-13). The disciples anointed the sick with oil and healed them (Mark 6:13), just as we are instructed to do when praying for the sick (James 5:14).

All this emphasis on oil is intended to teach us that the Holy Spirit is totally involved in the spiritual life of the believer in Christ. We are kings and priests to God (Revelation 1:6; 5:10; 20:6). We have been cleansed from sin and have the witness of the Spirit that we are sons of God (Romans 8:15). He illuminates the Word of God for us and guides us in our daily walk with the Lord, keeping us close to Him and ready for His coming. He is the miracle-working God who desires to permeate our whole being with His presence and power.

Oil certainly is an appropriate symbol for the Holy Spirit. It penetrates, permeates, saturates. It soothes, moistens, protects. It lubricates, eliminating friction and abrasion. It purges and cleanses. Its energy radiates light and warmth.

The Psalmist declared: "You anoint my head with oil" (Psalm 23:5); "Fine oils have been poured over me" (Psalm 92:10).

Dove

Another symbol of the Holy Spirit is the dove. The Spirit descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove (Luke 3:22). The dove symbolizes peace and gentleness, outstanding qualities of the Holy Spirit.

Because the Spirit's influences are gentle, we must be sensitive to Him. If we have a careless attitude, if we run roughshod over His inner promptings, if we ignore His still, small voice as it whispers to our hearts, we will grieve Him, perhaps completely in time. Where the Heavenly Dove abides, there is peace.

Water

In John 7:37-39, Jesus likened the Spirit's fullness in the believer to rivers of living water. This is only one of several places in the Bible where water is spoken of as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. In Isaiah 44:3, God promised, "I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants." In God's promise to "pour out" His Spirit (see Joel 2:28 and Acts 2:17), the very term itself suggests an outflowing, as of a river or a flood of waters.

Water brings life. It quenches and refreshes. It cleanses and purifies. Its momentum is powerful, moving huge dynamos, changing the topography of the land, pounding the seashore. It bubbles along in rippling streams and moves silently in deep currents. It is terrible in its judgments on those who resist it, but beautiful and restful to those who live in harmony with its laws. So it is with the Holy Spirit.

Wind

Wind is another symbol of the Holy Spirit. On the Day of Pentecost, “there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting” (Acts 2:2 KJV).

Jesus said, “The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit” (John 3:8).

Like the Spirit, the wind is strong, unrestrained in its movements, persistent, pervading, refreshing.

Fire

Fire is an excellent type of the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist prophesied of Jesus: “He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire” (Matthew 3:11).

When the Spirit descended on the Day of Pentecost, there was not only the sound of wind but also tongues of fire: “They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them” (Acts 2:3).

Fire is practical and useful. It lights and heats. It purifies and refines. It is cheering and stimulating. But it can also consume. It is not something to be trifled with, a plaything. All these things are true, too, of the Holy Spirit. Truly, “our God is a consuming fire” (Hebrews 12:29).

Wine

It is more accurate, perhaps, to say that wine is a *contrast* to the Holy Spirit, rather than a type of the Holy Spirit. True, the Spirit does produce a genuine spiritual stimulation in the charismatic believer. At Pentecost, “some ... made fun of them and said, ‘they have had too much wine’” (Acts 2:13). These mockers saw behavior that resulted from the infilling of the Spirit; but, alas, the only thing they knew to compare it with was the pathetic counterfeit brought on by the destructive effects of wine. “And do not be drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18 KJV).

Seal

Ephesians 1:13 says that “having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.” A seal is an outward, visible sign of ownership. The Holy Spirit is God's seal on the believer. We shall come back to this subject later.

Have you noticed that some of these symbols of the Holy Spirit have several things in common? Do you see a general pattern? Do you have a clearer view of the Person and work of the Holy Spirit?

Remember, God the Holy Spirit is not oil, wind, fire, and so forth. These are only symbols. But they are accurate symbols, presented to us in the Scriptures to give us a better understanding of the Third Person of the Adorable Godhead.

The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

What did the Holy Spirit do here on this earth during the time from creation until Christ's first coming, the time covered by the Old Testament? Plenty!

Before we follow the Holy Spirit through the Old Testament, let's take time to consider something that will help in understanding the Bible. It is called progressive revelation. It simply means that God revealed the truth gradually, not all at once. As time went by, each thing that God revealed was the truth, and it contributed toward building the completed revelation. There was no element of error. It was not progressive trial and error or progressive guesswork. It was progressive *revelation*. The progression was quantitative, not qualitative. It was all pure truth from the very beginning. But it was not *all* the truth until the New Testament revelation put in the final pieces to complete the picture.

So it is with the revelation concerning the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. It is progressive. We learn as we proceed. What we don't find in the Old Testament, we discover in the New. There are no missing pieces: That is one of the things that make exploring the Bible so exciting.

The Bible introduces us to the Holy Spirit immediately: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters" (Genesis 1:1, 2).

Picture the scene. In the solar system, exactly the right distance from the sun, the creative power of God is at work. God speaks, and things happen! Before us a huge mass of elements and compounds heaves and shudders under supernatural forces. Water covers everything. Over the waters, invisible, the Holy Spirit moves like a hovering bird. What is He doing? He is putting into effect the creative Word of God through Christ. He is carrying out the organizing process — assembling, structuring, integrating, composing.

Oceans of water move into place with tremendous momentum. Whole continents emerge with a gigantic shudder. That's power! That's the Holy Spirit at work.

"By His Spirit He adorned the heavens" (Job 26:13, NKJV).

"The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life" (Job 33:4).

"When you send your Spirit, they [that is, all living creatures] are created, and you renew the face of the earth" (Psalm 104:30).

When the great work of creation was completed, the Holy Spirit turned to another task — changing the stubborn will of man. In a sense, this is far more difficult. Starting galaxies in motion was effortless to the Spirit. But moving the human heart is a different story!

God has made man a free moral agent, and He will not violate that freedom of will. If man is changed, it must be by moral means. He must be *persuaded* to change. Powerful appeals must be made to his reason until he either turns to God or sears his aching conscience.

So we find the Spirit of Christ warning a world in rebellion (1 Peter 3:18-20), and nobody is listening except Noah.

But there is a limit to the efforts of the Holy Spirit in this direction. Beyond it, further

persuasion is not wise. God issued the final warning ticket when He said, “My Spirit shall not always strive with man” (Genesis 6:3 KJV). When they continued to resist the Spirit, the flood came upon them. Evidence of that cataclysm is written in geology as well as in the Scriptures.

In the Old Testament (in contrast with the New), the Holy Spirit came upon only a few of God's people. Even then, it was usually only occasionally. Very few people in the Old Testament enjoyed the permanent fullness of the Spirit.

Joseph was one such person. When he had revealed Pharaoh's dreams and their interpretation, the ruler, though a pagan, recognized the power of the Holy Spirit in Joseph. “Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?” (Genesis 41:38).

Moses

When God instituted the rituals of the law in Israel, He intended them to be object lessons, something the Holy Spirit could use to teach the people about sin and salvation. For example, no one except the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies, and even he could go in just once a year (provided that he carried with him the blood of sacrifice). The Bible tells us why in Hebrews 9:8: “The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still standing.”

The Holy Spirit was concerned even about the making of the high priest's garments. So God commanded Moses: “You shall speak to all who are gifted artisans, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments, to sanctify him, that he may minister to Me as priest” (Exodus 28:3, NKJV).

The same thing is true regarding the building of the tabernacle. God wanted a Spirit-filled foreman on the job, so He told Moses: “See, I have chosen Bezalel ... and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts — to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship” (Exodus 31:2-5).

And, of course, there was Moses himself. The Holy Spirit was upon him. Through him, the Spirit led the nation to the Promised Land.

“Then his people recalled the days of old, the days of Moses and his people — where is he who brought them through the sea, with the shepherd of his flock? Where is he who set his Holy Spirit among them” (Isaiah 63:11).

“Like cattle that go down to the plain, they were given rest by the Spirit of the LORD” (Isaiah 63:14).

“You gave your good Spirit to instruct them. You did not withhold your manna from their mouths” (Nehemiah 9:20).

Seventy Elders

One day Moses complained to God that he was not able to carry the load by himself. This teaches us something, doesn't it? A Spirit-filled person is still human. Pentecostals can overwork themselves. The baptism in the Holy Spirit does not make us Superman. God knew that, but He was waiting for Moses to realize it.

“The LORD said to Moses: 'Bring me seventy of Israel's elders who are known to you as leaders and officials among the people. Have them come to the Tent of Meeting, that they may stand there with you. I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the Spirit that is on you and put the Spirit on them. They will help you carry the burden of the people so that

you will not have to carry it alone...'

“So Moses went out and told the people what the LORD had said. He brought together seventy of their elders and had them stand around the tent. Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke with him, and he took of the Spirit that was on him and put the Spirit on the seventy elders. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied...

“However, two men ... had remained in the camp ... And they prophesied in the camp” (Numbers 11:16, 17, 24-26).

When Joshua discovered that the two elders who didn't make it to the meeting were prophesying, he became excited: “My lord Moses, forbid them” (Numbers 11:28 KJV).

Listen to Moses' answer: “Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the LORD's people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!” (verse 29).

In other words, Moses saw the need for every believer to be filled with the Spirit. That is what God wants, too; and He has provided it for us, now that Jesus is our exalted High Priest. Have *you* received?

Balaam

Next we come to a very unusual character in the Bible. His name was Balaam. We read about him in Numbers, 22 through 24.

Balaam was not known as a godly man, just a commercial religionist who sold blessings and cursings. So far as his heart was concerned, Balaam was a phony. Eventually, he suffered the consequences.

But the Holy Spirit is sovereign. So if for some reason He wants to do something through a phony, He can. And no credit to the phony, either.

Numbers 24:2 says: “And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes; and the spirit of God came upon him” (KJV). The Spirit of God is very patient, and He will do all He can — up to a point — to salvage the soul.

The sinning Pentecostal who can still exercise the gifts of the Spirit is in grave spiritual danger. The gracious Holy Spirit is still striving, still saying, “I haven't abandoned you — yet.” So, instead of being smug and self-confident in rebellion, the backslider should repent. If he or she does not, he will lose his soul as well as his gifts.

Joshua

Let's go on to Joshua. As the future successor of Moses, he also was filled with the Spirit.

“The LORD said to Moses, 'Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay your hand on him’” (Numbers 27:18).

“And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him” (Deuteronomy 34:9 KJV).

Israel entered Canaan under the leadership of Joshua, a Spirit-filled man. As long as the Israelites obeyed God, they prospered. But when they themselves failed God and began practicing the sins of the people of the land, God had to chastise them by allowing them to come under oppression.

Judges

Whenever Israel turned to the Lord, God would raise up military and political leaders, called judges, to liberate them and provide them with spiritual leadership. The Bible specifically states

that the Holy Spirit was active in the lives of at least some of the judges. About Othniel it says: "And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went to war" (Judges 3:10 KJV).

When the Midianites and the Amalekites threatened Israel in overwhelming numbers, "the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon" (Judges 6:34). Supernatural victory resulted.

Later, the Ammonites threatened a particular area under Israelite occupation. When reasonable appeals to the Ammonites were disregarded, "the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah... Then Jephthah went over to fight the Ammonites, and the LORD gave them into his hands" (Judges 11:29, 32).

And then there was Samson, the weak strong man: "The Spirit of the LORD began to stir him" (Judges 13:25).

Samson is a prime example of what happens to people who want the power of the Spirit, but not the discipline of the Spirit. Such people like the blessing and miracles, but they fail to allow the Holy Spirit to develop the fruit of the Spirit in their nature. Like impulsive Samson, they do not bring their own human spirit under submission to the Holy Spirit. Their emotional instability often results in chaos in their lives and even ruin to their souls.

It did for Samson. In a very real sense, he had been made a partaker of the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 6:4-6). But he treated the power of the Spirit as though it were a toy to be played with and taken for granted. Still, the sovereign Holy Spirit had a job to do, and He could do it through Samson, in spite of Samson's careless attitude.

The Philistines were Israel's oppressors at the time. In Timnath, Samson saw a daughter of the Philistines. She struck his fancy. Marrying the pagan woman was a clear violation of God's Word, but impulsive folks are concerned about what they want, not what God says. On the way to Timnath a lion met Samson with a roar. What happened? "The Spirit of the LORD came upon him in power so that he tore the lion apart with his bare hands as he might have torn a young goat" (Judges 14:6).

In spite of Samson's bullheadedness, God did use him to harass the Philistines, easing somewhat their pressure on Israel. "The Spirit of the LORD came upon him in power. He went down to Ashkelon [and] struck down thirty of their men" (Judges 14:19).

"As he approached Lehi, the Philistines came toward him shouting. The Spirit of the LORD came upon him in power. The ropes on his arms became like charred flax, and the bindings dropped from his hands" (Judges 15:14).

Kings

We pass now from the time of the judges to the era of the kingdom. Again, the Holy Spirit was at work in Israel. The first of the Israelite kings was Saul. The people were insisting on a king to unify the nation against the Philistines. So God chose Saul. Before Saul could lead the nation in a struggle for liberty, God would have to do something supernatural for him.

And God did. Samuel said to Saul: "The Spirit of the LORD will come upon you in power, and you will prophesy with them; and you will be changed into a different person..."

"The Spirit of God came upon him in power, and he joined in their prophesying" (1 Samuel 10:6, 10).

Later, when the Ammonites threatened the city of Jabesh, Saul went into action: "When Saul heard their words, the Spirit of God came upon him in power, and he burned with anger. He took a pair of oxen, cut them into pieces, and sent the pieces by messengers throughout Israel,

proclaiming, 'This is what will be done to the oxen of anyone who does not follow Saul and Samuel.' Then the terror of the LORD fell on the people, and they turned out as one man" (1 Samuel 11:6, 7).

The tragedy was that Saul failed to continue to obey God. He became unstable, unpredictable, and full of neurotic self-pity. "The Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul" (1 Samuel 16:14 KJV). That's the saddest thing that can be said about anyone.

Saul grieved the Holy Spirit away. Only once more did the Spirit come upon him in a final, but futile, effort to humble his heart. First Samuel 19:20-24 describes the occasion, including Saul's strange behavior as he struggled against the sovereign power of the Holy Spirit: "The Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on, and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah. And he stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night" (1 Samuel 19:23, 24 KJV).

At last, with the Spirit of God grieved away, Saul became a walking dead man, dabbling in witchcraft. A king who once knew the power of the Spirit of God ended his earthly life a casualty of war and ultimately a suicide upon Mount Gilboa (1 Samuel 31:4-6).

But the Holy Spirit was at work in a young man named David: "Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came upon David in power" (1 Samuel 16:13).

In some cases in the Old Testament, the Spirit came upon certain individuals only at certain times and for specific purposes. But David is one of the few during Old Testament times upon whom the Spirit remained continuously.

A band of armed men gathered around David while he was still a fugitive from the anger of Saul. One of them was Amasai, chief of the captains. "The Spirit came upon Amasai, chief of the Thirty, and he said: 'We are yours, O David! We are with you, O son of Jesse!'" (1 Chronicles 12:18).

First Chronicles 28:11, 12 informs us that David received the pattern for the temple by the Spirit: "Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlors thereof, and of the place of the mercy seat, And the pattern of all that he had by the spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, and of all the chambers round about, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries of the dedicated things..." Through David, the Holy Spirit transmitted a large portion of the Scriptures, including many prophecies concerning Christ.

David's fellowship with the Spirit was intimate and sweet. But when he sinned so terribly in the Bathsheba and Uriah affair, that fellowship was broken. Grief-stricken, David cried out to God: "Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me" (Psalm 51:11, 12).

Prophets

In the Old Testament dispensation, the Holy Spirit came not only upon judges and kings, but also upon prophets. In fact, for several hundred years, the Holy Spirit's ministry to Israel was mainly through the prophets, beginning with Samuel and continuing through Malachi.

Concerning the prophets that lived before the captivity of Judah and the people's response to them, the Lord said through Zechariah:

"They made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen to the law or to the words that the LORD Almighty had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets. So the LORD Almighty was very angry" (Zechariah 7:12).

Also, Nehemiah confessed: “For many years you were patient with them. By your Spirit you admonished them through your prophets. Yet they paid no attention, so you handed them over to the neighboring peoples” (Nehemiah 9:30). Even a casual examination of the ministry of these prophets reveals the Holy Spirit at work in their lives. Miracles, inspired utterances, previews of the future — all by the power of the Holy Spirit — were commonplace with the prophets.

Let's take a brief look at some of these prophets to see what the Scriptures say about the work of the Spirit in their lives.

Azariah

“The Spirit of God came upon Azariah son of Oded. He went out to meet Asa and said to him, 'Listen to me ... The LORD is with you when you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you’” (2 Chronicles 15:1, 2).

Elijah and Elisha

“Elijah said to Elisha, 'Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?’

“Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit,' Elisha replied” (2 Kings 2:9).

Elisha had seen the Holy Spirit mightily at work in Elijah in a grand display of miracles. Now, above all else, that is what Elisha desired — only twice as much. He got his desire, for 2 Kings 2:15, 16 says:

“The company of prophets from Jericho, who were watching, said, 'The spirit of Elijah is resting on Elisha.' And they went to meet him and bowed to the ground before him. 'Look,' they said, 'we your servants have fifty able men. Let them go and look for your master. Perhaps the Spirit of the LORD has picked him up and set him down on some mountain or in some valley.'

“No,' Elisha replied, 'do not send them.’”

Notice verse 16 in particular. In 1 Kings 18:12, Obadiah, a servant to King Ahab, was afraid the Spirit of the Lord would transport Elijah to some other location before he could arrive with the king; thus his own life would be endangered. These two references seem to indicate that the Holy Spirit had done some very dramatic things with Elijah, even before his sensational translation to heaven.

