

*An Assessment of the “Strange Fire” Conference Critique of the
Spiritual Gifts and the Charismatic Movement:
October 16-18, 2013*

Introduction

On October 16-18, 2013, Pastor John MacArthur held a three day conference at his Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, CA, entitled, “Strange Fire,” that was focused on a critical assessment of the Charismatic Movement and its espousal of the present day ministry of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. There were ten different speakers, each dealing with various topics concerning the Charismatic Movement. This assessment is going to focus in particular on their critique of the gift of tongues as practiced today in the Charismatic Movement, versus what they believe the New Testament teaches. As I go through this assessment, I will also bring in some of their historical perspectives in relation to the ministry of the Holy Spirit from the early Church up to today. This analysis will also include a detailed exegesis at times of certain Scripture passages in conjunction with their exegetical conclusions, and I will be providing a delineated footnoting of references for anyone interested in doing further study and research on this topic.

I am going to arrange this assessment in a chronological order according to the various speakers and their particular, titled emphasis, and that way, you, the reader, can also go to the “Strange Fire” website and click on the **Media** tab and read in sequence the articles yourself. I will first of all present what the individual speaker has to say on the subject he is addressing, and then I will give as thorough, clear, and objectively fair an assessment as I possibly can. I will admit, however, that my subjective perspective will be a part of this assessment, and it will be based on what God has made real to me personally in and through His Word, which in and of itself is His objective truth made subjectively real. As I begin this assessment, let me first of all say that all of the men who spoke at this Conference are our brothers in Christ, and that being the case, we should pray for them and walk in Philippians 2:1-8 toward them, as we are all in the process of being “conformed to the image” Christ by our Heavenly Father (Romans 8:28-30).

John MacArthur – “Strange Fire” TM13-1

John opens up the Conference with an introduction as to the subject matter and focus of the Conference, which is an overall biblical and theological critique of the Charismatic Movement, and for him, he sees much of the movement as being in the grip of a satanic deception as the following quote indicates:

When I was talking about this some months ago to our church, I said it’s this severe. Jesus said to the Jewish leaders, “You have attributed the works of the Holy

Spirit that I have done to Satan.” In other words, they said Jesus did what He did by the power of Satan, Matthew 12, and He said you’ve attributed the works of the Holy Spirit to Satan. It’s fair to say that the reverse has happened in many places in the Charismatic Movement. They are attributing to the Holy Spirit the works of Satan. Once they had attributed to Satan the works of the Holy Spirit, now it’s reversed. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, the Triune God is not to be trifled with. It is dangerous to all who offer strange fire. It is dangerous to all who offer corrupt worship. It is dangerous to declare things that the Holy Spirit has not done, has not said, would not participate in as works of the Holy Spirit. That is not a small matter, it is a radical, seriousness in dishonoring the Holy Spirit that apparently escapes these people.¹

On the other hand, he does admit there are those within the Charismatic Movement who are true believers and maintain a biblical orthodoxy concerning the Gospel, but are in error concerning the work of the Holy Spirit:

Do some in the Charismatic Movement believe the truth? They do. They do. Do some in the Charismatic Movement hold a sound theology on some issues? They do. But none of those true understandings have come to them through that Movement. The true understandings have always been there in the long line of godly preachers and teachers that God has used to keep the truth and to keep the church on track. The Movement adds nothing to that. It detracts and it confuses. It is not a source for any advancement of our understanding of Scripture or sound doctrine.

Have people truly been saved in Charismatic churches and under the preaching of Charismatic preachers? Answer—yes they have but nothing coming from that Movement has been the reason they were saved. The gospel is the reason they were saved and it wasn’t invented by that Movement. In some places it is still intact. In some it’s not. Nothing coming from the Charismatic Movement has provided recovery or strengthening of the biblical gospel. Nothing coming from the Charismatic Movement has preserved truth and sound doctrine. It has only produced distortion, confusion, and error. The faith of the biblical gospel has been intact. It has survived. It will survive because God protects it and raises up faithful men in faithful churches to pass it from generation to generation.

Yes, there are people in the Charismatic Movement who know the truth, who love the truth, who are orthodox on the gospel and heterodox on the Holy Spirit. Not all of them are heretics but I say again, the contribution of the truth to people in the Movement doesn’t come from the Movement, it comes in spite of it.²

John goes on to delineate what he sees the Scripture teaching that the Holy Spirit does and doesn’t do:

What is the work of the Holy Spirit? He convicts, He regenerates, He justifies, He illuminates, He cleanses, He converts, He sanctifies, He adopts, He baptizes, He indwells, He endows, He empowers, He guides, He delivers, He produces fruit, He secures us. This is what Scripture says and what it doesn’t say is this, the Holy Spirit knocks us

¹ John MacArthur, “Strange Fire” TM13-1,” page 5 of print out.