Jahaziel

“The Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel ... as he stood in the assembly. He said: 'Listen, King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem! This is what the LORD says to you: “Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's”’” (2 Chronicles 20:14, 15).

Zechariah, Son of Jehoiada

“The Spirit of God came upon Zechariah son of Jehoiada the priest. He stood before the people and said, 'This is what God says: “Why do you disobey the LORD's commands? You will not prosper. Because you have forsaken the LORD, he has forsaken you”’” (2 Chronicles 24:20).

Verse 21 informs us that Zechariah was stoned to death by the people for this prophecy. Often there is a real price to pay in being used by the Holy Spirit.

Ezekiel

“The Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven and in visions of God he took me to Jerusalem, to the entrance to the north gate of the inner court, where the idol that provokes to jealousy stood” (Ezekiel 8:3; see also 2:2; 3:12, 14, 24; 11:1, 5, 24; 37:1; 43:5).

Obviously, Ezekiel, too, had some dramatic experiences with the Holy Spirit, at least in visions. Ezekiel prophesied of the activity of the Holy Spirit in the restoration of Israel: “I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it,” declares the LORD” (Ezekiel 37:14).

Zechariah

During the rebuilding of the temple (after the Babylonian captivity), God told Zerubbabel through Zechariah to put his confidence in the power of the Holy Spirit instead of in armies and human strength. It is something that we need to be reminded of often:

“This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my spirit,' says the LORD Almighty” (Zechariah 4:6).

The Written Word

The inspired utterances of the ancient prophets have been preserved for us in the Old Testament as part of the written Word of God. Some are direct quotations and first person accounts; others are accurate reports by faithful scribes who wrote down what the prophets (and others) said and did, transcribing them as they heard them or as the facts were revealed to them by the Spirit.

In all of this the Holy Spirit superintended the composition, preserving it from error. This is true of the New Testament as well.

In some cases the writers themselves testify to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in those utterances preserved by the Spirit in the Scriptures. Sometimes other inspired persons in the Bible testify to the inspiration of these writers. King David asserted without reservation, “The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me; his word was on my tongue” (2 Samuel 23:2).

Jesus himself confirmed the fact that David spoke by the Spirit. In Mark 12:35, 36 He said (in reference to David's statement in Psalm 110:1): “David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared: 'The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.'”

In Acts 1:16, Peter said: “Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus.”

The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews refers to Psalm 95:7-11 in this manner: “The Holy Spirit says: 'Today if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion’” (Hebrews 3:7, 8). In other words, the Holy Spirit spoke these words by the Psalmist.

Paul testifies to the inspiration of the prophet Isaiah. In Acts 28:25 he reminds the Jewish elders at Rome of Isaiah's words, and tells them that they were the words of the Holy Spirit: “The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your forefathers.” Isaiah's own testimony is found in Isaiah 48:16: “The Sovereign LORD has sent me, with his Spirit.” Hebrews 10:15-17 quotes Jeremiah 31:34 as being the words of the Holy Spirit. Here, in part, is the New Testament passage:

“The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says: 'This is the covenant I will make with them after that time’” (verses 15, 16).

The prophet Micah was fully aware of the divine Source of his prophecies. One can almost feel the conviction in his statement in Micah 3:8, "I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the LORD, and with justice and might."

King Nebuchadnezzar recognized the power of the Holy Spirit in Daniel, just as Pharaoh had in Joseph, though in his pagan ignorance he ascribed it to "the gods." This is what he said to Daniel (the king called him Belteshazzar): "Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you, and no mystery is too difficult for you" (Daniel 4:9).

Very clearly and emphatically the New Testament teaches that the Old Testament came to us by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Here are two definitive statements:

"Prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21).

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16 KJV).

So we get an overall picture of the Holy Spirit's work on earth in ancient times. He *filled* comparatively few people. He remained *among* the chosen nation of Israel, however. In Haggai 2:5 we read: "This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt. And my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear."

At one time they "rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit. So he turned and became their enemy and he fought against them" (Isaiah 63:10).

Yet, He promised not to take His Spirit from them: "'As for me, this is my covenant with them,' says the LORD. 'My Spirit, who is on you, and my words that I have put in your mouth will not depart from your mouth'" (Isaiah 59:21).

He had to chastise them, but all the while He was working out His vast purpose, preparing men's hearts for the glorious redemption that He had foreordained in Christ Jesus. All the while, the Holy Spirit looked forward to His own great work that was to begin on the Day of Pentecost.

The Holy Spirit and Jesus

We now enter the New Testament in our study of the Holy Spirit. First, we're going to talk about the relationship of the Holy Spirit to Christ. But before we do, we should take time to notice some people in the New Testament who were filled with the Spirit even before Jesus came to earth, and long before the inauguration of the Spirit's full ministry on the Day of Pentecost.

In a real sense, these people were still living under the Old Testament arrangement. But they were directly associated with the first coming of Jesus, and so we find them in the New Testament.

Luke, "the beloved physician" (Colossians 4:4), was an inspired historian of the Early Church, writing both a Gospel and The Acts.

"Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account ... so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught" (Luke 1:1-4).

One day the angel Gabriel came to a devout Jewish girl by the name of Mary with the startling announcement that she was to be the mother of the Messiah. The Holy Spirit would come upon her (Luke 1:35), and she as a virgin would bear the Son of God!

Even though the angel told her not to be afraid, Mary was troubled. To be the mother of the Messiah had been the dream of almost every Jewish girl. But a virgin birth! Would people believe her? would the religious authorities? and her own family? and Joseph — what about Joseph?

She just had to have someone to talk to, someone who just might understand. Elizabeth! She could confide in her cousin Elizabeth. But would even Elizabeth understand?

About six months previously, Elizabeth's husband, Zechariah, had experienced an unusual visitation in the temple; ever since, he had been unable to talk. And now Elizabeth — barren Elizabeth — was going to have a baby. What did all that mean?

Excited, perhaps even frightened, Mary hurried to the hill country of Judea where Elizabeth and Zechariah lived. What happened? "When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit" (Luke 1:41).

So Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and began to prophesy. The prophecy confirmed to Mary what the angel had already told her. Relieved and happy, Mary began to rejoice and magnify the Lord in the Spirit. Read about it in Luke 1:46-55.

For three months Mary stayed with Elizabeth and Zechariah. As the days went by, Elizabeth and Mary must have enjoyed many precious spiritual moments together. Something miraculous was happening, and they were personally involved!

After three months, Mary went home. Elizabeth had been blessed greatly by having her

young guest around. But now she had other things to think about. Her own baby was due.

The relatives and neighbors seemed almost as thrilled as Elizabeth and Zechariah when the baby was born. A first child is exciting enough for an older couple, but when Zechariah, the baby's father, was filled with the Holy Spirit and began to prophesy, things really began to stir.

Neighborhood excitement turned to awe. Soon the hills were buzzing with the news (see Luke 1:57-80). The baby? We know him as John the Baptist. He, too, was filled with the Holy Spirit. In fact, he had the unique experience of being filled with the Spirit from his mother's womb. The angel of the Lord said so: "He will be great in the sight of the Lord ... He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb" (Luke 1:15 NKJV).

Now, before we examine the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Lord Jesus, one other person deserves our attention. His name is Simeon. The Bible says the Holy Spirit was upon him. The Spirit had let him in on a secret: Before he died he would see the Messiah!

One day Joseph and Mary brought baby Jesus to the temple. "Moved by the Spirit, [Simeon] went to the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God" (Luke 2:27, 28).

The Holy Spirit must have been active in the lives of others, too, about the same time. We read of Anna, the prophetess, in Luke 2:36-38. The fact that she was a prophetess of God implies the activity of the Holy Spirit.

But our main concern now is the relationship of the Holy Spirit to our Lord Jesus Christ in His redemptive mission.

Prophecy Fulfilled

First, we will have to return briefly to the Old Testament. There we observe the Holy Spirit at work in the prophets, foretelling through them the coming of the Redeemer.

The prophets themselves did not understand the full significance of what the Spirit in them was saying when He spoke of salvation through Christ. But they were deeply interested, and searched diligently for more understanding (see 1 Peter 1:10, 11). The study of these prophecies is an adventure in itself, one we will not take the time for in our present exploration.

It is relevant to our subject, however, to consider what Isaiah foretold about the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon Christ. The following are directly to the point:

"The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him — the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD" (Isaiah 11:2).

"Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations" (Isaiah 42:1).

Matthew 12:18 quotes this prophecy and declares that it was fulfilled in Jesus.

"The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor" (Isaiah 61:1; see also verses 2, 3).

In Nazareth, where He had been raised, Jesus read the passage from Isaiah 61 in the synagogue, and announced to the home folks that Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled in Him. They responded by trying to kill Him (Luke 4:16-30).

As we have noted previously, it was the Holy Spirit who accomplished the virgin birth of Jesus. God sent Gabriel to tell Mary before the miraculous conception took place (Luke 1:35). But He did not inform Joseph of the miracle until later, after Joseph discovered that his bride-to-be was expecting a child. So we read:

“This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

“But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit'" (Matthew 1:18-20).

Spirit-Led Ministry

When Jesus was about to begin His public ministry, He traveled to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. “As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased'" (Matthew 3:16, 17).

This was an unlimited anointing of the Holy Spirit, as John the Baptist testified, “The one whom God has sent speaks the words of God; to him God gives the Spirit without limit” (John 3:34).

Immediately, the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the lonely wilderness. There the Savior met and defeated the temptations of Satan.

“Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil” (Luke 4:1, 2).

“Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside” (Luke 4:14).

Jesus cast out devils by the power of the Spirit, telling the Pharisees, “If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come unto you” (Matthew 12:28 KJV). In fact, all the miracles Jesus performed in His earthly ministry were done in the power of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 10:38, Peter (who was an eyewitness to those miracles) testified that “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and ... he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.”

“Made Alive by the Spirit”

Then came the horrible ordeal of the Cross. But Jesus endured it to the end in the power of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit was with Him all the way. Hebrews 9:14 says that He “through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God.”

And the Holy Spirit was not through yet! On the third day God, by the Holy Spirit, raised Jesus from the dead. First Peter 3:18 says, “Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.”

By the resurrection, the Holy Spirit publicly declared Christ to be innocent, just, fully exonerated. “Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit” (1 Timothy 3:16). (See also Romans 8:11.)

Before He went back into heaven, Jesus gave specific instructions to His apostles. This He did through the Holy Spirit, for we read in Acts 1:1, 2: “In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.”

Without the illumination of the Holy Spirit upon their Lord's instructions, the apostles would not have grasped their full meaning or been adequately aware of their great significance.

So now we see how active the Holy Spirit was in the life, ministry, and redemptive work of Christ here on earth. But a change was coming. What is called the Church Age was about to begin. And Jesus would be among His disciples bodily no longer; He was about to ascend to the Father. Who would take His place on earth? Who would lead the Church and guide it into all truth?

The answer, of course, is the Holy Spirit. He would direct the Church. But more than that, He will come into the individual believer. Though Christ returned bodily to the right hand of the Father, He is still with us by His Spirit. In this way, He is closer to us than He could be had He remained bodily upon earth after His resurrection.

The Holy Spirit in the Early Church

Do you remember the time Moses told Joshua that he wished God would put His Spirit upon all the people (Numbers 11:29)? Those early Israelites had been eyewitnesses to a sensational display of the miraculous. They had seen water turned to blood. They had marched through the Red Sea on dry land. Their daily bread came right from heaven. Still, their faith was weak, and their perception of spiritual realities was dim.

It just goes to prove that sensory observations and experiences do not necessarily result in keen spiritual awareness and a deep appreciation of eternal values. Seeing is not always believing. Under Moses the people saw more miracles in a year than most people do in a lifetime. Yet they were spiritually near-sighted.

Moses was painfully aware of the shallowness of God's people. But he also knew the remedy. If only God would pour out His Spirit upon all the people! The Holy Spirit within them would make the difference.

So for our benefit, God recorded Moses's private remark to Joshua in His Word. In effect, God is saying to us, "Do you get the message? That's what *you* need, too."

Foretold by the Prophets

Then, through the prophets, God spelled it out clearly. Through Joel He declared the timing ("the last days"), the extent ("on all people"), and some of the exciting details (prophecy, dreams, visions, wonders, signs, etc.). Here is the text of the prophecy:

"Afterward [that is, in 'the last days'-Acts 2:17], I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Joel 2:28-32).

When the Holy Spirit descended at Pentecost to inaugurate the Age of the Spirit, Peter stood and announced, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel" (Acts 2:16 KJV).

The Old Testament prophecies were being fulfilled.

Isaiah delivered God's message about the coming fullness of the Spirit: "The fortress will be abandoned, the noisy city deserted ... till the Spirit is poured upon us from on high" (Isaiah 32:14, 15). "I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring and my blessing on your descendants" (Isaiah 44:3).

Ezekiel also recorded what God was going to do: "I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws" (Ezekiel 36:27). "I will no longer hide my face from them, for I will pour out my Spirit on the house of Israel," declares the Sovereign Lord" (Ezekiel 39:29).

So also did Zechariah. We have already referred to Zechariah 4:6 (“Not by might nor by power...”). Later on, in Zechariah 12:10, the prophet adds this promise of the Lord: “And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplications” (KJV).

In the New Testament we meet a person who reminds us of the prophet Elijah. John the Baptist could be called the last of the Old Testament order of prophets.

But he arrived on the scene after a prophetic silence of almost four hundred years. The times were different. The Messiah had arrived. It was not the time to foretell the distant future, but to herald the arrival of events long foretold. Jesus had come to be God’s Passover Lamb for our redemption — and to baptize us with the Holy Spirit.

We all love John 3:16. But let’s not miss Luke 3:16: “John answered them all, ‘I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.’” John’s announcement is important. God doesn’t want us to miss it. That’s why He inspired all four evangelists to record it (see Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8, and John 1:33).

Promised by Jesus

Did Jesus himself say anything about giving us the Holy Spirit? He certainly did! Here are His promises:

“If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (Luke 11:13).

“I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49).

“Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, ‘If any man is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.’ By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified” (John 7:37-39; see also John 14:16, 17, 26; 16:7-15).

Dramatizing His promise of the soon outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Jesus “breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’” (John 20:22).

After His resurrection, Jesus met privately with His disciples. What He told them on that occasion is recorded for us in Acts 1:4, 5, 8:

“Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised... For John baptized with water but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

When Peter was describing to the Jewish Christians at Jerusalem the events at Cornelius’ house, he told of recalling the words of Jesus:

“As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. Then I remembered what the Lord had said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ So if God gave them the same gift as he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God!” (Acts 11:15-17).

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

Then it happened! Jesus had ascended to the Father. About ten days later, about a hundred and twenty disciples were waiting in an upper room in Jerusalem. It was the Feast of Pentecost, and Jerusalem was filled with Jewish pilgrims from other countries. Luke, the Pentecostal historian, gives us the inspired account:

“Now when the Day of Pentecost had 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 the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:1-4 NKJV).

All that speaking in other languages caused quite a stir. Excitement swept over Jerusalem. People began moving toward the place where God was in action. Soon the crowd numbered in the thousands. Jews from various parts of the Roman world listened in amazement as they heard God's wonderful works extolled in their native languages. How could a hundred and twenty Galileans do that?

“What does this mean?” The question rippled over the multitude.

“They're drunk on new wine!” mocked some.

But a brand-new Peter — Spirit-filled, bold, dynamic — stood up. He had the answer, right out of God's Word. Loud and clear, his words rang out over the crowd:

“This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy...'

“Exalted to the right hand of God, [Jesus] has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear” (Acts 2:16-18, 33).

Peter's words hit like a sledgehammer. Deeply convicted of their sins, thousands asked what they must do to be rid of their guilt. Peter answered:

“Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call” (Acts 2:38, 39 NKJV). Three thousand were converted!

The Spirit in Action

But was that it? Was it all over? Was it just a one-time spiritual extravaganza, with no permanent effect or continued action? By no means! In fact, it was just the beginning of the Age of the Spirit. That's the age we're in right now. And it will continue until Jesus returns.

Let's watch the Holy Spirit in action in some of the early Christians. Observe carefully, because what we see recorded is the divinely inspired pattern for us to follow.

Peter and John

The healing of the lame man at the temple gate (Acts 3) gave Peter and John another opportunity to present Christ to a large audience. But the religious establishment resisted vigorously and arrested the apostles.

At their arraignment before the authorities, did Peter deny his Lord? Oh, no! What made the difference this time? For one thing, Peter was now full of the Holy Spirit. Acts 4:8-12

records what he said to the religious authorities.

After John and Peter's release, they went to the church and reported the situation. Instead of panicking in fear, the church prayed in faith. What happened? "After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly" (Acts 4:31). A fresh surge of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit swept over them, filling the new converts among them and giving new boldness to everyone.

Spirit-Filled Deacons

Later, social concerns crowded in upon the apostles, nearly diverting them from their first priority, the preaching of the gospel. So the apostles took action:

"Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."

"This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism" (Acts 6:3-5).

Church business and social action should be directed by Spirit-filled persons.

Stephen was one of those Spirit-filled deacons. His ministry reached out beyond his immediate social duties, and he began preaching Christ and performing miracles. Soon he was before the council, in trouble with the prevailing religious system.

As Stephen spoke, his words had a deep effect on the council. Still, they would not believe. Convicted but not converted, they chose to suppress the truth that so directly challenged their fundamental presuppositions. Luke records the tragedy and Stephen's triumph in Acts 7:54-60. Verse 55 says: "Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God." What a victorious way to go!

Philip was another of the original Spirit-filled deacons. He, too, had a ministry that was not limited to the material needs of people. Soon we find him in Samaria preaching the good news of Jesus Christ. Miracles happened and people were saved.

The new converts were happy in Christ. Yet, something was missing. They hadn't yet been filled with the Holy Spirit. That was too important to be neglected. So Peter and John came and "when they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:15-17).

Verses 18-24 are about Simon the sorcerer. He had believed and been baptized. But now the sight of people being filled with the Spirit as the apostles laid hands on them stirred up his old desires (he must have seen and heard something very fascinating!). Lapsing into his old ways, he even tried to buy the ministry of laying on hands. But the gift of God cannot be bought. Even today some people, like Simon, want the supernatural if they can get it their way and for their own purposes. They, too, are "in the bond of iniquity" (verse 23).

Ananias

The ninth chapter of Acts relates the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, who later became Paul the Apostle. Jesus stopped him in his tracks on the road to Damascus. Later, in Damascus, the Lord sent a disciple by the name of Ananias to minister to him.

“Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord — Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here — has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit’ (Acts 9:17).

Peter

Acts 10 records the dramatic introduction of the gospel to the Gentiles. For the occasion God chose a devout Roman centurion named Cornelius. Peter was the apostolic messenger. To prepare Peter to go to a Gentile home, the Holy Spirit informed him of the approach of Cornelius's messengers and instructed him to go with them (verses 19, 20).

Peter had barely introduced the gospel to his receptive audience when something happened: “The Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, 'Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have’” (Acts 10:44-47).

Barnabas “was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith” (Acts 11:24).

In verse 28 we meet Agabus, a New Testament prophet, foretelling by the Spirit the great famine that occurred later on in the reign of Claudius Caesar.

Paul

Let's get back to Paul. During a time of prayer and fasting in the church at Antioch, “the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' ...The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia” (Acts 13:2, 4).

Paul's first missionary journey took him to the island of Cyprus. At the city of Paphos, a sorcerer named Elymas opposed him. Paul rebuked Elymas in the Spirit. Backing up Paul's words, God brought judgment on Elymas in the form of temporary blindness. As a result, the governor of the island was converted. Read about it in Acts 13:6-12.

From Cyprus, Paul and his missionary team traveled to Asia Minor, where many were converted. True, the conversions were accompanied with persecutions, but “the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 13:52).

When the serious question arose about whether Gentile believers should keep the Mosaic law, the apostles and elders at Jerusalem (Spirit-filled men, remember) took up the matter. Their written decision to the Gentile Christians stated: “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements...” (Acts 15:28. Verse 29 lists them.).

On Paul's second missionary journey, the Holy Spirit directed the apostle where *not* to go as well as where *to* go. In Acts 16:6, 7 we read: “Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.”

At Ephesus, on his third missionary journey, Paul encountered disciples who had not yet received the fullness of the Holy Spirit. We talked about these people earlier. “When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied” (Acts 19:6).

At Ephesus, on his way to Jerusalem, Paul admonished the elders, reminding them that they had been placed in their ministry by the Holy Spirit. Here are his words: “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers” (Acts 20:28).

Paul had much to say in his epistles about the role of the Holy Spirit in his life and ministry, including the inspiration of the Spirit in the composition of the epistles themselves. A look at these will be interesting:

“By the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit ... from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ” (Romans 15:19).

“My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power” (1 Corinthians 2:4).

“I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding ... I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all” (1 Corinthians 14:15, 18 NKJV).

“He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant — not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life” (2 Corinthians 3:6).

“Our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction” (1 Thessalonians 1:5).

“He who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit” (1 Thessalonians 4:8 NKJV).

Also, in 2 Peter 3:15, 16, the apostle Peter classifies Paul's epistles as Scripture.

John

Before concluding this chapter, let's talk about one of the twelve disciples, John the brother of James. The Holy Spirit was mightily at work in his life, too. We notice this particularly in the Book of Revelation, written while John was in exile on the island of Patmos.

John starts by saying, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day” (Revelation 1:10 KJV). And so we follow him as he experiences things in the Spirit reminiscent of the visions that came to Ezekiel:

“At once I was in the Spirit” (Revelation 4:2).

“Then the angel carried me away in the Spirit into a desert” (Revelation 17:3).

“He carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high” (Revelation 21:10).

Repeatedly, the Book of Revelation emphasizes that its message is from the Holy Spirit. (See Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22.).

We have briefly traced some of the workings of the Holy Spirit in the lives of a few of the early Christians. Two things should be emphasized. First, what we have noticed was not the full extent of the Holy Spirit's ministry in these people. Instead, they are only the few examples preserved for us in the Scriptures. Paul's references in his epistles indicate that his whole Christian life was lived in the fullness and blessing of the Spirit of God.

Second, these people were not alone in living the Spirit-filled life. All the writers of the New Testament (as well as the Old) were inspired of the Holy Spirit in the transmission of the written Word of God. Of the Lord's immediate disciples Hebrews 2:3, 4 says:

“How shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.”

Also, 1 Peter 1:12 declares that the facts of the gospel “have now been told you by those

who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.”

So the promise has been fulfilled. The Holy Spirit has come. We have watched Him at work in and through the Christians of the first century. No wonder it was said of them that they had “turned the world upside down” (Acts 17:6).

The Holy Spirit is still working in the world, reproofing, convicting, striving to set men's hearts right.

The Holy Spirit and the World

The Holy Spirit is talking to people. That does not necessarily mean He is speaking in an audible voice, though He might. But He is communicating.

In John 3:5-8 Jesus told Nicodemus: "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit. (NKJV)"

In other words, we do not see the wind, but we witness its effects. Similarly, we do not see the Holy Spirit, but we observe His influence on the human spirit. He urges the sinner to repent, trust in Christ, and live for God. The person responds. The Holy Spirit — the Spirit of Christ — comes in. The person is changed — completely. He or she is a new person — born again, born from above, born of the Spirit.

The Spirit Communicates

The Holy Spirit can transmit a thought directly from His mind to ours.

Although He can speak in an audible voice (or even a subaudible voice), usually He places His message directly upon our consciousness. Sometimes this involves bringing us into circumstances or situations that convey a message and prepare us to think about the truth.

If you are not a Christian, the Holy Spirit is working constantly to get the gospel across to you. He labors incessantly to call your attention to the Word of God. The Bible is His message to you. Hebrews 3:7, 8 says, "So, as the Holy Spirit says: 'Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.'" He sharpens your conscience. He urges divine reproof upon your soul. Jesus said, "He will convict the world of sin" (John 16:8, NKJV).

It is very clear, then, that the Holy Spirit does not influence the mind of man by direct physical force. The idea of forcing people to obey God *from the heart* is absurd and contradictory. Genuine obedience must be willing obedience.

True, God uses physical events to speak to people. And often He presents truth with such shocking clarity that the sudden awakening causes people to tremble, weep, or fall to their knees. But the Holy Spirit does not drag people to God against their wills or apart from their wills.

The Spirit Persuades

His ministry to the human mind is a moral or persuasive ministry. He seeks to move the heart or will with truth. He assembles infinite values, eternal considerations, and powerful logical motives. Then He combines them and thrusts them onto the intelligence of the sinner, focusing the full weight of their logic on his reason in a grand and gracious effort to sober him up to eternal realities and to move him to God and away from his selfishness.

But it is obvious that moral or persuasive influences can be accepted or rejected. For example, suppose you see a man standing on a high ledge. He's about to jump. You have no way to restrain him physically. A call has gone out for a net, but it appears he's going to jump before it arrives. It's all up to you. What do you do?

You have only one tool — persuasion. So you urge him not to jump. You address his reason, using the strongest considerations and most serious facts you can muster. You appeal to his emotions with all the tender passion you can call forth. With everything within you, you plead with him. But what he does with your plea is totally up to him. The decision is his alone.

You have done all that can possibly be done; the responsibility rests strictly on the shoulders of the man himself. He can do one of two things. He can weigh the facts and consider the values you have presented to him with such sincerity and feeling, and abandon his suicidal purpose. Or he can throw it all to the wind, look at you with contempt, give himself over to his unreasonable impulses, and plunge himself to his destruction.

So it is with the unconverted. Sin is moral and eternal suicide. The Holy Spirit gathers solemn facts, eternal values, infinitely valuable interests, weighty considerations, and powerful motivations. Any one of them ought to be sufficient to move the stony heart of man. The Holy Spirit combines them and lays them out before the intelligence. Truth fills the sinner's horizon like an ocean viewed from the beach. But what the soul does with all the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit is strictly its own choice. The door to the human heart is locked from the inside. Christ knocks, but He will never break in.

The sinner can respond to the appeal of the Holy Spirit and let Christ in; or he can reject His light, drown the voice speaking to his reason, crucify his own intelligence, sear his conscience, cling tenaciously to the cheap idols of his heart, press on stubbornly in his own chosen path of self-gratification, and plunge himself at last into outer darkness!

One of the two will happen. That fact is certain.

The Holy Spirit is giving Himself to the thankless task of trying to win precious souls from self-destruction. But so long as people hold onto their self-indulgences, they frustrate the Holy Spirit and make it morally impossible for Him to save them.

People who are waiting for God to convert them against or apart from their own will are living in a delusion. No one can be born of the Spirit until he stops resisting the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is urging sinners to submit to Christ immediately and on the spot. So long as sinners refuse to do this, they are making their own salvation impossible. They might as well try to drive both ways on the street at the same time. In both cases, we have to make up our minds which direction we are going to take.

So the Bible says, "Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish" (Galatians 5:16, 17 NKJV).

God requires us to walk in all the light we have. In ignorance a Christian might frustrate the work of the Holy Spirit in his life. But a Christian cannot live in willful disobedience to the Holy Spirit and remain a Christian. Romans 8:14 makes this clear: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (KJV)

Resisting the Holy Spirit

"No one can serve two masters" (Matthew 6:24). Each one of us is either obeying the Holy Spirit or disobeying Him, submitting to Him or resisting Him, working with Him or against Him.

Between each one of us and God exists either harmony or discord, peace or conflict.

The Bible says, "The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14, NKJV).

The word "natural" is *psuchikos* in the Greek of the New Testament. It means sensuous. The natural man, then, lives in the realm of the senses only. He refuses to receive the things of the Spirit of God. He cannot receive them as long as he will not. He has no time for the things of the Spirit of God. Because he is concerned only about his sensuous world, spiritual things do not interest him. They do not contribute to his self-gratification, and so they are foolishness to him. They are foreign to his system of values. Therefore he resents and resists every intrusion by the Holy Spirit into his little self-world. The Holy Spirit reproves him of sin, but he resists even this.

How then can the Spirit of God reveal the riches of Christ to a person of such a mind? It is impossible. He cannot receive them until he becomes willing to listen to the Holy Spirit. He cannot be saved without the illumination of the Holy Spirit, a light he fights every step of the way.

Earlier we noted Stephen's speech before the council. As he addressed the rulers he leveled this charge at them: "You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!" (Acts 7:51).

Let's look at that statement for a moment. Remember, these were religious men. They attended worship, tithed, gave alms, prayed, read the Scriptures. Their public conduct was highly accepted. Yet Stephen charged them with *always* resisting the Holy Spirit.

Think of it! While they attended worship, while they tithed and gave to the poor, even while they carried out such devotional exercises as praying and reading the Scriptures, they were resisting the Spirit of God. They did not resist the Spirit of God *often*; they resisted Him *always*. It might come as a shock to some people to know that a person is sinning even while praying if his heart is not surrendered to God.

These men spent their lives in religion. Yet they were continually resisting the Holy Spirit. How could this be? Because their motive was wrong. It was selfish. Jesus summed up their strict religious observances, and then disposed of them all by saying, "But all their works they do for to be seen of men" (Matthew 23:5 KJV). In other words, their motive was wrong, and the motive is what counts with God.

So you do not become a Christian by joining a church, or even by becoming a minister. You must surrender your heart to God and receive Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord.

God said long ago, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man" (Genesis 6:3, KJV).

Strife implies resistance. So the very fact that the Spirit of God is striving with man indicates that man is resisting. If people were truly willing to be converted, the Holy Spirit would have no problem at all. But the Holy Spirit has to wrestle with people because they stubbornly refuse to do the very thing they must do for God to save them: repent and believe the gospel.

But the gentle Holy Spirit does not take that kind of abuse forever. The people of Noah's day found that out. It's a sad day to the heart of God when the Holy Spirit, consistently frustrated, has to "call it quits" on a man or woman.

How do people resist the Holy Spirit? By resisting the truth as He presents it to the mind. This is done in various ways: rejecting the truth outright, putting off obedience to some future time, ignoring the Holy Spirit by diverting the mind to something else, embracing doctrinal error

or some religious deviation. In short, any course of action other than honest, total, and immediate surrender to God is an act of resistance to the Holy Spirit.

What does this lead to? What are its consequences? Jesus said: "If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Matthew 6:23).

As the Holy Spirit is grieved, the heart becomes hard and cold. Truth no longer affects the soul. Some even pride themselves at being able to sit through a gospel meeting without being moved by the truth. What a horrible condition!

As people grow old in sin, they usually become less interested in the gospel, less affected by its presentation. This is not the result of maturity, but of hardness of heart. The mind becomes settled in error, delusion, and self-justification. People in this condition are in real danger of being abandoned by the Holy Spirit. Jesus said:

"Blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come" (Matthew 12:31, 32).

One might disobey the Father, and also reject the Son. But when the gentle influence of the Holy Spirit is quenched, who is left to plead with the soul?

People who have reached this stage are on the spiritual critical list. Their only hope is to throw themselves upon the mercy of Christ without delay. The door to mercy is still open to "whosoever will."

The Bible records the tragedy of some who were successful in resisting the Holy Spirit. "But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul" (1 Samuel 16:14 KJV). And concerning rebellious Israel we read: "But they rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy" (Isaiah 63:10 KJV).

How horrible when a person's attitude and life become so obnoxious to the Holy Spirit that He can stand that person no longer! Isaiah 45:9 says, "Woe to him who strives with his Maker."

Look at that precious soul! All heaven is filled with tense anxiety over him, and yet he trifles. Against the opposition of the Holy Spirit and his own reason, he stubbornly rejects Christ, his only Hope of eternal life. He dashes recklessly on, crashing through every roadblock the Spirit of God throws in his path. Gospel warning lights are flashing. Once the siren of conscience shattered his complacency as he raced down the broad way that leads to destruction. But now it is almost silent.

Now he is on the precipice. The Holy Spirit makes one last desperate effort to save him, but he wrenches himself loose from the Spirit's loving, restraining grasp and plunges himself into everlasting misery and woe. The sight is unbearable. Heaven groans in grief.

Some of the most tragic words are found in Jeremiah 8:20: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." Once he basked in the sunshine of God's great harvest summer, thinking, There's plenty of time; there'll always be another gospel service, another altar call. I'll always feel the tug of the Spirit." Then he awoke in the dark, lonely, tormenting, eternal night to realize the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and he is not saved!

So the Holy Spirit is not inviting forever. Proverbs 29:1 warns, "A man who remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed — without remedy."

God is patiently telephoning people's hearts. But if the sinner continues to ignore ring after ring, the time will come when the Holy Spirit hangs up. So let us answer now, while He is still calling.

“So, as the Holy Spirit says: 'Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts'” (Hebrews 3:7, 8).

“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2 KJV).

The Holy Spirit in You

Earlier, we followed the Holy Spirit as He was at work in the first-century Church. The good news is that He is still here and He has not changed!

In the 20th century, the Church experienced a new awareness of the Holy Spirit. Increasing numbers of Christians of various denominations are realizing what it really means to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Dissatisfied with cold, formal religion, they hunger for a greater spiritual reality. They long to experience a dynamic Christian life.

And God is answering! The Holy Spirit is filling these believers and going into action in their lives, just as He did in the New Testament. They have found a new dimension in the Holy Spirit. Have you?

“Me?” you ask. “Is the Holy Spirit interested in *me*? Do you mean that I can experience Him *personally*?”

You certainly can! And beginning right now we are going to talk about the Holy Spirit and His personal relationship to you as a Christian.

The Spirit Draws Men

As we noted in the previous chapter, the Holy Spirit convicted us of our sins and made us aware of our need of a Savior. He drew us to Christ. Were it not for the Holy Spirit, no one could be saved, for without the Spirit's influence, no one would ever come to Christ. In John 6:44 Jesus said, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.” Then in John 12:32, He stated: “But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.”

So, then, no one will come to Christ unless the Father draws him. And how does the Father draw man? By the lifting up of Christ on the cross. God draws people by the gospel, and that gospel is Jesus Christ crucified for our sins and risen for our justification. God in Christ draws everyone. Some respond, others refuse.

“The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’” (Revelation 22:17). The Holy Spirit working with and through the Bride (the Church) called us to Christ. He led us to Calvary, the fount of cleansing. (See Isaiah 4:4.)

We were born again — made new — as a result of the gracious influence of the Spirit, “not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5; see also John 3:5-8).

We are washed, sanctified, justified through the agency of the Holy Spirit. Paul desired “that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:16). Other Scripture passages describe this sanctification:

“You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:11).

“From the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth” (2 Thessalonians 2:13).

“[You are] elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit” (1 Peter 1:2 NKJV).

“You have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit” (1 Peter 1:22, NKJV).

The Holy Spirit gave us access to the Father, “For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father” (Ephesians 2:18 KJV).

The Spirit Dwells Within Believers

At our conversion, the Holy Spirit came to dwell within us, witnessing (testifying) to us that we are now the sons of God, and making us happily aware of our sonship as believers.

“But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors — not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (Romans 8:9-16).

“I speak the truth in Christ — I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit” (Romans 9:1).

“Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, ‘Abba, Father’” (Galatians 4:6).

“Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you — guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us” (2 Timothy 1:14).

“This is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us” (1 John 3:24).

“We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit” (1 John 4:13).