² Ibid., page 6 of print out.

down. The Holy Spirit makes us laugh in a silly way. The Holy Spirit amps up our body heat. The Holy Spirit gives us the hiccups. The Holy Spirit gives us convulsions, puts us in a stupor, makes us look drunk, causes us to fall down, speak gibberish, make primal sounds, jump, roll...ridiculous...absolutely ridiculous.³

How did the Holy Spirit work in Christ? Did He knock Him down? Did He make Him look drunk? Did He cause Him to fall or flop, or roll, or laugh hysterically, or bark, or babble, or talk gibberish? It's a bizarre thing to think about anything like that. And people who make people do that are not Spirit-filled, that's not what the Holy Spirit does. The Holy Spirit was the constant companion of Jesus...THE constant companion of Jesus. It was the Spirit of God who gave Him life in the womb of Mary. The Son of God emptied Himself of His divine prerogatives, voluntarily submitted to the will of the Father in the power of the Spirit. Jesus restricted the independent use of His divine abilities, privileges, and yielded Himself to the Holy Spirit.⁴

In other words, the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to lead you into the truth, to disclose the things of Christ to you in order that you might be conformed to Christ's likeness. Just an amazing simple reality. The Holy Spirit does in us what He did in the Son, conforming us to the very image of Christ.⁵

As John delineates the various aspects of the distortions within the Charismatic Movement under the heading of "what the Holy Spirit does and does not do," I know that all of those who are part of Calvary Chapel would stand solidly with him in the same assessment. On the other hand, as you can see, he completely discounts the present day "gift of tongues" that is associated with the Charismatic Movement, and he classifies it as those who "speak gibberish." In addition, all of us within Calvary Chapel teach exactly what he stated above in his last quote, and that is, "The Holy Spirit does in us what He did in the Son, conforming us to the very image of Christ."

As a young man who came to Calvary Chapel thirty-three years ago, I felt like a "square peg in a round hole" because the Southern Baptists didn't want me based on my belief in the present day ministry of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and I absolutely didn't fit in with the Word Faith Movement and its utter distortions and misrepresentations of the truth of God's Word. However, when we moved to Southern California for my graduate study, I came and heard Chuck speak on a Sunday night, and when I did, I felt as though I had found a spiritual oasis in a theological desert because Chuck taught and believed what I believed! I scheduled a meeting with him, and at that meeting, he invited me to come on staff at Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa, and thus, I became a part of Calvary Chapel in September of 1980. Therefore, that which John is describing as the aberrant emphases within the Charismatic Movement, Chuck Smith and Calvary Chapel were in the forefront of exposing such distortions and misrepresentations and proclaiming solid, biblical truth that was glorifying the person of Jesus Christ, and in doing so, hundreds of thousands of people were coming to a saving faith in Jesus Christ, began growing in a systematic teaching of God's Word, and were continually being filled with the Holy Spirit, empowered by

³ Ibid., page 8 of print out.

⁴ Ibid., pages 11-12 of print out.

⁵ Ibid., page 13 of print out.

Him to be a living witness of Jesus' saving and redeeming power. The one additional aspect is that believers in Calvary Chapel were also ministering in the gifts of the Holy Spirit in a solid, biblical manner, where Jesus was being glorified and honored, with the result that true, genuine, biblical evangelism was occurring in all venues of people's lives. This in turn, however, brought on some serious opposition from the distorted elements that were present in the Charismatic Movement, but it was that consistent stand for biblical truth in the face of the aberrant teachings within the Charismatic Movement that was a major reason for God's effective and life changing ministry for hundreds of thousands in and through His ministry through Calvary Chapel.

Steve Lawson – “Calvin’s Critique of Charismatic Calvinists” TM13-4

The main reason I included this topical discussion in the assessment is the focus placed on Calvin by Steve. Indeed, Steve points out that Calvin, like most of the Reformers, believed the “gifts of the Holy Spirit” ceased functioning within the first century AD after the last Apostle died, or at least by the end of the canonization process of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament:

So Matthew 10, verse 1, John Calvin...I want you to hear this in Calvin's own words. I trust it's being or will be put up, maybe you'll have a word of knowledge here in a moment and all right, I'm going to read it anyway. “The calling of the apostles is here described to us, it is proper to observe, however, that Jesus is not as He...does not speak of perpetual Apostleship but only of temporary preaching.” And then he goes on to describe the place of miracles as seals upon the doctrine of the Apostles. So Calvin early on in his *Harmony of the Gospels*, and by the way, he died preaching a harmony of the gospels, was convinced that the Apostle, the office thereof, was restricted to the first century and he will argue, therefore miracles are restricted to the first century as validations of the new message that they are bringing. Now Calvin would address the receiving of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2, and verse 38, in his commentaries. He writes, “We do not receive it...referring to the gift of the Spirit...we do not receive it that we may speak with tongues, that we may be prophets, that we may cure the sick, that we may work miracles. Yet it is given us for a better use that we may believe with the heart and a righteousness and that our tongues may be framed unto true confession.”⁶

On the other hand, we find Calvin saying the following about the “gifts of the Holy Spirit” in the life of believers:

If we believe that the Spirit of God is the only fountain of truth, we shall neither reject nor despise the truth itself, wherever it shall appear, unless we wish to insult the Spirit of God: for the gifts of the Spirit cannot be undervalued without offering contempt and reproach to the Spirit himself.⁷

⁶ Steve Lawson, “Calvin’s Critique of Charismatic Calvinists” TM13-4, pages 4-5 of print out.