Also at conversion, the Holy Spirit placed (integrated) us in the body of Christ, the Church. First Corinthians 12:13 says, “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.” (NKJV)

As Christians, God has given us eternal life in Christ (1 John 5:11, 12). As long as we remain in Christ, we have eternal life from Him, just as a branch has life as long as it remains in the vine (John 15:1 - 6).

So Romans 8:1-6 says, in part: “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death ... that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” Life and peace continue as we continue to live “according to the Spirit,” pursuing spiritual things out of love for Christ.

“For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the

deeds of the body, you will live” (Romans 8:13).

“For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life” (Galatians 6:8).

Led of the Spirit

Let it be emphasized again: It is just as impossible to make pleasing the flesh our goal and pleasing God our goal at the same time as it is to travel in two opposite directions at the same time. Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 6:24: “No one can serve two masters.”

Paul encourages the Christian to be led by the Spirit: “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law” (Galatians 5:16-18 NKJV).

The law is for those who love the flesh and the things of the world. It sets boundaries for their lusts to inhibit their destructiveness in society. It tells the sinner how he ought to live. Sometimes, for selfish reasons — health, reputation, self-esteem, religious pressures or sentiments, fear of punishment, gratification of an emotional attachment to others — the sinner will try to “live right,” as he says, without really giving up the desires of the flesh. But his miserable legalism fails. It has no motivation beyond his own desires. He is the slave of his chosen master, sin. Repressed, condemned, he cries out, “Oh, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Romans 7:24 KJV).

But the Christian is led by the Spirit. He has renounced the flesh and abandoned its gratification. He is not repressed, because he has found full, unrestricted freedom in pursuing the things he really loves — the things of Christ. Obedience to Christ comes easy to him. It is a matter of love, not a religious duty. The “law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” has made him “free from the law of sin and death” (Romans 8:2). Motivated by love, he lives right because he wants to. He is not under the law, because he does not need the law to keep him in line. Because he walks in the Spirit, there is no condemnation. To him, Jesus is truly Lord.

Now, *we cannot live both lives at the same time!* Slavery to sin and freedom in Christ do *not* coexist in the Christian. The Bible makes that very clear. Those who seek to fulfill their own desires do not have the Spirit: “These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit” (Jude 19). And sinners, Jesus said, cannot receive the Spirit: “The world cannot accept him [the Spirit of truth], because it neither sees him nor knows him” (John 14:17).

These two opposing motives — loving God and loving the flesh — produce completely different and incompatible results in one's life. The kind of fruit produced in our lives reveals which motive rules our hearts.

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and the like; of which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit” (Galatians 5:19-25 KJV; see also Matthew 3:8; 7:15-20; 12:33; Romans 6:19-23; 7:4, 5).

The Spirit in You

The New Testament teaches that the Holy Spirit is present in all believers, collectively and individually. Speaking of believers collectively, Ephesians 2:22 says that in Christ “you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.” Also speaking collectively, 1 Corinthians 3:16 asks, “Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?”

But speaking of believers individually, 1 Corinthians 6:19 exclaims, “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own.”

Although the Holy Spirit *lives* in all believers, not all are *filled* with the Spirit. There is a difference between the two, one of kind as well as degree. Let me illustrate. Suppose you move to another house. While in the moving process, you pile your things in the kitchen and living room. The utilities are not turned on yet. So for the first day or two you live on cold cereal and sandwiches. You are in, all right. You are living there. But you are not yet fully utilizing the house's facilities. You are glad to be in, but you will be a lot happier when all the utilities are turned on and you can start putting the whole house to use.

Just so, the Holy Spirit has come to live in every believer. But He wants to do more than that. He wants to *fill* you. He wants to turn on all the utilities, so to speak, and mobilize your whole being for His purpose. *This is called the baptism in the Holy Spirit.*

This baptism, or infilling, of the Spirit is referred to in the New Testament as God's seal upon the believer. It is God's public announcement of divine possession and commission. As such, it is the beginning of His dynamic ministry in us. The work of the Holy Spirit in us will be complete when God by the Spirit raises us from the dead. In that victory all believers will share, because Romans 8:11 specifies that all who are indwelt by the Spirit of God will be raised to eternal life, not only those who are filled.

“You also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession — to the praise of his glory” (Ephesians 1:13, 14).

“[God has] set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come” (2 Corinthians 1:22). “Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come” (2 Corinthians 5:5).

“Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies” (Romans 8:23).

The Spirit of God does not want to wait until the drama of the resurrection to go into action in our lives. While looking forward to that glorious exercise of His power in us, we can experience His fullness right now. This is the privilege of all believers — *now, today*. “The promise is for you” (Acts 2:39).

In fact, it is more than a privilege. It is an obligation. The command of Ephesians 5:18 is “Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.” Be filled and stay filled (literally, “continue filled”). The general pattern is found in Acts 2:38: Repent; be baptized in water; then be filled with the Spirit. But, remember, this is a general pattern, not an inflexible rule. Salvation is always first, of course. No unsaved person can

receive the Holy Spirit (John 14:16, 17). Water baptism is usually next, followed by the infilling of the Spirit.

There are exceptions in the order following salvation. Cornelius and his group are a classic example. We read about it in Acts 10:44-47. They were filled with the Spirit before being baptized in water.

Acts 2:38 tells us that the infilling of the Spirit is a gift. We cannot earn it. If we could, it would not be a gift. So we do not beg for it. We ask. Jesus said, "If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him" (Luke 11:13).

Conditions for Receiving the Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Although we cannot merit the gift of the Holy Spirit, we must meet the two conditions for receiving: obedience and faith (we could say faith alone, for true faith always implies obedience):

"We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him" (Acts 5:32).

"Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard?" (Galatians 3:2).

We do not become good so we can be saved. We become saved so we can be good. Just so, we do not become deeply spiritual so we can be filled with the Holy Spirit. We are baptized in the Holy Spirit so He can lead us into deeper spirituality.

Laying On of Hands

There is no set ritual for receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit. At Pentecost the disciples were sitting (Acts 2:2). Some have received standing, others have received lying in bed!

The Scriptures do contain a general pattern however. But remember it is a general pattern, not a hard-and-fast rule. It involves "laying on of hands." God has granted this ministry to some, for example, Peter and John.

Philip did not have this gift or ministry, although he performed great miracles at Samaria. A sizable church emerged in Samaria under his preaching, but not a Spirit-filled believer in the whole congregation, only Philip. When the apostles Peter and John arrived, however, they laid their hands on the converts and they received the Holy Spirit. It was when Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands that he offered them money so he could do the same thing (Acts 8:15-19).

The Ananias who prayed for Saul was not an apostle, but God sent him to lay hands on the recently converted Saul. When Ananias arrived, he "went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord — Jesus ... has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit'" (Acts 9:17).

And then there were the non-Pentecostal disciples Paul found at Ephesus. When Paul laid his hands on them, they were filled with the Spirit (Acts 19:6).

Acts also has examples of people receiving without the laying on of hands, Cornelius and his household for example (Acts 10:44-47).

The lesson is that we are not to reduce the work of the Holy Spirit to a set of forms, rituals, or symbols. He is God. We do not manipulate Him. He moves us. His ministry does not consist in mechanics, but dynamics.

The Initial, Physical Evidence

We are ready now to address the subject of the initial, physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Notice, the emphasis is on *initial, physical* evidence, because evidences of the fullness of the Spirit in the life of the Spirit-filled believer are many. Many of them are much more important than so-called “ecstatic utterances.”

Nevertheless, in this Age of the Spirit a uniform, observable evidence that the Holy Spirit has filled the believer and introduced him or her into the Spirit-filled life is important. And God has wisely provided such an evidence. It was very prominent on the Day of Pentecost, so prominent that it above all else attracted the attention of the public. I refer to speaking with other tongues by the direct activity of the Holy Spirit. We read the record in Acts 2:1-4:

“Now when the Day of Pentecost had 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 the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

These were languages that the ones who were speaking had not learned, nor did they understand them. But they were real languages just the same, not gibberish. They had vocabulary and syntax. So it was throughout the New Testament. So it is today.

Scriptural Evidence

No verse of Scripture states in so many words that a believer is baptized in the Holy Spirit only if he or she has spoken with other tongues. But the general import of the Scriptures is that this is so.

The Acts of the Apostles serves as our pattern. In some instances in Scripture where believers were baptized in the Holy Spirit, no specific evidence is mentioned. Just the fact is reported. But whenever the Scriptures record specific accompanying experiences, one is always mentioned: *speaking in other tongues*. Being the common element makes it highly significant.

Even in those instances where no accompanying experiences are recorded, the Bible implies that they did exist. In fact, they were so dramatic in Samaria that they excited Simon the sorcerer.

Paul was baptized in the Holy Spirit, as was almost everyone in the first-century church. In I Corinthians 14:18 he said, “I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you.”

When did Paul start speaking in tongues? The New Testament does not say, but logically and Biblically we may assume that it was at the time Ananias laid hands on him.

We do have a very strong statement in Acts 10:45, 46: “The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.”

Couple this with Peter's report in Acts 11:15, 17, which reads in part: “As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning ... So if God gave them the same gift as he gave us, ... who was I to think that I could oppose God!”

The fact that Cornelius and his group “spoke in tongues” was the conclusive evidence to Peter that they were filled with the Spirit. No other immediate evidence was needed, and no other would have been sufficient or conclusive.

From these facts it is safe and proper to state that speaking in other tongues is not only the initial, physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but also the *uniform* evidence, the one evidence without which it cannot be said that the person is baptized in the Spirit.

Why Tongues?

But why did God choose speaking in other tongues to be the initial, physical evidence? For several reasons. Here are a few:

It is an observable evidence. Without an observable evidence, the question of whether a person was filled with the Holy Spirit would have to be left up to subjective personal introspection and/or the examination by Christians of each other's lives. Both procedures are negative and tend to a critical and judgmental attitude. God was wise in giving us a dramatic, observable, unmistakable evidence.

It is a uniform evidence. Without uniformity in the evidence, its value as an evidence would be reduced to the point of uselessness.

It is a verbal evidence. As such, it demonstrates the personality of the Holy Spirit. He is not a mere force. He speaks! Only a personality can communicate verbally. On the believer's part, verbal communication is one of his highest human activities. It expresses his unique humanity. It represents his highest intellectual and spiritual capacities.

Commitment to the control of the Holy Spirit in verbal expression demonstrates the total surrender of the human personality to God, a surrender that is necessary for both the initial infilling of the Spirit and the continued fullness of the Spirit.

It is a supernatural evidence. As a supernatural evidence that glorifies God and confesses the lordship of Jesus, it is a witness to all that the work is of God. God is doing something, not just man. This places the whole experience beyond mere psychology, although the human mind is involved.

Purposes of Tongues

“But I have heard that tongues is the least of the gifts, and that it is not for everybody. Why make it so important?”

Most Christians have missed a very important point about speaking in other tongues, namely, that the Bible recognizes three distinct uses, or purposes, for *glossolalia*, or speaking in tongues. The scriptural rules for one use of tongues do not necessarily apply to the others. Also, the significance of one use does not necessarily affect the significance of the others.

Here are the three uses, or purposes:

The initial, physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Here tongues is not the gift. The Holy Spirit himself is the Gift. Tongues serve as the immediate evidence. If you have not yet been baptized in the Spirit, do not seek tongues. Seek the fullness of the Holy Spirit. The tongues will come as a matter of course.

Devotional assistance. Praying in other tongues is a valuable asset to the devotional life of the Spirit-filled believer. In 1 Corinthians 14, the apostle speaks of private devotional tongues and indicates that this use of tongues is distinct from the gift of tongues as a public utterance.

In devotional tongues, the person “does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him” (verse 2). He edifies (builds up) himself spiritually (verse 4). Jude says,

“Build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit” (Jude 20, 21, NKJV).

Paul says in 1 Corinthians that when a person prays in tongues, his spirit prays but his understanding is unproductive (14:14). In verse 15, Paul describes his personal experience: “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” (KJV). The context and the wording imply that praying in the Spirit involves praying in other tongues.

I share the apostle's desire that you would speak with tongues (verse 5). Don't miss this very valuable ministry of the Holy Spirit in your life.

Did you ever desire to unburden your heart to God in prayer, but your vocabulary just did not contain the words to express what you felt? That's where the Holy Spirit assists. He supplies His vocabulary, enabling the human spirit to experience total release toward God:

“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will” (Romans 8:26, 27).

Needs exist that we are not aware of. But the Holy Spirit is. He can lay a burden of prayer upon us. We might know nothing about the need. So the Holy Spirit frames the petition in a language of His choosing and lifts it to God from our hearts and lips. Not only is this a privilege; it is a command. Ephesians 6:18 exhorts us to pray in the Spirit: “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (KJV).

What is true of intercession is true also of worship and praise. Oh, how delightful it is to open the deep wellsprings of our human spirit and pour out to God adoration and praise uninhibited by the limitations of our own vocabulary! So then, because the rules of 1 Corinthians 14 refer in general to public utterances, they do not apply to devotional tongues. For example, private devotional tongues are not to be interpreted.

A *“gift” for public utterance*. The exercise of the public gift of tongues comes under the strict rules of 1 Corinthians 14. To be of any value to the church, all such utterances must be interpreted. We shall take this up when we consider the gifts of the Spirit.

When Will Tongues Cease?

First Corinthians 13:8 tells us that the time will come when prophecies will fail, tongues will cease, and knowledge will vanish away. Verse 10 informs us that this will take place “when that which is perfect has come” (NKJV).

But when is that? Frequently the statement “when that which is perfect has come” is interpreted to mean the completion of the New Testament around the end of the first century A.D. The assertion is then made that because the Bible is now complete, prophecies, tongues, and partial knowledge are done away.

Nowhere does the Bible even remotely suggest that the gifts of the Spirit, including tongues, interpretation of tongues, and prophecy, were ever intended to be a first-century substitute for those parts of the New Testament not yet completed. They do not now, and never did, serve as a temporary standard of faith and practice. They are for “edification and exhortation and comfort” (1 Corinthians 14:3 NKJV), and their genuineness and message are always to be judged by the Scriptures themselves.

“When that which is perfect has come” in verse 10 must refer to the consummation of this

present age. That is the only time reference in this passage. The Greek for “that which is perfect” is *to teleion*. In ancient times the word was used in a variety of meanings (mature, complete, perfect, totality, conclusion, culmination, final). In this text it means the end of this incomplete present age (verse 9), and the beginning of the complete future age. That will happen only after Christ returns, and not before.

Furthermore, 1 Corinthians 13 is not a contrast between the gifts of the Spirit and the Scriptures. It is a contrast between the temporary nature of the gifts and the eternal quality of love. The view of the chapter is to the eternal in contrast to the temporal, of heaven in contrast to earth.

The Corinthian church had emphasized the gifts of the Spirit to the neglect of the fruit of the Spirit. Thank God we don't have to choose one to the exclusion of the other! We can have both. In choosing both we simply keep in mind which is permanent and which is temporary.

Comparative Spirituality

“But what about great Christians who have never spoken in tongues and yet have won more people to Christ than most Pentecostals?”

This question is often raised.

The Holy Spirit is very gracious and willing. He will always work in our lives to the fullest extent possible in whatever capacity or dimension we have experienced Him. Let us never underestimate the indwelling Holy Spirit in the life of the non-Pentecostal believer. He is there, and He is active.

A letter I wrote to *Christianity Today* (which they published) speaks to the point:

“I believe that comparing Pentecostals with great non-Pentecostals of the past and present misses the point. The baptism with the Holy Spirit is not intended to make the least Pentecostal greater in Christian stature and productivity than the greatest non-Pentecostal. We are on the wrong track when we start comparing ourselves among ourselves. The question is not: 'Am I a greater Christian than my non-Pentecostal brother or sister?' The question is:

'Am I as a Pentecostal a more dynamic, victorious, productive, Christ-like Christian than I would be if I were not a Pentecostal?'

“The fact is that 'all that baptism signified by tongues produces' has *not* been equaled, much less surpassed, 'in the lives of Christians who have never spoken in tongues.' Great as such Christians are, were they to become Pentecostal in experience, they would find their lives enriched by the Holy Spirit in a way previously unequaled in their personal spiritual history.” (*Christianity Today*, Vol. XVII, No.7, January 5, 1973, p.24. Used by permission of the publishers.)

Philippians 1:19 speaks of “the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.” The baptism in the Holy Spirit is not a goal; it is a beginning. It is not a spiritual destination; it is the door into the Spirit-filled life. As important as the initial experience is, continuing in the fullness of the Spirit from then on is even more important.

Some think of the Spirit's fullness as a reservoir. Once filled, they struggle to keep it from “leaking out.” Occasionally, they experience “refillings” to keep the reservoir full. But this is not the biblical norm for the believer.

Jesus did not speak of the Spirit as a stored reservoir, but as rivers flowing out from within the believer (John 7:38, 39). A continuous, daily inflow from God and outflow to others of the fullness and ministry of the Holy Spirit — *that* is the ideal Pentecostal experience.

We do not receive the Spirit by the works of the law, but by the hearing of faith (Galatians 3:2), and that is the way we experience His continued fullness — by the life of faith, a “faith expressing itself through love” (Galatians 5:6).

Tongues — and a Lot More

Remember, the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a new, distinct, and dynamic dimension of the presence and power of the same Holy Spirit who dwells in every true believer.

In the Early Church, the baptism in the Holy Spirit normally occurred so soon after conversion that the New Testament usually refers to it as receiving the Spirit (Acts 19:2), even though the believer in Christ already received the Spirit in a sense at regeneration (Romans 8), and the Church as a whole received the Spirit into this age at Pentecost (Acts 2).

At salvation, the Holy Spirit is the agent doing the baptizing, the new believer is the subject being baptized, and the body of Christ is the element into which the believer is being baptized. But at the baptism in the Holy Spirit, Christ is the agent baptizing, the believer is the subject being baptized, and the Holy Spirit is the element into which the believer is baptized. Jesus baptizes us in the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11).

At salvation, the believer is privileged to “drink into one Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:13). At the baptism in the Spirit, Jesus fills and saturates the believer with the same Spirit.

So then, the greater the dimension of the Holy Spirit's presence within us, the greater will be His ministry in and to us. What we as Christians experience in part before being baptized in the Holy Spirit, we are privileged to enjoy in fullness afterward.

Not always is the difference quantitative, or one of degree. Sometimes it is qualitative, or one of kind. That is, some things the Holy Spirit does in and through Spirit-baptized believers only. The gifts of the Spirit are an example.

Let us explore the work of the Spirit in the life of the Christian. Some Pentecostals seem to have the notion that all the Holy Spirit wants to do is give us boldness and keep us happy and “talking in tongues.” Perhaps our exploration brings some pleasant surprises, and brings us to a better understanding of what the Spirit is trying to accomplish in us so we can give Him our full cooperation.

Christ is the Head of the Church (Ephesians 1:22), and the Holy Spirit is His true Vicar (Representative) on earth (John 14:16, 26; 16:13, 14). As Christ's personal Representative, the Holy Spirit manages the Church, leading it and revealing Christ to it.

In Ephesians 1:17-23 Paul prays “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness

of Him who fills all in all” (NKJV).

Notice carefully what he prays the “Spirit of wisdom and revelation” will make clear and real to us.

Believers worship in and by the Spirit of God (Philippians 3:3).

If your Christian experience is dull, open up your life to the fullness of the Spirit! “The Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (2 Corinthians 3:17).

Power in Word and Witness

Earlier we watched the Holy Spirit at work in the New Testament Church. Such power they had! Such boldness and spiritual authority! And the Holy Spirit does not change. His leadership and ministry in the Church are still the same.

When the early disciples were filled with the Spirit, they “spoke the word of God boldly” (Acts 4:31). So today His continuing authority in the Church is able to make effective our word and witness. The anointing of the Holy Spirit also gives authority to our witness for Christ.

“We, having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, 'I believed, and therefore have I spoken;' we also believe, and therefore speak” (2 Corinthians 4:13 KJV).

“To us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven” (1 Peter 1:12, NKJV; see also Acts 1:8).

He speaks in us. Jesus said, “When they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you” (Matthew 10:19, 20; see also Mark 13:11 and Luke 12:12).

We see this in operation in the witness of Stephen: “They could not stand up against his wisdom or the Spirit by which he spoke” (Acts 6:10).

Witnessing is one of the basic ministries of the Holy Spirit:

“We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit” (Acts 5:32).

“It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is truth” (1 John 5:6).

“No one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, 'Jesus be cursed,' and no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:3).

“This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God” (1 John 4:2).

“[Jesus Christ was] declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Romans 1:4 NKJV).

The Spirit's Teaching Ministry

More personal and intimate is the Holy Spirit's teaching ministry to the Church and to the individual believer. “The anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit — just as it has taught you, remain in him” (1 John 2:27).

Now, this does not mean that because we have the Holy Spirit, we do not need teaching in the Scriptures. Indeed, if that were the case, John's readers wouldn't need to listen to John! It means that because the Holy Spirit has revealed Christ to us, and Christ is the truth (John 14:6), contrary religious doctrines and philosophical speculations are empty and vain. Hold fast to Jesus Christ as the Holy Spirit has revealed Him to you in faith and according to the Scriptures.

Do not let anyone teach you “another gospel,” or cause you to follow “another Jesus.”

The Holy Spirit teaches us through the written Word. The anointing teaches us all things by revealing to us the all-sufficient instruction of the Scriptures.

“These are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person’s thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words (1 Corinthians 2:10-13).

The Church’s responsibility in this process is to conform its teaching ministry to the written Word of God as the Holy Spirit has given it and as He illuminates it. Jesus said:

“The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, ... will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you” (John 14:26).

“The Spirit of truth ... shall testify of Me” (John 15:26 KJV).

“The Spirit of truth ... will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of himself, but whatever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you” (John 16:13, 14 KJV).

Conforming Us to the Image of Christ

So the Holy Spirit teaches us by showing us the things of Jesus Christ. He glorifies Christ to us. He seeks to fix our hearts upon Jesus so that He can conform our character to the image of Christ. This is how God perfects and sanctifies us. As we walk in the Spirit (Romans 8), the fruit of the Spirit is brought to maturity within us.

Oh, how beautiful is the fruit of the Spirit! It is the reflection of the image of Christ in the believer. Just as the character of the wicked is displayed in the “works of the flesh,” so the character of the true Christian is expressed in the “fruit of the Spirit” (Galatians 5:19-26). It is the outward evidence of genuine repentance (Matthew 3:8), the natural and necessary expression of the love of God in a pure heart.

The fruit of the Spirit grows and matures as the Spirit is allowed to control the nature of the believer. And the greater the measure of the Spirit in us, the greater is the development of His fruit in our behavior. The baptism in the Holy Spirit should result in a rapid acceleration of character development. The Spirit-filled Christian should be a more Christ-like Christian.

Characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit are mentioned in Ephesians 5:9, “The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth.”

Goodness. Righteousness. Truth. This is the direction the Holy Spirit is working in sanctifying our temperament and personality. He seeks to eliminate from our nature everything incompatible with goodness, righteousness, and truth. And He can do a much smoother job of it if we cooperate intelligently. So let us stay in goodness, righteousness, and truth. There is where the Spirit seeks to establish and perfect us.

And where are these qualities found? In Christ.

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear

fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit — fruit that will last — and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. (John 15:1-16)"

Notice especially verse 5: "If a man remains in me, and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

Fruit doesn't have to strain and struggle to grow. It just "abides" (remains, stays put) in the vine or tree. Just so, we do not have to strain and struggle in legalism to perfect the fruit of the Spirit. Just abide in Christ by faith. Paul cried, "After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?" (Galatians 3:3).

One of the most important verses of Scripture on this subject is 2 Corinthians 3:18: "We, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."

Keep looking at Jesus with an open, receptive heart. Love Him. Spend time in His presence in sweet communion. Look at Him often as He is portrayed in His Word. See Him as He is exemplified in the lives of those who walk close to Him. The more you are exposed to Him, the easier it is for the Holy Spirit to mold you into His image. Keep looking at Him in the Spirit and in the Word, and you will become like Him — "ever-increasing glory."

Sometimes the process involves discipline. Hebrews 12:9-11 tells us so. Verse 11 says: "No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it."

"This is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ — to the glory and praise of God" (Philippians 1:9-11).

"The wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness" (James 3:17, 18).

Second Corinthians 3:3 says that we are "a letter from Christ ... written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God."

In other words, God is working by His Spirit to make us so much like Jesus that the world can see Christ in us. The Christian should be so conformed to the likeness of Jesus Christ that his or her very life shows the world what He is like. That is no guarantee, of course, that the world will accept Him.

Those who reject Jesus Christ will also reject Him *in you*. Because your life exhibits the fruit of the Spirit instead of the works of the flesh, it is a rebuke to the unconverted. Your Christian character makes them feel uncomfortable in their sins. This they resent. They might show hostility toward you as part of their defense mechanism. But be happy.

“If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you” (1 Peter 4:14).

“But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now” (Galatians 4:29 KJV).

The Spirit Unifies

Another very important work of the Holy Spirit is to unify the Church in a close communion, or fellowship, of love.

Love has top priority. It stands first in the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). All the rest are expressions and results of love. Love is the hub. The others are spokes radiating from it.

The Holy Spirit is working full-time producing as much love as possible. He fills our hearts with the love of God (Romans 5:5). Epaphras reported the Colossian believers' “love in the Spirit” to Paul (Colossians 1:8). And the “love of the Spirit” was the basis of Paul's appeal to the church at Rome (Romans 15:30).

The unity of the Church is a very important goal of the Holy Spirit. He is working diligently to make the prayer of Jesus a reality (John 17:21). Without such unity, the world will not truly believe that the Father sent the Son (verse 23). Ephesians 4:3 commands us to “keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”

The unity of the Spirit is very high on God's list of priorities for the Church. Only the fundamentals of the gospel and the purity of the Church are more essential. Nothing of lesser importance has any right to disturb it.

If we love God and one another, we will love peace and the unity of Christ's body. We will defend and preserve that unity, no matter how much we have to sacrifice our own pride and opinions. And the Church will have peace and unity if we allow the Holy Spirit to discipline our own human spirits.

The Spirit Gives Strength and Joy

The Holy Spirit is set to protect the Church, for “when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him” (Isaiah 59:19).

He upholds and sustains us, giving us power to overcome sin. David knew this; he prayed, “Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me by your generous Spirit” (Psalm 51:12).

The Holy Spirit gives us inner strength. Ephesians 3:16 says we are “strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man” (KJV).

As the Comforter, the Spirit builds up our faith. Acts 9:31 says, “Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied” (NKJV).

Also, “the fruit of the Spirit is ... joy” (Galatians 5:22). Acts 13:52 informs us that “the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Spirit.” And the Thessalonian converts “received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit” (1 Thessalonians 1:6).

I doubt very much that a truly Spirit-filled Christian can be a sorehead or a sourpuss. The Bible says that “the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness,

peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Romans 14:17).

The Spirit Gives Hope

The Holy Spirit points to a future of total victory for the believer. To all who die in Christ, He has affirmed the promise of a blessed life after death. Revelation 14:13 says, “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord ... 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'they will rest from their labors, for their deeds will follow them.’”

Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19), and death does not terminate the purpose of the Holy Spirit for these bodies. Romans 8:11 promises that “if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

The resurrection is the blessed hope of the believer. The Holy Spirit nurtures and strengthens that hope. He affirms our confidence that when we appear before Christ, we shall stand righteous by faith.

“For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith” (Galatians 5:5, KJV).

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13).

Grieve Not the Holy Spirit

So let the Holy Spirit have His way. Stay true to Christ. Ananias and Sapphira “agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord” (Acts 5:9, KJV). The result was death. The Scriptures clearly warn us of the peril of apostasy, of grieving the Holy Spirit:

“Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30).

“Quench not the Spirit” (1 Thessalonians 5:19, KJV).

“How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?” (Hebrews 10:29).

If we allow anything in our lives that is contrary to the Word of God, incompatible with the image of Christ, or inconsistent with the fruit of the Spirit, that thing will grieve the Holy Spirit and hinder the development of the masterpiece of grace that He so carefully and patiently is creating within us.

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (Revelation 2:7).

The Gifts of the Spirit

We have been considering the work of the Holy Spirit *in* and *for* the believer. It is now time to give specific attention to the super-natural work of the Spirit *through* the believer.

I refer to what are commonly called the gifts of the Spirit (literally, in the Greek they are called “spirituals”). I use the term *supernatural* because these gifts of the Spirit involve activities that go beyond natural processes, sometimes even going against natural processes.

We must be careful to distinguish between Spirit-anointed human ability and the supernatural operations of the Spirit. In both cases the Holy Spirit is present and active. But in the gifts, the activity of the Holy Spirit transcends natural processes.

This does not mean the human agent is set aside. The person through whom the gift is operating does not become a robot. He or she does not necessarily go into a trance. Human personality, vocabulary, emotional makeup, and so on are all retained. Except in the authorship of the Bible, this includes the susceptibility to error in the human response to the Holy Spirit. But the activity of the Spirit in the operation of the gifts goes beyond human limits. In this sense the gifts are supernatural.

First Corinthians 12 lists the nine gifts of the Spirit. They are not nine separate forces working independently of each other. Rather, they are the nine distinct ways the Spirit can and does work supernaturally through Spirit-filled believers. They are all activities of the one Holy Spirit, and are listed separately only for our understanding.

Paul begins the chapter by telling the Corinthian church (and us) that he does not want them to be ignorant about “spirituals.”

Many Christians at Corinth were confused. Some of the pagan idol-worshippers in the city were giving what they claimed were inspired utterances. In these they called Jesus accursed. The Christians did not understand what was happening. Like many people today, they might have thought that everything that gave the appearance of being supernatural was of God.

Paul reminded them that they, too, used to be swept away by the occult. The idols they once served were only inanimate objects, incapable of communicating. So the idols could not be inspiring these pagan utterances. And the Holy Spirit was not giving them, because He will not demean Jesus.

Only two possibilities remained: either the pagan oracles were fabricating these prophecies out of their own minds while in a state of emotional ecstasy, or the utterances were the work of evil spirits. In either case, they were counterfeits. The personality generating the utterance (whether human or demonic, or both) refused to confess the lordship of Jesus. This in itself demonstrated that the Spirit of God had nothing to do with it.

But enough of the occult. Let's learn more about the genuine work of the Holy Spirit.

Manifestations of the Holy Spirit

In 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, these supernatural expressions of the Holy Spirit are called “gifts,” “administrations,” and “operations.” These terms emphasize the total divine authority involved. The gifts are all manifestations of the one and the same Holy Spirit. These manifestations of the Spirit are all part of the administration of the one and the same Lord over His church. This administration of Christ over His church, in turn, is part of the total operation of the one and the same God of the whole universe.

This means, then, that the genuine gifts of the Spirit are not ecstatic off-the-cuff remarks generated by the fertile imaginations of deeply emotional mystics. They are not mystifying feats of ESP performed by clairvoyants. They are not mind-over-matter treatments given by “healers.” They are not little games and toys to be played with for amusement or to build our ego.

The genuine gifts of the Spirit are God in action through Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

The Holy Spirit desires to work regularly in at least one of His supernatural ways in every Spirit-filled believer, and He desires to work regularly in all His supernatural ways in every congregation.

“The manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good, ... All these [gifts] are the work of the one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each man, just as he determines” (verses 7 and 11).

I say “Spirit-filled” believer, because the Holy Spirit must fill a person before He can carry on regular, continuing supernatural ministry through that person. God wants everyone to be a Christian, and He wants every Christian to be filled with the Spirit.

It is important here to sound a note of warning. Possession of these gifts is no basis for spiritual pride or personal egotism. Remember, they are *gifts*. We do not earn them. They are all of grace, not of works. Continued humility in love is a necessary condition for their proper operation. Otherwise we (not the gifts) become “a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal” (1 Corinthians 13:1).

The nine manifestations of the Spirit are listed for us in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10:

“To one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues” (NKJV).

A little observation reveals that these nine gifts fit naturally into three groups, with three in each group.

Information Gifts:

- word of knowledge
- word of wisdom
- discerning of spirits

Action Gifts:

- gifts of healings
- working of miracles
- gift of faith

Vocal Gifts:

prophecy
varieties of tongues
interpretation of tongues

These nine gifts work together in perfect accord. The Holy Spirit is well coordinated in His actions.

Information Gifts

Often two or more of these gifts work together at the same time. For example, a word of knowledge might proceed on the flow of a prophecy. But each gift never loses its individuality. They never compound to form new gifts.

Word of Knowledge

The word of knowledge is the supernatural impartation of a fact that is in the mind of God to the mind of the believer. It is not Spirit-anointed human knowledge. It is God's knowledge, but not all of God's knowledge. It is a *word* of knowledge, a fragment. It is some item of information that the believer did not learn by natural means.

God has all facts before Him. The Holy Spirit, who “searches all things, even the deep things of God” (1 Corinthians 2:10), takes a fact (past, present, or future) that is in the omniscient mind of God and puts that fact into the mind of the believer.

Let's watch the word of knowledge in operation in the Bible. For this, and for the other gifts as well, we will view a few prominent examples, rather than attempt an exhaustive study of all occurrences.

“Now the day before Saul came, the Lord had revealed this to Samuel: 'About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin. Anoint him leader over my people Israel' “(1 Samuel 9:15, 16).

God tells Samuel a simple fact. He also tells him what to do, so we have here a word of wisdom also.

“Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel — all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him” (1 Kings 19:18).

God informed the discouraged prophet Elijah how many in Israel were still true to Jehovah. Elijah needed that encouraging bit of information right about then.

When Elisha's servant Gehazi went after Naaman to get a reward under false pretense, God showed Elisha exactly what Gehazi was up to. The Holy Spirit's communications are far superior to any modern electronic surveillance system. When Gehazi returned, he got an instant replay:

“Elisha said to him, 'Was not my spirit with you when the man got down from his chariot to meet you? Is this the time to take money or to accept clothes — or olive groves and vineyards, or flocks and herds, or male and female slaves? Naaman's leprosy will cling to you and to your descendants forever.' Then Gehazi went from Elisha's presence and his skin was leprous — it had become as white as snow” (2 Kings 5:26-27).

By the Holy Spirit, the prophet Elisha told the king of Israel what the king of Syria whispered in his bedroom (2 Kings 6:8-12)!

We move on now to John 4:18, 19. Jesus, whom God had given the Spirit “without limit”

(see John 3:34), told the poor, sinful woman of her transgressions. No wonder she became so excited she forgot her waterpot and went into the city to tell the men about Jesus. Jesus had revealed her sins to her not to condemn her, but to save her.

Remember Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11)? The Holy Spirit is the divine Auditor of every set of books.

Acts 9:10-12 mentions another Ananias:

“In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, “Ananias!”

“Yes, Lord,” he answered.

The Lord told him, “Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.”

Imagine his surprise at this news. There is never a dull moment when the gifts of the Spirit are in operation!

Our last example is in Acts 27:9, 10. “Now when much time had been spent, and sailing was now dangerous because the Fast was already over, Paul advised them, saying, ‘Men, I perceive that this voyage will end with disaster and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives’” (NKJV).

If the soldiers and sailors had listened, the word of knowledge operating in Paul would have saved them from shipwreck.

This gift of the Spirit has a definite purpose. In its operation, the Holy Spirit imparts pertinent and timely information needed to meet a situation, information usually unobtainable by ordinary means. Take it seriously. It is not a plaything.