⁷ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion, Vol. I*, trans. John Allen, 7th American ed. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1936), Book II, Chapter II, Section XV, 296.

Now granted, Calvin was referring to what we today would term as “natural talents” that God has given to all men, such as in the areas of science, medicine, art, etc., versus the “miraculous gifts” that we are discussing here, but nonetheless, it is important to see Calvin’s view of the sanctity of the Holy Spirit and God’s sovereign dispensing of His “excellent gifts” as He chooses: “Yet let us not forget that these most excellent benefits of the Divine Spirit, which for the common benefit of mankind he dispenses to whomsoever he pleases.”⁸ But we also find Calvin giving a very interesting insight on the distribution and working of the “gifts of the Holy Spirit,” including what we would term in this Assessment as the “miraculous gifts,” in his commentary on I Corinthians 12:7:

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man. He now points out the purpose for which God has appointed his gifts, for he does not confer them upon us in vain, nor does he intend that they shall serve the purpose of ostentation. Hence we must inquire as to the purpose for which they are conferred. As to this Paul answers—(with a view to utility)—πρὸς τὸ συμφερον; that is, that the Church may receive advantage thereby. *The manifestation of the Spirit* may be taken in a passive as well as in an active sense—in a passive sense, because wherever there is prophecy, or knowledge, or any other gift, the Spirit of God does there *manifest* himself—in an active sense, because the Spirit of God, when he enriches us with any gift, unlocks his treasures, for the purpose of *manifesting* to us those things that would otherwise have been concealed and shut up.⁹

Once again, what we see in Calvin’s perspective up to this point is an overall acknowledgement of the Work and Ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives so that the Body of Christ as a whole may be benefited by the “gifts of the Spirit” working in and through us for God’s glory, not ours. However, Lawson correctly points out¹⁰ that in Calvin’s Commentary on Acts 10:44, Calvin believes the “gift of tongues” is no longer a gift given by the Holy Spirit:

The gift of the tongues, and other such like things, are ceased long ago in the Church; but the spirit of understanding and of regeneration is of force, and shall always be of force, which the Lord coupleth with the external preaching of the gospel, that he may keep us in reverence of his word, and may prevent the deadly dotings, wherein brain-sick fellows enwrap themselves, whilst that, forsaking the word, they invent an erroneous and wandering spirit. But it doth not, nor shall not, always so fall out, that all those which hear the word with their outward ears, do or shall also receive the Spirit; and the ministers do seldom light upon such hearers as Peter had, who are willing, with one consent, to follow God. Yet he bringeth to pass that all the elect feel in themselves the consent of the external word, and of the secret power of the spirit.¹¹

Thus, Calvin clearly believed that the “gift of tongues” had ceased and was no longer given to believers.

⁸ Ibid., Book 2, Chapter 2, Section 16, 297.

⁹ John Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, trans. John Pringle (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996), 400.

¹⁰ Lawson, page 7 of print out.

¹¹ John Calvin, *Commentary upon the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996), 452.

With regard to Calvin, Steve says the following: “Towering over the centuries of church history, John Calvin stands as THE one most imminent figure of monumental importance.”¹² He also makes reference to Schaff’s perspective on Calvin’s exegetical insight¹³:

Calvin was an exegetical genius of the first order. His commentaries are unsurpassed for originality, depth, perspicuity, soundness, and permanent value. The Reformation period was fruitful beyond any other in translations and expositions of the Scripture. If Luther was the king of translators, Calvin was the king of commentators.¹⁴