Word of Wisdom

This gift can be defined as the supernatural impartation of the wise course of action. Again, it is not Spirit-anointed human wisdom. It is God's wisdom, but not *all* of God's wisdom. It is a word of wisdom, a fragment.

It does not result in any increase in the regular wisdom of the person in whom the gift may operate.

God has all contingencies before Him. He always knows what is best. So the Holy Spirit takes the wisest course of action in the mind of God and reveals it to the believer exercising this gift. It is more than an inner inclination, or leading. It is definite, something the person had no way of figuring out for himself.

In 2 Chronicles 20:15-17 we read, “Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the Lord to you: ‘Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God’s. Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel. You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!’ Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord is with you” (NKJV).

The divinely prescribed military strategy was extraordinary indeed, but it brought the victory.

In Acts 8:29 the Holy Spirit directed Philip to hitch a ride with a passing Ethiopian. Philip had no way of knowing the man's mind was receptive to the gospel. But the Holy Spirit knew,

and the evangelist was in communication with the Spirit.

“While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, 'Simon, three men are looking for you. So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them’” (Acts 10:19, 20).

First we observe a word of knowledge (“three men are looking for you”). But that did not tell Peter what to do. So a word of wisdom was needed (“go with them”) (see also Acts 11:12).

“The Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them’” (Acts 13:2).

Long before, God had called Paul, informing him that he was a chosen messenger to the Gentiles. But the timing of God's will was not clear to Paul. A genuine word of wisdom (probably through prophecy) gave Paul his “marching orders.” Please notice it was not a private, personal message. It was a function of the Holy Spirit in the Church, exercised before Spirit-filled witnesses.

Discerning of Spirits

The discerning of spirits completes the information gifts.

Notice, it is not the gift of *discernment*. It is *discerning of spirits*. It is not a means of judging another person's human spirit, but supernatural insight into the spirit-world.

The spirit-world is very real. The Bible refers to angels and demons as matters of fact. Jesus cast out evil spirits. So did His disciples. So do many Spirit-filled people today. The whole subject might sound somewhat “spooky” to some people, but that is only because so much mystery and superstition has been added to the Biblical facts.

This is not the place to go into a detailed study of what the Bible says about the spirit-world. We shall proceed on the basis that it exists and that Jesus Christ is victorious over the kingdom of Satan. “Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it” (Colossians 2:15, NKJV).

Satan is a deceiver. He loves to counterfeit the genuine work of God. He has fooled many people that way, even in modern society. Even the Corinthian Christians could not understand the difference between the utterances of the pagan oracles and the prophecies given in the church.

Much of the occult today exists on the assumption that everything that is supernatural is divine and therefore part of valid religion. But this assumption is erroneous and dangerous.

The Bible contains tests for distinguishing what comes from God and what comes from Satan (for example, 1 John 4:1-3). But sometimes the discerning of spirits is necessary to ascertain the source of a supernatural phenomenon. A classic example is found in Acts 16:16-18:

“Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, 'These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.' She kept this up for many days. Finally, Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, 'In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!' At that moment the spirit left her.”

The girl's statement was true, but it was associated with the wrong crowd. Satan wanted to give the public impression that the miracles done by the apostles were just part of the general occult practices already going on in the city. But the discerning of spirits operating in Paul

exposed the devil's masquerade.

We still need this gift today, perhaps even more than ever before.

The mechanism, or mode of operation, of the information gifts is different from that of the other groups of gifts. In fact, each group has its own particular mode.

In the information gifts, the facts originate with the Holy Spirit. Sometimes the person through whom the gift is operating suddenly becomes aware of a fact that he or she did not learn.

For example, a Spirit-filled minister sitting on the platform or standing behind the pulpit might suddenly become aware that someone in the congregation is suffering. No one conveyed this information to the minister by natural, sensory means. But remember, the Holy Spirit does not need to use the five senses to convey information. The information might come as a vision, an inner voice, or even as a vivid mental picture. This does not mean the person is a psychic.

These gifts are not the expression of a fertile imagination, or of emotional impulsiveness. Nevertheless, the human element does enter into the picture. This is true of all the gifts of the Spirit.

No, the Holy Spirit needs no practice. He is perfect. But we need to learn how to *respond* to the Holy Spirit. The gift is divine. The response is human. For the person just beginning to exercise a gift, this can mean butterflies in the stomach, mistakes, even an occasional “flop.” This requires humility and understanding.

But the Holy Spirit is a patient Teacher. As we become better acquainted with the ways the Spirit works, we learn to relax and respond correctly. Then the gift flows smoothly.

Sometimes these gifts are represented as being ecstatic in nature. But often the very opposite is true. A high degree of emotion or tension can hinder rather than help us in yielding to the Spirit.

Please remember these things as we consider the other gifts, because they apply to all.

Action Gifts

Gifts of Healings

We begin our examination of the action gifts with a close look at the gifts of healing. Notice the plurals: “*gifts of healings*” (1 Corinthians 12:28, KJV). Sometimes one individual will have greater success in praying for people afflicted with a particular kind of sickness or disease, while someone else has greater results praying for people with another kind.

Divine healing is not “faith healing” or mind over matter. Faith is always a condition for healing, and the mind does play a role in human health and healing, but in divine healing the act is the work of the power of God, not the power of the human mind.

The gift of healing is supernatural and often involves such miraculous events as the creation of new tissue and organs, and the arrest and reversal of otherwise terminal processes.

Why God gave this gift (and the others) is obvious: *God loves people*. And His love is just the same today as it was in the first century. He is vitally interested in relieving human suffering and restoring health to sick people.

Also, He desires to confirm His Word, to glorify His name, and to encourage Christians. The fact that the written Word is now complete is all the more reason to expect God to confirm it by the miraculous.

The Bible contains numerous examples of the operation of this gift. In the Acts of the

Apostles we read of the healing of the lame man at the temple gate (3:1-8), mass healings in Jerusalem (5:12-16), miracles of healing in Samaria under the ministry of Philip (8:5-7), the healing of a lame man at Lystra (14:8-10), plus many more.

And the gift has not ceased. By faith people are still receiving healing for their bodies by the power of God, the God of love. And God wants to do even more, and will do even more, as people believe His Word and obey His Holy Spirit. The gift of healing is not just for a handful of evangelists. God wants it operating in every church!

Working of Miracles

Closely related to the gift of healing is the working of miracles. A miracle is an occurrence contrary to established physical laws.

We human beings interfere with the operation of physical laws every day. When we pick up our shoes in the morning, we interfere with the operation of the law of gravity. And so we go through the day, imposing our will on our physical environment (often thoughtlessly). We do not call these interventions miracles, because we can see and explain their human cause. The human agency involved is so obvious, we think nothing of it.

But when the agency is superhuman (whether of God or angels on the one hand, or of Satan and demons on the other), we call the intervention in the physical process a miracle. Why? Because we do not see the personality at work.

God has established the physical laws, and He runs the universe by them. He intends these laws to operate dependably and uniformly. So for a miracle to occur, sufficient reason for it must exist. When such a reason exists, God certainly has the right to intervene in the operation of His own laws.

For example, Jesus said that if we have faith as small as a mustard seed, we can move mountains (Matthew 17:20). But God does not want Christians to go tossing mountains around. If a mountain should be moved, there must be a sufficient reason for it (and it would have to be a very good one).

Faith, then, is not blind. Rather, it is exercised in accordance with the wisest and most intelligent principles. It is responsible, not capricious.

Some situations, however, do warrant divine intervention in the operation of the laws of nature. That is where the working of miracles comes in. Here are a few Biblical examples of this gift in action:

In 2 Kings 6:1-7 we read the record of a borrowed ax head that fell into deep water, then rose to the surface for Elisha. The specific gravity of iron is such that the laws of physics prohibit it from floating in water. So a miracle took place as God honored the faith of the prophet and brought the iron to the surface.

We move next to Matthew 8:23-27: "Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke him, saying, 'Lord, save us! We're going to drown!' He replied, 'You of little faith, why are you so afraid?' Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. The men were amazed and asked, 'What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!'"

To demonstrate His divinity, comforting the disciples and strengthening their faith at the same time (these things were more important at the moment than the weather), Jesus exercised control over nature!

Then we have Philip's experience in Acts 8:39, 40.

"When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea."

Talk about jet air travel! Philip went first class! No doubt he had accompanied the Ethiopian quite a distance on his chariot journey toward Africa, and it was a long way back to Caesarea. Why not travel part of the way by "Charismatic Air Lines"?

There was Elymas the sorcerer in Acts 13:9-12. This was divine healing in reverse! But don't forget, God did this in love. It was for the sake of the gospel and the salvation of souls that He brought temporary judgment on Elymas. God always knows what secures the most good in the long run.

Gift of Faith

The third of the action gifts is faith. There is more than one kind of faith. For example, there is saving faith. "By grace you are saved through faith" (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

There is faith that is part of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). But that is not the gift of faith. Gifts are given; fruit is grown. Faith as a fruit of the Spirit is an abiding quality. It remains and grows. Its development produces steadfast faithfulness and unwavering trust.

What then is the gift of faith? It is a supernaturally given ability to grasp hold of the promises of God in faith in a particular situation, beyond one's ordinary development of faith.

Usually it involves the *receiving* of a miracle, rather than the *performing* of a miracle.

A classic example, sufficient for our present study, is found in Acts 28:3-5:

"Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand. When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, 'This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live.' But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects."

Ordinarily, a person would get very excited, perhaps even panic, in such a situation. But an unusual calm, something beyond human nature, came over the apostle. His faith rose up suddenly and laid hold of Christ's promise (see Mark 16:18). Calmly he shook off the poisonous snake and went on with his business, unharmed.

The mechanism, or mode of operation, of the action gifts is obviously different from the mode of the information gifts and the vocal gifts. Sometimes they involve the laying on of hands, sometimes just a spoken command in Jesus' name. In all cases, positive faith is very prominent.

Vocal Gifts

For some reason, these seem to raise the most questions, perhaps because they appear to be the most common. Perhaps they are very susceptible to misuse (as they were in Corinth).

Their abuse has caused even some charismatic churches to ban them from the main services. This seems to be an overreaction, or an easy way out of the situation. It is easier to push the gifts aside than to help people into a fuller experience in the Spirit. But in the long run, everybody loses.

Anything worthwhile takes a little effort and attention. So do the understanding and cultivation of the gifts. They are too important to be neglected. Paul admonished Timothy, "Stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands" (2 Timothy 1:6, NKJV).

No one need be embarrassed by the scriptural operation of the gifts of the Spirit. They are beautiful. The Holy Spirit knows what He is doing. And if the Spirit-filled minister knows what he is doing, he will let Him have His way. He should know enough about the operation of spiritual gifts to teach his people how to respond to the Holy Spirit scripturally, and also to guide the service in the Spirit so that everything is scriptural, Christ-honoring, and edifying to the Church.

For our instruction, Paul devotes the entire fourteenth chapter of First Corinthians to the rules for the operation of the vocal gifts. Paul is not suppressing the gifts. He is laying down the inspired procedures to be followed to experience their full, free, and proper exercise.

When I was a freshman in a Bible School in California, I had the privilege of listening to a series of special lectures on the gifts of the Spirit given by an Englishman named Harold Horton.

I shall never forget hearing him say one morning, "Paul did not go down to Corinth with a bucket of water to put the fire out. He went down with a pair of tongs to put the stray coals back on the fire, and a pair of bellows to pump the blaze up higher!"

Other gifts of the Spirit might be more important than these. That, however, does not make these unimportant. Every manifestation of the Spirit has its place and purpose. None is to be despised. "Do not treat prophecies with contempt" (1 Thessalonians 5:20).

Prophecy

Among the vocal gifts, prophecy is the most useful. As public utterances (and remember, we are not talking about private, devotional tongues here), tongues must be followed by interpretation of tongues. It takes these two gifts together to equal the value of prophecy.

"I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification" (1 Corinthians 14:5, NKJV).

First Corinthians 14:3 gives us the purpose of prophecy:

"Everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort."

Prophecy is primarily for the church (verse 22). Sometimes prophecies are for personal guidance and spiritual impartation (1 Timothy 1:18; 4:14).

Essentially, prophecy is for "edification and exhortation and comfort" (1 Corinthians 12:3).

Above all, it is not a substitute for the guidance of Scripture. Its content is to be judged by the written Word of God (1 Corinthians 14:29). This is true of all charismatic utterances.

The possession of the gifts of the Spirit does not make anyone so spiritual that he is above the Scriptures. Through spiritual pride some have taken this attitude and have become unteachable. Usually they make shipwreck of their lives and of their faith. So watch out for the "Charismatic ego-trip." Stay humble, but not ignorant. Paul said, "if anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command. If he ignores this, he himself will be ignored" (verses 37, 38).

Prophecy edifies the church (verse 4). Yet, the unconverted can be reached by prophecy. By a word of knowledge carried on the flow of a prophecy, some have been convicted and converted.

"If an unbeliever or someone who does not understand comes in while everybody is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be judged by all, and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, 'God is

really among you” (verses 24, 25).

“You can all prophesy in turn, so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged” (verse 31).

“Therefore, my brothers, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues” (verse 39).

Varieties of Tongues

Mention was made earlier of the three purposes of speaking in other tongues. Let us look more closely now at the public utterance of tongues. First Corinthians deals with this purpose of speaking in tongues. We will consider tongues and the interpretation of tongues together because that is the way they operate.

In private devotions, and even in the prayer time following the public service, praying out loud in other tongues in the Spirit is scriptural, proper, and personally edifying.

“Anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit” (verse 2).

“He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church” (verse 4).

In the public church service no one should speak out in tongues loudly enough to bring attention to oneself unless it is a message in tongues to be followed by an interpretation (1 Corinthians 14:16, 17). Public address systems amplify this improper expression of personal devotional tongues.

The same biblical principle applies if everyone in a public service is speaking loudly enough to create dissonance, a discordant mingling of voices.

“If you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say 'Amen' at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say? For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified” (verses 16, 17 NKJV).

“If the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and some who do not understand or some unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind?” (verse 23).

These biblical injunctions are clear. Therefore, pentecostals and charismatics who persistently ignore them have no one else to blame if people say they are crazy. Also, it drives people away and causes them to miss out on the fullness of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

“And the spirits of prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion but of peace” (verses 32, 33, KJV).

“Let all things be done decently and in order” (verse 40, KJV). It is proper for Spirit-filled believers to pray in the Spirit during united praise and worship moments in the public service if it is done quietly and does not distract others.

Also, tongues are a sign to unbelievers (1 Corinthians 14:22). They certainly were on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2). A large crowd gathered. Though some mocked, the people asked, “what does this mean?” That gave Peter an opportunity to preach the gospel. As a result, many believed. The same can happen when believers receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit during public services.

Interpretation of Tongues

Why have public tongues at all? Why not have just prophecy? Because tongues, especially

when followed by an interpretation, serve a purpose. Tongues and interpretation confront the unbeliever with the supernatural. Someone might hear a prophecy and miss the fact that something supernatural is happening. But it is hard to miss the supernatural in tongues and interpretation, even if the person listening rejects the message (verse 21). Thus it becomes a “sign” to the unbeliever that God is present and active. This is all the more reason to give it place in the public service.

A “two or three” rule applies both to prophecy and to tongues and interpretation.

“If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God. Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the others judge” (verses 27-29, KJV).

Each message in tongues should be followed by an interpretation. More than three prophecies and more than three messages in tongues with interpretation in one service are unscriptural. The Holy Spirit is very gracious, however, and rather than discourage an honest person, He will repeat himself. But that is not the way He has instructed us to yield to Him. It is interesting to note that after a third prophecy and/or interpretation, nothing new is added to the substance of the message. The Holy Spirit has said what He intended to say in that service through the vocal gifts.

Responding to the Holy Spirit

Remember 1 Corinthians 14:32. We do not control the Holy Spirit, but we do control our own human spirit and how it responds to the Holy Spirit.

The vocal gifts, too, have their own mechanism, or mode of operation.

The thoughts expressed in genuine charismatic utterances originate in the mind of the Holy Spirit, not in the mind of the one speaking. This does not mean that the speaker is passive. The speaker's vocal mechanism does not become merely an instrument for the voice of the Holy Spirit to speak through. The human personality is very much involved in the total process. It is not obliterated by the personality of the Holy Spirit. The voice, vocabulary (except in *glossolalia*), and the personality are very human.

The Holy Spirit works with the human spirit (and vice versa), not independent of it.

In *glossolalia* (speaking in tongues), the vocabulary and grammar are totally that of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God works directly upon the spirit of man, prompting the utterance and directing the process of verbalization. Acts 2:4 says,

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

The disciples did the speaking, but the Holy Spirit gave the “utterance,” that is, the verbal impetus (momentum) and the grammatical substance.

In prophecy and interpretation of tongues, the vocabulary and grammar are those of the speaker, but the verbal momentum and thought patterns are those of the Holy Spirit. In other words, the Holy Spirit works with the human spirit as far as the human spirit is able to participate in the process according to the nature of the process.

Too, prophecy and interpretation require more faith and humility than speaking in tongues, because if a person stumbles while giving a message in tongues, probably no one will know the difference. But if a person misses the leading of the Spirit in prophecy or interpretation, probably everybody will know!

What about these human stumblings and falterings? Do they mean the speaker is not “in the Spirit”?

Not necessarily. They cast no reflection at all upon the reality of the Holy Spirit's activity. They indicate simply that the speaker is human and needs to learn how to respond better to the Spirit.

It is like a child learning to walk. He falters and falls a number of times in the process. But we do not condemn or discourage him. We encourage him to get right up and go again, one step at a time. Soon he walks as gracefully as most adults.

So it is in learning how to respond to the Holy Spirit. The first few times the Holy Spirit places the beginning words of a prophecy or an interpretation upon the mind of a Spirit-filled person, and generates in his or her spirit the impetus to speak, a genuine case of stage fright can develop.

Let's suppose it happens to you for the first time (we are assuming you are a Spirit-filled Christian). *Is this really the Holy Spirit, or is it just me?* you wonder. You feel the impetus, the prompting, within you.

“What if I make a mistake? What if I don't know how to yield to the Spirit, and say something stupid? What if I don't yield? Will God forgive me? Will He give the message to someone else?”

All kinds of thoughts race through your mind, tending to distract your attention from the Holy Spirit. It's the opportune moment in the service (and you do wait for the opportune time, never interrupting the minister, someone leading in prayer, or special music). Soon it will be gone. The service is silent.

Why doesn't Pastor give it? you wonder.

But the pastor doesn't have it. You do!

So here goes! By now the momentum of the Holy Spirit's prompting has built up inside. Your own human spirit feels the compulsion. So you open your mouth and pour it out as the Spirit pours it through your mind and onto your speech mechanism.

You hear your own voice. It sounds nervous. If you keep your attention on the Holy Spirit, the words and phrases flow freely. But if you panic, start thinking about what you are saying, and try to make it sound “right,” you will falter.

Suddenly, it's over! A sense of sweet release sweeps through your spirit (total, if that is the only message; partial, if another is about to follow). It's beautiful. You begin to rejoice with the congregation.

Did you falter? Don't worry. Keep open to the Holy Spirit. As He continues to work through you, you will learn how to relax and yield to Him more smoothly.

I remember an evening service I attended in California years ago. A message in tongues was given, and a gentleman behind me started the interpretation by saying, “My people, I say unto you this morning ... uh, I mean this afternoon ... uh, I mean this evening.”

I tried hard (really I did), but it was just too much for my sense of humor. Afterward, I said to the person next to me, “The Holy Spirit sure had a hard time getting across to that brother what time of day it is.”

Maybe I wasn't as charitable as I should have been. After all, sometimes I, too, have needed the patience and understanding of the church.

The principles of 1 Corinthians 13 are very important in the operation of the gifts of the Spirit. Love is essential to eliminate pride or a harsh critical attitude. Love will keep us from

sounding like the resounding of a gong or the clanging of a cymbal. It will make us patient, gracious, and understanding toward those whose response to the Holy Spirit is not yet graceful and mature. It will prevent us from wanting to be the only ones used by the Spirit, keeping us from exercising a one-man or one-woman monopoly on the gifts in the church.

Be courteous in exercising the gifts of the Spirit. Maybe God wants to start using somebody new. Give him or her a chance, even though you might have the interpretation.

Perhaps two or three will pick up the prophecy or interpretation in the Spirit. If two or more start speaking at once, usually the more experienced (more mature) person should stop and let the less experienced continue. In any event, only one should continue: "If a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop" (1 Corinthians 14:30).

Some have wondered why two people who start to give an interpretation at the same time say different things. That is because the gift is the *interpretation* of tongues, not the *translation* of tongues. A translation is a word-for-word rendering. An interpretation is a thought-for-thought paraphrase, employing greater flexibility in the use of the words and phrases.

And, pastor, don't panic and overreact if someone makes a mistake, or the service appears to have the potential for getting out of hand. Be wise enough yourself in the ways of the Spirit, sensitive enough yourself to His direction, to help the people toward a smooth, edifying response.

So let's all "covet earnestly the best gifts" (1 Corinthians 12:31, KJV), remembering always to follow the "more excellent way" — the way of love. *That* is the Holy Spirit's way.

APPENDIX A: The Day Of Pentecost: A Closer Look

Most Christians have a basic knowledge of what happened on the day of Pentecost. The facts are recorded in The Acts Of The Apostles, Chapter Two.

Yet, when people are asked how many were baptized in the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the common response is "a hundred and twenty."

Let's look more closely.

When the people heard Peter's words, "they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?'" (verse 37 NKJV).

Peter replied, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (verse 38).

Verse 41 records: "Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them."

That day.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit that morning was just the beginning of the *day* of Pentecost. About three thousand people needed to be baptized in water, and in the early Church believers were baptized immediately upon their confession of faith.

So the next event on that day was baptizing about three thousand new believers. What a joyous time of celebration that massive occasion must have been!

Now, was water baptism the climax and final event of the day? Did anything else happen?

We remember what Peter said: "...and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

So, what were the new believers expecting? They were expecting *exactly what the one hundred and twenty had received* that very morning.

Peter did not lie. He did not speak conjecturally or tentatively. He did not say that they should expect to receive the Holy Spirit someday, perhaps in a few days or weeks. He did not send them away without the gift. The order was definite and direct: repent; be baptized; you shall receive. No delay. It all happened the *day* of Pentecost.

That being so, one more dynamic feature must have added dramatically to the events surrounding the baptismal celebration. It is reasonable and proper to conclude that those new believers were baptized in the Holy Spirit right after being baptized in water. Perhaps some arose from their "watery grave" speaking with other tongues, and others as they were rejoicing in their new life in Christ.

We can only imagine how the scene must have affected the city of Jerusalem.

What a complete day that day of Pentecost became as the reality it had symbolized unfolded in its fullness throughout the day.

So, how many were baptized in the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost? — not about a hundred and twenty, but about *three thousand a hundred and twenty*. It was a much bigger and fuller day than what is commonly assumed.

Moreover, that was only the beginning. The Gift given to the Church on that day is still here. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off; as many as the Lord our God will call" (verse 39).

Afar off — in time as well as in distance. The Holy Spirit is an age-long gift in His fullness and entirety. Just as the new believers on the day of Pentecost received exactly what they had witnessed and been promised, even so believers today may receive the same in its fullness — nothing subtracted, nothing expired. Tongues have not ceased and will not cease until "that which is perfect [*to teleion*] has come" (1 Corinthians 13:10).

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

APPENDIX B: Tongues: The Necessary Evidence

Peter knew he was going to be in trouble. God had just hammered through to him that the Gentiles are not “off limits.” Now he was about to take a trip from Joppa to Caesarea to visit Cornelius — a gentile!

That was going to cause an uproar when he got back to Jerusalem, and he knew it. So Peter did a smart thing. He took six brothers from the Joppa church with him (twice the number of witnesses needed to establish the facts).

At first Peter was cautious: “May I ask why you sent for me?” Cornelius's reply opened the way for Peter to go ahead and preach the gospel to the assembled group. Every word was received as it was spoken.

Then Peter uttered the key words: “everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.” Immediately they believed and were saved.

Then it happened. The Holy Spirit fell on all these brand new, “seconds-old” believers, and they began to speak with tongues.

Peter challenged his astonished Jewish companions: “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?”

No objections. Why? Because “they heard them speak with tongues.” That was the conclusive evidence that they were baptized in the Holy Spirit. And that meant that they were saved, because a person cannot be baptized in the Holy Spirit without first getting saved (John 13:17; Acts 2:38).

Sure enough, Peter was in big trouble when he returned to Jerusalem. But he had wisely taken along “the Joppa six.”

The circumcised believers (and that was most of the Jerusalem church, including apostles!) contended with him: “You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them.”

Carefully Peter went over what happened at Caesarea, emphasizing how God had baptized the new gentile believers in the Holy Spirit.

Then came the “zinger:” “If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?” (Acts 11:17 NASB).

Sudden silence. No more objections. The issue was settled. All glorified God.

Why? What brought the opposition to an abrupt end? What was the conclusive proof? Tongues! No other evidence was needed. No other evidence would have been decisive.

And no other evidence is decisive today. Of all the many evidences of a Spirit-filled life, the one that is decisive at the point of beginning — the evidence that identifies the experience with what happened on the Day of Pentecost — is speaking with tongues as the Spirit gives utterance.

That makes tongues the necessary initial physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

This is the clear and firm position of The Scriptures. It is the clear and firm position of The Assemblies Of God. May it always be the clear and firm position of all of our churches and ministers.

APPENDIX C: The Fullness

Filled By The Spirit With All The Fullness Of God In Jesus Christ

The "home base" and starting point of our exploration of this profound and marvelous revelation is found in Paul's twin epistles to the Colossians and the Ephesians.

An immediate and urgent reason for the writing of these two epistles was the threat of Gnosticism with its philosophical speculations concerning Jesus. When the gospel encountered the Greek philosophical mind-set, it tended to become distorted by Greek thought forms. The worst by far was Gnosticism.

Gnostic Christology was divided into two parts. The Docetic Gnostics said that Jesus was an "aeon" that only seemed to have a body. This denied Jesus' full humanity. By contrast, the Cerinthian Gnostics said that Jesus was an ordinary man with a real body, that the aeon "Christ" came on Him at His baptism but left Him when He was on the cross, and therefore that Jesus died on the cross a mere man. This denied Jesus' full deity. Both denials are found in modern religious and New Age thought. Both rob Him of His true person and also rob mankind of its Savior.

So then, the need to combat and refute Gnosticism became the occasion to establish in the New Testament an inspired, decisive declaration of the deity and preeminence of Jesus Christ. This declaration is based on Jesus' own claims, validated by the Father in raising Him from the dead and exalting Him above all things. Colossians and Ephesians link with Philippians in the divine declaration. Over two decades later, the apostle John wrote the inspired, decisive declaration of the full humanity of Jesus — the Word (*logos*) made flesh.

Woven throughout Colossians and Ephesians is the word "fullness" (*pleroma*). It is introduced in Colossians and developed in Ephesians. This could indicate that when Paul wrote these two epistles, he wrote Colossians first and then Ephesians before sending them together by Tychicus. Colossians emphasizes the fullness of Christ, the Head of the Church, His body; Ephesians emphasizes the fullness of the Church, His body, received from Christ, its Head.

Colossians 1:19.

Colossians contains the two foundational statements of the fullness of Jesus Christ. The first is in Colossians 1:19, "For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell." Because the words, "the Father," do not appear in the original, a variety of translations have appeared. Some are awkward and strained. Others make "the fullness" the subject of the sentence. For example, "[F]or in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell" (ESV, likewise the RSV). "For all the fullness was pleased to dwell in him" (World English Translation, likewise Darby Translation). The fullness of the Godhead was indeed pleased to dwell in Jesus Christ. Most translate the verse by supplying either "God" or "the Father" as the subject.

Colossians 2:8 - 10.

The second foundational statement is in Colossians 2:8 - 10, "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic

principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead (*theotetos*) bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power."

It has pleased the Father, Who is the executive authority in the Trinity, that all the fullness of the Deity should dwell bodily in Jesus Christ. It pleased the Father that the glorified body of Jesus Christ be the fixed and permanent dwelling of the fullness of the very essence of the omnipresent God. This accords completely with the great Christological statement in Philippians 2:5 - 11. God has highly exalted Jesus Christ and given Him the Name that is above every name. The Name embodies the fullness.

This settles the matter for all believers for all time. We reject all spurious gnostic "knowledge," all empty egocentric eastern and New Age mysticism and so-called "spirituality." In Jesus Christ "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3).

It is to be noted that in Colossians 2:10 "complete" is *pepleromenoi* (perfect passive participle of *plerao*). "You are in Him made full."

Also, in Colossians 4:12 Paul writes, "Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete (*pepleromenoi*) in all the will of God." Following the Alexandrian text (but not papyrus 46), most modern versions read *peplerophoremnoi* (perfect passive participle of *plerophoreo*), "fully assured" but possibly also meaning "complete."

We go now to the Epistle To The Ephesians.

Ephesians 1:10 says that in the arrangement of the fullness of the times God will head up in Christ all things in the heavens and on the earth. Although this verse speaks of the headship of Christ, it contains an example of the general use of the word "fullness." Here it refers to the fullness of the times. We find other examples of the general use of the word in Romans 11:12, 25 (the fullness of the elect), Romans 15:29 (the fullness of the blessing of the gospel), 1 Corinthians 10:26, 28 (the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof), Galatians 4:4 (the fullness of the time). But when "fullness" (*pleroma*) refers to Jesus Christ and His relationship to "all things," especially to the Church, the word is theologically specific.

Ephesians 1:15 - 23.

We come now to Paul's prayer in Ephesians 1:15 - 23. He prays that God will give them a spirit (or Spirit) of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Christ, the eyes of their hearts being enlightened to see (among other truths) the surpassing greatness of God's power that was demonstrated in raising Jesus Christ from the dead; seating Him at His right hand in the heavenlies, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name in this age and the next; placing all things under His feet and giving Him to be Head over all things to the Church, which indeed is His body, the fullness (*pleroma*) of Him who fills everything everywhere and in every way.

Notice specifically the apositional phrase that states clearly that the Church is the fullness of Christ. The Head (Jesus Christ) is seated at the right hand of God and also vitally connected to His Body (the Church) — that is filled with His fullness — with all things under His feet (His Body, His Church) here and now on earth.

Only one thing remains to be done. "Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign

till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death" (1 Corinthians 15:24 - 26).

Although the references in Colossians and Ephesians are to the Church, they include each member. As believers in Christ, we are part of something surpassingly greater than ourselves individually; yet each of us is connected to its fullness.

Look at the power of God that is directed toward us, available to us, working in and for us! We see it in full action in Christ's resurrection and exaltation. He is exalted higher than the heavens (Hebrews 7:26). That is where the Head of the Church — your Head — is now positioned in the fullness of His glory, authority and power. Our exalted Head is right now seated on the highest possible throne of the universe. As believers in Jesus Christ, we have "connections in high places." We are vitally connected to our Head, in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, in whom we are complete, and who fills us with His fullness. The fullness of the Head flows throughout His body and each of its members.

As human beings, whenever our head (mind, will) chooses to do something, it puts our body into action. Life, energy, communication are flowing throughout our body. Instructions go out. Immediately our body is mobilized. There is action. Things get done.

The same is true of the Body of Christ. Whenever our creative Head, Jesus Christ, wills to do something on earth, He puts His Body — His fullness — into action, and every member is a part of the action.

This must not be dismissed or diminished as merely an "ideal." This is what the Church is. It is not necessarily what the Church is living up to, or to what it or its members have attained. The Church is "a work in progress," and so is each believer. Nevertheless, God is calling us to live up to who we are in faith and obedience. This is the divine imperative, and we must take it seriously. "As He is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4:17).

Ephesians 2:20 - 22.

We encounter another metaphor of the Church in Ephesians 2:20 - 22. We the Church have been "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a habitation of God in [by] the Spirit." The Church is both the Body of Christ and the Temple of God, each with its own distinctions and applications, and filled with God's fullness.

Ephesians 3:14 -19.

Let us go forward now to Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:14 - 19. He prays that God would grant them, "according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the width and length and depth and height — to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

We focus our attention on the last clause — "filled with all the fullness of God" — specifically the word translated "with." It is the Greek preposition *eis*. Although its primary meaning is "into," *eis* has a broad range of definitions and applications. Here it means more than "with." "Into all" means "up to the full measure of all." As we would say of a cup, "filled up to the brim." The NIV renders it, "filled to the measure of all the fullness of God." Others say, "filled up to all the

fullness of God" (NASB, NET, Lexham, Mounce). It is the purpose accomplished through the process. Both the purpose and the process are embodied in the high-priestly prayer of our Lord, recorded in John 17, and in the other New Testament prayers for believers.

Ephesians 4:10 - 16.

This leads us directly to Ephesians Chapter Four. Verse 10 says that Jesus Christ "ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things." The fullness of the very essence of the Godhead, including every attribute (quality) of that essence dwells bodily in Jesus Christ. This includes His omnipresence. That is why Jesus can be everywhere at once — at the right hand of God ever interceding for us (Hebrews 7:25), and at the same time by the Holy Spirit (who is also the Spirit of Christ) with us always even to the end of the age (Matthew 28:20). His glorified body transcends the laws of the present physical cosmos.

He "gave gifts to men" (verse 8, quoting from Psalm 68:18). "He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God. to a perfect man, to (*eis*, into) the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head — Christ — from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love" (Ephesians 4:11 - 16).

Notice the word "fullness" in verse 13. How is the Church "filled up to all the fullness of God" (Ephesians 3:19)? By growing up "into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13). All the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Jesus Christ. As we grow up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Jesus Christ, we become filled up to the measure of all the fullness of God. As we shall see in Ephesians 5:18, the Holy Spirit has brought that fullness into the Church through Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church.

The biblical description of the Church as a body emphasizes both the headship of Jesus Christ and also the interaction of believers with one another in the local church. That is why Paul earlier focused on the local church in 1 Corinthians 10:16, 17, and 12:12 - 27. 1 Corinthians 12:12 states, "For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ."

Notice, it does not say, "so is the Church," but "so is Christ." In other words, Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, is so identified with His Body, the Church, that His Church is not considered apart from Him and He is not considered apart from His Church. Jesus Christ is not a head without a body, and the Church is not a body without a head. The Church is not only fully connected to Christ, but also fully in Christ. Also, Christ is fully in His Church. Christ is all and in all (Colossians 3:11).

Theosis.

Before we proceed further, it is important that we address an error that came early into the post-apostolic Church and has been with us ever since, particularly in the eastern Church. It is the doctrine of Theosis, also known as Divinization. Briefly stated, it is said to be the process of becoming so united with God that believers actually become deity. A classic statement of the

doctrine is by Athanasius, Bishop Of Alexandria (c. A.D 296 - May 2, 373). Athanasius said, "He was made man that we might be made God."

This assertion comes directly out of the influence of Greek thought forms deeply ingrained in the minds of many of the Church fathers. It misinterprets Peter's statement in 2 Peter 1:4 that God gave us very great and precious promises so that we "may be partakers of the divine nature [*phuseos*, from *phusis*]." The word *phusis* was assumed to be ontological (referring to the divine essence), rather than moral (referring to the divine character) as it clearly is from the context and also from 2 Corinthians 6:17 - 7:1. Romans 8:29 says that believers are predestined to be conformed to the character-image of Christ, not the essence of His deity.