It is, therefore, for the above stated adulation given Calvin by both Schaff, a prolific, 19th century, church historian, and Steve Lawson, a 21st century, Baptist pastor, that I am writing an Assessment on this section by Steve Lawson. Sadly, as great a contributor to the Reformation and to ministry of the Gospel that Calvin was, many have placed him in an almost “deified” position, with the result being that whatever Calvin wrote or taught, as well as whatever he did, is of a pure, divine origin, and thus, should be fully and wholeheartedly accepted and embraced without any question or debate. I too have read Calvin, and I have been greatly blessed by many of the things that God led him to write. However, what has been a far greater blessing for me was the advice given to me as a young believer. The one Baptist pastor told me that since I was at a state university (Mississippi State), I should begin studying my Bible as though I was taking another academic course because I would not be getting a “biblically based education” there. Thus, my freshman year, I began doing just that, and a Presbyterian pastor talked to me about prayer, sharing with me Philippians 4:6-7: “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Consequently, I began to pray about everything in my life, from football, which at that time was a top priority in my life, to my dating life, to my academic work, and most importantly, to the questions that would arise out of my Bible study. Thus, armed with these two powerful pieces of godly counsel and direction, I have learned that apart from God’s inspired Word, NO MAN HAS THE FINAL ANSWER, nor is ANY MAN’S COMMENTARY ON SCRIPTURE OR THEOLOGY the ONE TRUE GRID OF TRUTH for mankind because EVERY MAN IS A MERE, FLAWED MAN, from the early Church Fathers, including Augustine, up through the Reformers, which obviously includes Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and Arminius, and on to the movers and shakers of the First and Second Great Awakenings in Europe and America (i.e., Whitfield, Wesley, Edwards, Finney, Moody, etc.), as well as such great American, biblical scholars as Broadus, Robertson, Warfield, Machen, et al, all the way up through the 20th and 21st century Christian leaders such as Billy Graham, W. A. Criswell, R. B. Thieme, Chuck Smith, Charles Stanley, John MacArthur, et al.

¹² Lawson, page 4 of print out.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church, Vol. VIII, Modern Christianity: The Swiss Reformation* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, reprint, 1986), 524.

One very important event in my college career that reinforced the importance of being a critical reader and thinker concerning biblical truth had to do with a Holiness preacher that came and taught at a Campus Crusade Bible Study we had at Mississippi State. This man came and taught from I John 3:9 out of the KJV that after we get saved, we can also become “entirely sanctified” where we no longer sin: “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God” (I John 3:9). This is part of the Holiness Doctrine espoused by such denominations as the Nazarene Church, of which this pastor was a minister.¹⁵ I and some other of my football brothers in Christ, who were members of the FCA, had a very difficult time with that concept, both biblically, as well as experientially! At the time, I was the leader of our FCA huddle group at MSU, and the Lord led me to invite a young pastor from Jackson, MS, who was a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary, to come and teach at one of our huddle groups, to which we also invited those involved in Campus Crusade’s outreach at MSU. This pastor came and taught a thorough, exegetical analysis of I John 3:9 from the Greek text, but he did it in terms we could fully grasp and understand, going beyond “King James English grammar,” and bringing out the truth of what was being said by John. Consequently, I learned through that experience that EVERY PASTOR, TEACHER, WRITER, AND EVANGELIST must be critically read, listened to, and thoroughly examined in the light of God’s Word! Thus, as great a commentator, writer, and contributor to the Reformation as Calvin was, he was still just a MERE MAN, as are we all, with all of the spiritual, mental, emotional, and intellectual foibles that we all have, and I want to point out two of those foibles in his life, one in his theology, and the other in his actions. In pointing these areas out in Calvin’s life, I want to emphasize that not only are all of us capable of doing the same as he did, but we have done the same as he has done, and perhaps even worse, the point being that we are all MERE MEN, and the one Person we need to be focused on as our ultimate example is Jesus, and the one written source that needs to be our ultimate guide is the Word of God. However, having said that I also know that there has been, and always will be the tendency in us as human beings to set up as an idol certain men whom we view as the “grid” for spiritual truth, and in doing so, we identify ourselves with those men, their writings, their thought, and their theological proclivities:

And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ. ² I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able *to receive it*. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, ³ for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? ⁴ For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not *mere* men? ⁵ What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave *opportunity* to each one. ⁶ I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. ⁷ So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. ⁸ Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. ⁹ For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. (I Corinthians 3:1-9)

¹⁵ The following website gives the overall, theological foundation of the Doctrine of Entire Sanctification: <http://nazarene.org/ministries/administration/visitorcenter/articles/display.html>

Thus, to identify ourselves in the above fashion, which would include saying I am a “Lutheran, Calvinist, Arminian, Wesleyan, Smithite, Thiemeite, Criswellite, or MacArthurite,” is not a measure of spiritual maturity, but rather a measure of being “fleshy” and spiritually immature because it is not ANY MAN WHO CAUSES OUR GROWTH IN CHRIST AND HIS TRUTH, but rather it is “God who causes the growth,” and as men, we are merely the vessels through which He ministers His Word to others. In addition, the Apostle John, in dealing with the “docetic heresy” (also referred to as Gnosticism) that was confronting the Church at the end of the 1st century, as well as into the 2nd century AD, which John MacArthur also points out in his other section entitled, “Testing the Spirits,”¹⁶ addressed a central aspect of this heretical teaching that said only certain “spiritual ones” had the ability to truly understand and communicate the truth to others, and thus, one couldn’t come to the truth unless you heard it through these specific men:

The Gnostics, according to their own writings, given their radical anticosmic dualism, tended strongly to a docetic, ascetic lifestyle—the denial of the reality and importance of the human body, considered the appropriate response for those who knew the true character of salvation and the Pleroma. This is such a strong motif that it may be the most common denominator of all primary gnostic texts. The Gnostics identified themselves as the Pneumatics (the spiritual ones) over against the Psychics (the soulish ones enslaved to and in the flesh/human body), a view that was sometimes accompanied by a strong election consciousness.¹⁷

With that in view, the Apostle John penned the following: “And as for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him” (I John 2:27). This, therefore, has been a powerful truth in my life, and God has certainly proved it over and over again as I have compared the teachings and theological proclivities of various men throughout the 2000 year history of the Church with the unchangeable Word of God, which alone is our ultimate and final source of revelation and truth. Steve Lawson says as much in his section on “The Puritan Commitment to Sola Scriptura” and his analysis of the Westminster Confession of Faith’s statement on the Scripture: “The supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.”¹⁸ Steve’s actual assessment of this point in the Westminster Confession of Faith is as follows:

¹⁶ John MacArthur, “Testing the Spirits TM13-6,” page 5-6 of print out.

¹⁷ D. M. Scholer, “Gnosis, Gnosticism,” in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament & Its Developments* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1997).

¹⁸ The following website contains the Westminster Confession of Faith, and Steve’s comment is based on “Chapter One of the Holy Scripture,” and it is section number X: http://www.reformed.org/documents/wcf_with_proofs/

And then finally, number 10 is a final summation in this first chapter on the authority of the Word of God and just to nail this down, they said the supreme judge by which all controversies are to be determined and are to be examined, can be no other than the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture. Not speaking in your revelations, not speaking in your dreams and visions, not speaking in your tongues, speaking in the Scripture alone and the Word of God will be the highest arbitrator of all matters in the life of the church.¹⁹

Therefore, the first area of concern with Calvin that I want to address is his theological approach toward infant baptism. Both Steve Lawson and John MacArthur are Baptists who practice believer's baptism, versus infant baptism, and I and Calvary Chapel pastors are of the same persuasion. When I first read through the *Institutes*, I was greatly blessed as I discovered that Calvin believed a vast majority of the things that God had taught and made real to me through His Word. However, when I came to Calvin's teaching on infant baptism, I was shocked, to say the least, because I saw at that time a complete divergence from Scripture and a complete embrace of "religious tradition" in attempting to align Scripture with his belief in and practice of infant baptism. With this particular subject, neither time nor space permit me to go into an in depth discussion of Calvin's theological perspective of infant baptism, as his treatise on it encompasses 37 pages, but I will simply give you the primary basis of his perspective in his own words:

We have ascertained, therefore, that a spiritual promise, the very same which is given to us in baptism, was given to the fathers in circumcision; which represented to them the remission of sins and the mortification of the flesh. Moreover, as we have shown that Christ, in whom both these things are obtained, is the fountain of baptism, the same must be evident of circumcision. For he was promised to Abraham, and in him the blessing of all nations; and the sign of circumcision was added in confirmation of this grace.²⁰

I once got into a discussion with a young man who was a Presbyterian, seminary student concerning infant baptism. As we discussed the matter, he was following Calvin's perspective on infant baptism "to the letter," and then we came to Acts 16 when Paul and Silas were miraculously freed from the Philippian jail by God's sovereign hand (Acts 16:25-26). The jailer was going to kill himself, thinking that the prisoners had escaped, but Paul told him to stop:

But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here!"²⁹ And he called for lights and rushed in and, trembling with fear, he fell down before Paul and Silas,³⁰ and after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"³¹ And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household."³² And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house.³³ And he took them that *very* hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his *household*.³⁴ And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household. (Acts 16:28-34)

¹⁹ Steve Lawson, "The Puritan Commitment to Sola Scriptura TM13-12," page 6 of print out.

²⁰ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion, Vol. II*, trans. John Allen, 7th American ed. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1936), Book IV, Chapter XVI, Section III, 605-606..

This young man's support of the biblical validity for infant baptism was that since the Philippian jailer and "all his *household* was baptized," there must have been infants in his household, and, therefore, the infants were baptized too, thus, biblically and theologically supporting infant baptism. I remember looking at him and asking if he was really serious, and he said he was. As I look back on that experience, that was one of the first times I witnessed as flagrant and abject an eisegetical interpretation of Scripture as he gave. I tried to reason with him, but his "Reformed" position on infant baptism, enunciated by John Calvin in his *Institutes*, would not allow him to honestly interpret the Scripture on that issue. I point this out because it is imperative that we see that John Calvin was a MERE MAN, subject to the very same foibles as all of us, including having theological misdirections, which would mean that as great a theologian and commentator as he was, he was fully capable of misinterpreting the Scripture, and in fact, he did with respect to the concept of infant baptism. Thus, just because he said that the "gift of the tongues, and other such like things, are ceased long ago in the Church"²¹ doesn't make it so. What makes anything so, however, is the unequivocal, unmitigated Word of God, which, once again, John MacArthur emphasizes as well:

I believe the case that we have made this week can withstand the most intense scrutiny and I would eagerly invite any who have heard what has been said and find it hard to believe to take a Bible and take the book and measure carefully the arguments against the Word of God. We invite that scrutiny.²²

The other area of Calvin's life that reveals the fact that he, like all of us, was but a mere man has to do with his actions. The incident that I am referring to concerns Michael Servetus. In essence, Servetus was an anti-trinitarian, and Calvin, along with the Geneva City Council, condemned Servetus to death, and he was burned at the stake on October 27, 1553. Servetus had escaped from Vienna where he had been convicted and condemned to death by the Catholic Church for his anti-trinitarian views, and he came to Geneva, perhaps thinking that under a Protestant, City government, he would find some leniency. However, he was immediately arrested and ultimately condemned to death. On the one hand, Calvin fully approved of the death sentence, but on the other, he thought beheading would be more humane.²³ It must also be understood, however, that at that time, both Catholic and Protestant leaders supported the death penalty for heretics,²⁴ but even at that, it is still quite hard to even remotely defend the penalty of capital punishment by Protestant believers in Jesus Christ, let alone John Calvin, for someone

²¹John Calvin, *Commentary upon the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996), 452.

²² John MacArthur, "An Appeal to Charismatic Friends TM13-18," page 2 of print out.

²³ Martin I. Klauber, "Servetus, Michael (1511-1553)," in *The Dictionary of Historical Theology*, ed. Trevor Hart (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000).

²⁴ Philip Schaff, ed., *The Creeds of Christendom With a History and Critical Notes, Vol. I*, 6th ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), 463-466.

because they did not believe in the Trinity. The following, therefore, gives Calvin's defense of his actions of supporting the death penalty for Servetus:

Calvin's work against Servetus gave complete satisfaction to Melancthon. It is the strongest refutation of the errors of his opponent which his age produced, but it is not free from bitterness against one who, at last, had humbly asked his pardon, and who had been sent to the judgment seat of God by a violent death. It is impossible to read without pain the following passage: "Whoever shall now contend that it is unjust to put heretics and blasphemers to death will knowingly and willingly incur their very guilt. This is not laid down on human authority; it is God who speaks and prescribes a perpetual rule for his Church. It is not in vain that he banishes all those human affections which soften our hearts; that he commands paternal love and all the benevolent feelings between brothers, relations, and friends to cease; in a word, that he almost deprives men of their nature in order that nothing may hinder their holy zeal. Why is so implacable a severity exacted but that we may know that God is defrauded of his honor, unless the piety that is due to him be preferred to all human duties, and that when his glory is to be asserted, humanity must be almost obliterated from our memories?"

Calvin's plea for the right and duty of the Christian magistrate to punish heresy by death, stands or falls with his theocratic theory and the binding authority of the Mosaic code. His arguments are chiefly drawn from the Jewish laws against idolatry and blasphemy, and from the examples of the pious kings of Israel. But his arguments from the New Testament are failures.²⁵

The above account is a historical assessment of Calvin's involvement in the conviction and execution of Michael Servetus for heresy, and as stated above, even though such action was embraced by both some Protestants and the Catholic Church as a whole, that in no way made it right, let alone something that was God ordained and led by His Spirit. However, does this, as well as Calvin's teaching about infant baptism, negate all of the things that he did and wrote that were led and directed by God's Spirit? Absolutely not, but it does demonstrate that he was just a mere man, whose actions and writings need to be judged by the Eternal Truth of God's Word, and that being the case, what he writes and does is not the "grid for truth," equal to the Word of God, but merely his perspective that stands in judgment in the light of God's Word, as is the case for all believers in Jesus Christ. Therefore, regarding Calvin's perspective that the "gift of the tongues, and other such like things, are ceased long ago in the Church,"²⁶ I do not agree with him biblically, linguistically, theologically, or historically, but I do greatly appreciate his writings as a whole and the contribution God made through him to the Body of Christ. But once more, he is not the "grid for truth," but rather the Eternal Truth of God's Word is, and his exegesis of Scripture, like everyone else's exegesis of Scripture, rises and falls as it presents as accurately as possible what the Word is actually saying.

²⁵ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church, Vol. VIII, Modern Christianity: The Swiss Reformation* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, reprint, 1986), 791-792.

²⁶ John Calvin, *Commentary upon the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996), 452.

Tom Pennington – “A Case for Cessationism” TM13-7

In this session, Tom attempts to present a compelling argument as to why he believes the “miraculous gifts of the Spirit” have ceased. He does this through presenting what he sees as the four arguments given by “continuationists” for the present day ministry of the “miraculous gifts of the Spirit”²⁷; he then presents his definition of “cessationism”²⁸; and the remainder of his presentation is devoted to the seven reasons he believes the “miraculous gifts of the Spirit” have ended.²⁹ Therefore, I want to deal with his presentation in the chronology he presents his arguments, and that means the first aspect will be the four reasons he states “continuationists” maintain the “miraculous gifts of the Spirit” are still active today. As we go through this assessment, it is of vital importance that we deal with and analyze all of the components of this extremely important subject. Therefore, I will be expanding on the various aspects of what Tom is presenting, and in doing so, I will also be bringing in some of the statements from others who participated in this Conference with regard to the “gift of tongues” in particular.

Continuationist Reasoning

Reasons # 1& 2: The first two arguments deal with continuationists who say “the New Testament nowhere directly states that the miraculous gifts will cease during the church age.”³⁰ Pennington responds by saying: “But that argument cuts both ways because the New Testament doesn’t directly say they will continue either.”³¹ Therefore, Pennington’s argument against the “continuationists” that their positional argument is based on silence is the exact same situation for the “cessationists” who say “the New Testament doesn’t directly say they will continue either.”³² However, with regard to the “cessation of the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit” based on I Corinthians 13:8-13, I do not believe that “silence” is at all the issue, but rather an obvious and specific reference that at first glance seems to be totally clear and understandable, and that is the word “perfect” in I Corinthians 13:10: “but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away.” Thus, the problem is not with “silence,” but rather with the exegetical, or eisegetical motive and approach one takes toward interpreting the whole passage of I Corinthians 13:8-13:

Love never fails; but if *there are gifts of prophecy*, they will be done away; if *there are tongues*, they will cease; if *there is knowledge*, it will be done away. ⁹ For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; ¹⁰ **but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away.** ¹¹ When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. ¹² For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also

²⁷ Tom Pennington, “A Case for Cessationism TM13-7,” page 2 of print out.

²⁸ Ibid., pages 2-3 of print out.

²⁹ Ibid., pages 3-14 of print out.

³⁰ Ibid., page 2 of print out.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

have been fully known.¹³ But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (I Corinthians 13:8-13)

From the cessationist perspective, therefore, the “perfect” is one of three things: (1) the completed, twenty-seven book Canon of the New Testament³³; (2) the maturing of the Body of Christ so that the “miraculous gifts of the Spirit” were no longer needed³⁴; (3) the death of the last Apostle.³⁵ On the other hand, when we look at verse 8, we see three specific aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit that Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, says will ultimately “be done away” with and “cease,” and they are: “prophecy, tongues, and knowledge.” However, what is of major importance in looking at this passage is to see what Paul says “never fails” in comparison to these aspects of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and that is “love.” The first thing to do, therefore, is to realize that in the previous seven verses, Paul is pointing out the unquestionable superiority of “love” to everything else in the spiritual sphere of the lives of the Corinthian believers – “tongues, prophecy, knowledge, faith, philanthropy, martyrdom” – in all of these areas, “love” is incomparably greater. The word “love” that is used here is **ἀγάπη** (*agapē*), and this is the ultimate “love” of God for a lost and self-destructive human race that can only be experienced through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as one’s Lord and Savior (John 3:16). Thus, apart from this “love of God” ruling and directing our lives in all that we do, we have and are “nothing,” and we are merely being externally “religious.” Paul then goes on in verses 4-7 describing the practical manifestation of this **ἀγάπη** (*agapē*) “love” in the lives of believers in Jesus Christ:

Love is **patient**, love is **kind**, and is **not jealous**; love **does not brag** and is **not arrogant**,⁵ **does not act unbecomingly**; it **does not seek its own**, **is not provoked**, **does not take into account a wrong suffered**,⁶ **does not rejoice in unrighteousness**, but **rejoices with the truth**;⁷ **bears all things**, **believes all things**, **hopes all things**, **endures all things**. (I Corinthians 13:4-7)

The reality is that all of us as believers in Jesus Christ do not consistently express this level of the “love” of God in our lives, but as God’s children, He “disciplines us that we may share His holiness” (Hebrews 12:10), and through that discipline and death to our own, narcissistic, self-focus, He then, by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, “conforms us to the image of His Son” (Romans 8:29) whereby, little by little, we begin to see these various aspects of **ἀγάπη** (*agapē*) love develop and appear in our lives. It is that confirmation process, therefore, that is of the greatest importance, versus what specific “gifts of the Holy Spirit” we may have operating in our lives, because without the “love” of God ruling and controlling our lives, we are merely being “religious.” And “religion” can be a very deceptive thing because it does not create the

³³ R. Bruce Compton, “I Corinthians 13:8-13 And The Cessation of Miraculous Gifts,” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal*, 9, (Fall, 2004), 96-144.