The doctrine of Theosis also misinterprets Psalm 82:6, where God called the judges of Israel "gods" because they were His representatives as judges. Jesus referred to Psalm 82:6 when He used His adversaries' own rabbinical style of interpretation against them (John 10:34, 35).

Sometimes an error is a truth that is taken too far. The distinction between the Creator and the created must always be maintained. Being filled with the fullness of God in Jesus Christ does not mean that we will become divine. What fills and what is filled are two distinct things. By the Holy Spirit the essence of God fills the believer; but the believer does not become the essence of God. The contents of a container fill the container and might even permeate and saturate the container; however, the container does not become the contents. No matter how fully God fills the Church and the believer, the Church and the believer do not become God. The Church is the fullness of God because He fills it with His fullness. Our devotional pursuit is to be filled with the fullness of God out of love for God and devotion to Him, not to become God or a god ourselves.

The Church needs to clear Greek thought forms and neoplatonic ontological presuppositions from its thinking. For too long the Church has read the Bible through "Greek glasses." The Scriptures were written in a Hebrew/moral-relational mindset, not a Greek/ontological-metaphysical mindset. The Scriptures neither came from Plato nor are they understood through Platonism. They are by the Spirit of Christ Himself.

Ephesians 5:18.

We arrive now at Ephesians 5:18. "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit" (NIV). A key word in this command is the preposition translated "with." The original Greek word is *en*. Although its common meaning is "in," *en* (like *eis*) has a broad range of definitions and applications. The word is in the dative case. The question is this: is it the "dative of place" (locative, "in"), or is it the "dative of means" (instrumental, "by")? If it is locative, it should read "be filled in spirit" or "be filled in the Spirit." Neither gives a satisfactory sense.

"With" is too general to be an adequate translation of *en* in the context of Ephesians 5:18. The International Critical Commentary (Driver, Plummer and Briggs) affirms it to be instrumental, "by." "By" is also the reading of The Holman Standard Bible, The Lexham English Bible, and The New English Translation (NET). "Be filled by the Spirit" appears to be the most natural translation of *plerousthe en pneumatī*.

So the question is: be filled with what by the Spirit? The answer has been right before us all along: be filled by the Spirit with all the fullness of God in Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit was poured out on the Day Of Pentecost (Acts 1:1 - 4). He has been in the Church and in believers ever since, indwelling and infilling.

Before we can be filled by the Holy Spirit, we must have the Holy Spirit. "Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His" (Romans 8:9). Jesus said that we must be born of the Spirit (John 3:3 - 8). When we believe on Jesus Christ, we are born of the Spirit and receive the earnest (deposit) of the Holy Spirit in our hearts (2 Corinthians 1:21, 22; 5:5). Also, it is important that believers be filled with and remain full of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the one who baptizes in (with) the Holy Spirit (John 1:33). At Pentecost the disciples were all filled with the Holy Spirit (*eplethesan apantes pneumatos hagiou*). Peter was "filled with the Holy Spirit" (*pletheis pneumatos hagiou*, Acts 4:8). The Lord sent Ananias to the newly converted Saul (Paul) that he may receive his sight and "be filled with the Holy Spirit" (*plestheis pneumatos hagiou*, Acts 9:17). Later, Paul, "filled with the Holy Spirit" (*plestheis pneumatos hagiou*), spoke temporary blindness on Elymas the sorcerer for opposing the gospel (Acts 13:9). The Holy Spirit works in believers from within.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of our Father (Matthew 10:20) and the Spirit of Christ (1 Peter 1:11). He brings into believers the fullness of God in Jesus Christ. So then, Ephesians 5:18 (being filled by the Spirit), accomplishes Ephesians 3:19 (being filled up to all the fullness of God), by means of Ephesians 4:13 (bringing believers up to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ).

Because the Holy Spirit fills the Church and the believer with all the fullness of God in Jesus Christ, there must be nothing in our character and behavior that is not in the character and behavior of Jesus Christ; likewise, every quality of character and behavior that is in Jesus Christ must be fully established in the Church and the believer. It is the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22, 23). It is our calling; it is our destiny.

"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18). As we, the children of God, look into the word of God and live in the presence of God, we are being changed by the Spirit of God into the image of the Son of God.

You can be "confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6).

John 1:14 - 16.

And the word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth ... And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace" (John 1:14, 16).

When the apostle John wrote his Gospel, over twenty years had come and gone since the writing of the last of the Epistles. The divine deposit of The Scriptures of the New Testament was growing and becoming established in the Church. So John must have been very familiar with what Paul wrote in Colossians and Ephesians about the fullness of God in Jesus Christ. Therefore it is most reasonable to assume that when he wrote the grand prologue of his Gospel, John had in mind what Paul had written.

John was facing the increasing threat of the same Gnosticism that Paul opposed in his epistles. So John used the same word, fullness, to reaffirm that Jesus Christ is indeed the Fullness: the fullness of God, the fullness of the Church, the fullness of all things. The Body of

Christ and each of its parts have all received of His fullness — and grace for grace, fresh grace for today in place of grace for yesterday, out of the fullness of Jesus Christ.

The Content and Qualities Of The Fullness.

God created man (male and female) in His image, according to His likeness (Genesis 1:26). This is the image and likeness of God's personhood (intellect, sensibility, free will), not His essence and deity (Godhead).

Likewise, the fullness of God in the Church and the believer is not the fullness of His essence, His eternal being. God's deity, eternal self-existence, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, immutability, sovereignty, authority, and glory are His alone. By the fullness is meant the fullness that is given to believers in Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. We have this treasure in "clay jars" (2 Corinthians 4:7).

We see this distinction in Christ's great high priestly prayer, recorded in John 17. When He prayed, "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was" (verse 3), Jesus Christ was requesting the full restoration of His pre-incarnate glory that is His as full Deity. God will not give His glory to another (Isaiah 42:8). So the request could come only from One who is fully God Himself; otherwise the request would be arrogant and presumptive blasphemy.

In Verse 22 of His prayer Jesus said, "And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent me, and have loved them as You have loved Me." This is the glory that the Father gave Jesus Christ as the Son of Man on earth, and that Jesus delegated to His disciples, then and now, for the purposes stated in the prayer. This is the glory that the Church now possesses by the Holy Spirit.

The ascension and glorification of Jesus Christ did not remove Him from us. On the contrary, by receiving from the Father the gift of the Holy Spirit and pouring Him out on us (Acts 2:33), Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit (who is also the Spirit of Christ) can be — and is — nearer to us now than He possibly could have been in the days of His humanity on earth — among us, yes, even in us.

The fullness that believers have in Christ is a complete fellowship (communion), an eternal love relationship with all of its content and qualities, that will be finalized in "the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Revelation 19:7 - 9) — Christ and His Bride (the Church) forever united, not in deity but in spirit, because "he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him" (1 Corinthians 6:17). Our glorified bodies will be "conformed to His glorious body" (Philippians 3:21), a new humanity in the redeemed creation. God was made man that redeemed man will be joined to "the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5), not in the unique hypostatic union of God and man in Jesus Christ, but in spirit and in glorified bodies that will no longer be subject to or confined by the physical laws of the present creation.

So, what are the qualities of this relationship? What all is contained in the fullness of God in Jesus Christ that is given by the Holy Spirit to the Church and each believer?

LOVE.

God is love" (1 John 4:8, 16). In this terse and comprehensive statement the word "love" is not a predicate nominative. That is, "love" does not define the essence of God's being. God is not a mystical, metaphysical substance or essence called "love." It is a predicate adjective, an

all-inclusive definition of God's moral character. Everything in God's moral character is established in love, motivated by love, and expresses itself in attitudes and actions of love. God is full of love; in Him is the fullness of every moral quality of love.

All true morality and spirituality is summed up in love. Jesus said that supreme love for God and equal love for others is the anchor point from which all moral obligation suspends (Matthew 22:37 - 40). Echoing this, Romans 13:10 says that "love is the fulfillment of the law."

Love is the basic, voluntary, purposeful set of the soul on the highest well-being of God, the equal well-being of all human beings, and the proper care and treatment of God's creatures and creation.

Love is the highest moral act of the will, encompassing all right moral character and resulting in morally right attitudes and actions. It is the character of God and of all who are right with God. They have repented and become reconciled to God by faith in Jesus Christ, and thus are morally compatible with God and spiritually in fellowship with Him.

Love is being motivated by the same things that motivate God, living for the same things God lives for, working for the same goals God works for and pursuing them by the same means — all in joyful unity with God in heart and mind.

According to Ephesians 3:17, to "be filled with all the fullness of God," we must be "rooted and grounded in love." This is accomplished by the Holy Spirit. "The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit" (Romans 5:5). The Holy Spirit did not open the top of our heart and "pour in" a mystical substance called "love." The Holy Spirit made Jesus Christ and truth so real to us that our hearts opened up to His love like a flower.

This real, "God-kind" of love is: unselfish, impartial, motivating, compassionate, merciful, just, truthful, patient, humble, pure and holy.

"Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails" (1 Corinthians 13:4 - 8).

"The Lord is gracious and full of compassion" (Psalm 111:4; 145:8). Jesus said, "Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be the sons of your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:44 - 45).

This is the fruit of the Spirit. "Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Galatians 5:22, 23). This is like a string of pearls, with love as the unbreakable cord that unites them all.

Part of Paul's prayer in Philippians 1:9 - 11 is that believers' "love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, ... being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by [*dia*, through] Jesus Christ."

In 1 Thessalonians 3:12 his prayer is that "the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints."

Following Peter's statement that God has given believers "exceeding great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption of the world through lust," the apostle continues, "But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-

control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours [in you] and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:3 - 8).

Because this is the character of God, it is therefore the character of Jesus Christ. Love is fully established and openly revealed in Jesus. Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:1). He was — and is — "full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). He is "holy, harmless, undefiled" and completely set apart from the defilements of sinners (Hebrews 7:26). He was zealous and highly motivated to be about His Father's business (Luke 2:49). He was full of compassion (Matthew 9:36; 14:14). "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). This same love compelled Jesus Christ to die on the cross for us. All genuine believers are motivated by the same God-kind of love.

"He who lives in love lives in God, and God in him" (1 John 4:16). All the qualities of love are outstanding qualities of people who are filled by the Spirit with all the fullness of God in Jesus Christ.

Jesus invites, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light" (Matthew 11:28, 29). We learn love from Jesus.

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). Think like Jesus. Take on His mind-set and attitudes. Learn from Him. He is both the Teacher and the Curriculum. The Bible is our textbook. The Holy Spirit is our Tutor.

LIGHT.

"This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5).

This does not mean that God is a form of electromagnetic radiation. "God is light" means that the fullness of absolute truth is in God and is revealed by God in its moral perfection and clarity. God lives and acts immutably according to the truth and He clearly, unerringly reveals the truth.

Light is truth — truth revealed, truth perceived, truth received, truth obeyed, truth displayed. Light includes knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. Knowledge is having the truth; understanding is knowing what the truth means; wisdom is knowing what to do with the truth, how to apply it.

"Darkness" is the absence of light (truth). It is an intellectual and moral vacuum that is readily filled with error and evil. When the mind perceives truth and rejects it, the mind commits itself to error. Then darkness is more than the absence of truth; it becomes the adversary of truth, resulting in intellectual and moral perversion, and spiritual suicide. Jesus said, "If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Matthew 6:23).

Darkness has no place in God. God is true and always true to Himself. God's word is truth ("light"). "The commandment is a lamp, and the law is light" (Proverbs 6:23). Jesus said to the Father, "Your word is truth" (John 17:17).

When God sent Jesus Christ into the world, He sent the fullness of His light into the world. "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4). Jesus declared, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life" (John 8:12).

He said, "While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light" (John 12:36).

Jesus Christ is "the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians 1:24). Remember Colossians 2:3 says that in Jesus Christ "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

God has called us "out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). How did this happen? "It is the God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:6).

Jesus said to His disciples (and to all believers), "You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). Ephesians 5:8 declares, "You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light." Philippians 2:15 says that we are to be "blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation," among whom we "shine as lights in the world."

To do this we must "walk in the light as He is in the light" (1 John 1:7). We must "cast off the works of darkness" and "put on the armor of light" (Romans 13:12). We must live in love. "He who says he is in the light and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him" (1 John 2:9, 10).

All who are filled by the Spirit with all the fullness of God in Jesus Christ are full of light, live in the light, walk in the light, share the light, and radiate the light in a world full of darkness.

LIFE.

In Psalm 37:9 David said to God, "For with You is the fountain of life; in Your light we see light."

We usually think of life in terms of our present physical existence here and now on earth. That certainly is a vital form of life, even though it is temporary. James said, "For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away" (James 4:14).

Though it is precious, our biological and temporal life cannot compare to the transcendent value and importance of spiritual and eternal life. Jesus referred to eternal life, spiritual resurrection, and future bodily resurrection and judgment in His inclusive statement in John 5:24 - 29. We note in particular verse 26: "For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself." Later He said to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die" (John 11:25, 26).

Light and life are vitally connected and mutually indispensable. God has revealed His light and life in Jesus Christ. Referring to Jesus, John wrote, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4). So then, without the life that was in Jesus, we would have no true light. No life, no light. Likewise, without the light that was in Jesus, we would have no real life. No light, no life.

Jesus Himself declared, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life" (John 8:12). "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

And so we read in 1 John 5:11, 12, "And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."

Eternal life is much more than just the continuation of life after death. Eternal life is being personally reconciled to God through faith in Jesus Christ, and knowing and living in vital spiritual unity with God and His Son Jesus Christ both now and forever. Eternal life is the full quality of life that begins the moment a person comes to Christ in faith. Jesus prayed to the Father, "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3).

Jesus declared, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). Life — superabundant, meaningful, full and fulfilling — now and forever! It is the free gift of God to all who believe with the whole heart. Come! Believe it! Receive it! Live it!

Before we received the gift of God in Jesus Christ, we were "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). We were as others who live and walk "in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them because of the hardening of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to licentiousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness" (Ephesians 4:17 - 19).

Now, "[w]e know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death" (1 John 3:14).

We declared this in baptism. "How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:2 - 4).

This God-kind of love, this light, this life is dynamic, transforming, liberating. It is the fullness of God in Jesus Christ brought into believers by the Holy Spirit.

The Blessings Of The Fullness.

"His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue" (2 Peter 1:3).

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3). Jesus Christ is now seated at the right hand of God (verse 20), and believers are positionally seated with Christ (2:6). From there every spiritual blessing comes to us through Christ by the Holy Spirit. Believers have all heavenly blessings for abundant earthly living. It is not "pie in the sky when you die," but grace for the race that you face!

Here are some of the vital blessings that believers now have in Christ by the Spirit.

Access, position, standing, hope. "Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:1, 2). "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13).

Liberty. "Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Corinthians 3:17). We have been liberated from the Law of Moses because we have been liberated from sin and therefore no longer need the Law. "The law is for the lawless" (1 Timothy

1:9). The law is in our hearts (Hebrews 10:16). Believers "died to sin" (Romans 6:2). We can declare with Paul, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2). "For you, brethren, have been call to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another" (Galatians 5:13).

Spiritual nourishment. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst" (John 6:35). "On the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart [*koilia*, inner being] will flow rivers of living water.' This He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive ..." (John 7:37 - 39).

Instruction and illumination. "But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him" (1 John 2:27). Born-again believers do not need someone to teach them anything (pagan philosophy or cultic "new revelation") that claims to be supplemental to the Bible but in fact is contrary to it. By the anointing of the Holy Spirit they recognize false teachings and reject them immediately. The Holy Spirit and all true teachers are faithful to the word of God and faithfully focus on the truth concerning the person and work of Jesus Christ. "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God" (1 Corinthians 2:12). The Roman believers were "filled with all knowledge" (Romans 15:14). Paul prayed for the Colossian believers that they "may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Colossians 1:9).

Guidance, presence, joy. "You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore" (Psalm 16:11, quoted by Peter in Acts 2:28). Jesus said, "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full" (John 15:11; also 16:24; 17:13). Likewise, John writes, "These things we write to you that your (our) joy may be full" (1 John 1:4). "The fruit of the Spirit is ... joy ... " (Galatians 5:22). In spite of persecution, the new believers in Pisidian Antioch "were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 13:52). Paul said to the Thessalonian believers, "You became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit" (1 Thessalonians 1:6). "For the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17).

Unity. Believers must endeavor "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3). God places high priority on the unity of believers. The Holy Spirit actively promotes unity among believers, and so must we. "No divisions among you" (1 Corinthians 1:10). "No schism (split, division) in the body" (1 Corinthians 12:25). It is a true saying: "In essentials unity; in non-essentials liberty; in all things charity."

Comfort and encouragement. "Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied" (Acts 9:31).

Strength, power, and supernatural manifestations. Paul prayed that God would grant to believers "to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man" (Ephesians 3:16). Jesus said, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me [My witnesses] in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). This includes the nine supernatural "gifts" of the Spirit [*pneumatika*],

listed in 1 Corinthians 12:7 - 11). Paul knew that when he would come to Rome to preach the gospel, he would do so in the fullness of Christ's blessing (Romans 15:29).

The Scriptures, including chapters three and four of the epistle to the Colossians and chapters four through six of the epistle to the Ephesians, contain a wealth of practical instructions on how to live the fullness of God in Christ.

Jesus said that our heavenly Father gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him (Luke 11:13). He gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey Him (Acts 5:32). Asking in faith and obedience, let us be filled with the Holy Spirit and remain full of the Holy Spirit so that we may continue to be filled by the Holy Spirit with all the fullness of God in Jesus Christ. This is life as it ought to be, and as God intended it to be.

"And the Spirit and the bride [church] say, 'Come!' And let him who hears say, 'Come!' And let him who thirsts come. And whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17).