³⁴ Robert L. Thomas, “I Cor. 13:11 Revisited An Exegetical Update,” *Masters Seminary Journal*, 4:2 (Fall, 1993), 185-210.

³⁵ Norman L. Geisler, “Miracles, Cessation of Sign Gifts,” in *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999).

life of Christ within us – the only thing that can do that is a living and vital relationship with “Jesus,” controlled and directed by the “love” of God through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the manifestation of “love,” as delineated in verses 4-7, will indeed bring about the genuine life of Christ in a believer. Thus, it is after Paul lays out the superiority of God’s ἀγάπη (*agapē*) “love” in our lives that he then goes into the eternality and non-failing aspect of “love” as compared to the “spiritual gifts.” In doing so, he is making it quite clear that using the “spiritual gifts” as a measuring stick for our spirituality can be very self-deceiving and misdirected because as believers in Jesus Christ, we are all seriously corrupted, flawed, and very narcissistically driven at times, even though the “gifts of the Holy Spirit” are manifested in our lives (which “gifts” would include even “pastoring, teaching, administration, and helps”), and thus, such a measure is a very “imperfect measure.”

When we look at what Paul says in I Corinthians 13:8-13, we see that “knowledge” is also grouped in with “prophecy and tongues” as coming to an end. Would anyone say that we no longer have “knowledge” today of God, the world, and all venues of life? Or is Paul referring here to the “word of knowledge” that he mentions in I Corinthians 12:8? Or is he perhaps referring to the “knowledge” he spoke of in I Corinthians 13:2: “and know all mysteries and all knowledge”? If the latter, then it would appear that Paul is referring to “knowledge” as a whole, and its extremely “imperfect state” that we as human beings currently live by, operate in, and have our existence on a day by day basis. Exegetically, I believe that without question it is “knowledge” as a whole that Paul is referring to. Consequently, if the “perfect” in I Corinthians 13:10 was referring to the completed Canon of the New Testament, or the maturity of the Body of Christ at some point (which is an incredibly ambiguous and tenuous perspective), over the past two thousand years of human history since the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, I know of no one, Christian or non-Christian, who I would even remotely say has “perfect knowledge” about life in any venue, and that would especially be true with biblical knowledge and theology. From the end of the 1st century AD up to our present day, there have been untold thousands, and perhaps even millions of men and women who have written all manner of theological treatises on all manner of biblical and theological subjects, only to find shortcomings and incompleteness in their understanding of the subject matter about which they were writing. Now, as a believer in Jesus Christ, I am growing every day in my “knowledge of Jesus Christ,” who is living in and through me by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, but I would in NO WAY even begin to think that I have “perfect knowledge” of Jesus through His Word in my redeemed, but at the same time, my fallen, corrupted, and seriously flawed state. On the other hand, I have known some individuals in my lifetime who have given the impression that they have “arrived” in their knowledge of Christ, but fortunately, I was not in the trajectory of their fall. And in my own life, in my younger years, I too thought I had “arrived” in certain areas of my life, only to discover that I hadn’t even begun to know what I thought I knew, and I even discovered that what I did know was quite minuscule and very cluttered with “imperfect” knowledge and perception, along with my own failures in my Christian walk. But as I have grown older, I far better understand Paul’s self-evaluation of himself toward the end of his life in

I Timothy 1:15: “It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost *of all*.” What is most interesting about Paul’s statement is that he says “I am foremost,” not, “I was foremost,” and in the Greek, the phraseology for “I am” is εἰμι ἐγὼ (*eimi egō*), which is an emphatic, grammatical construction. The personal pronoun ἐγὼ (*egō*), that is included with the finite verb form εἰμι (*eimi*), is an added emphasis.³⁶ As I have grown older chronologically and spiritually, I can see sin in my life today that I wasn’t even aware of five years ago, and in some cases, even a year or months ago. Thus, as we grow closer to the Lord, we see even more clearly that we are permeated with sin throughout our corrupt natures, and it is the grace of God, and the grace of God alone that we stand in (Ephesians 2:8-10). And thus, in the midst of all of our “imperfection,” it is God’s grace that continually covers our “imperfect” and “partial” level of knowledge of Jesus Christ in this life, because it is God working in and through us in our very “imperfect,” flawed, and corrupt state to “conform us to the image of His Son”:

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.²⁹ For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren;³⁰ and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.
(Romans 8:28-30)

Therefore, I in NO WAY see anything closely representing the “perfect” that Paul is describing in I Corinthians 13:10 as having already come, and thereby, “done away with the partial.” On the other hand, I see our human state, including that of all believers in Jesus Christ, as still being quite “partial” in every way. In addition, the word “perfect” in Greek is τέλειος (*teleios*), and its primary meaning is “to be perfect, complete, mature, and in the moral sense with reference to God’s nature, perfect and fully developed.”³⁷ Thus, I have discovered in God’s Word and in my life, that the absolute and only “perfection” in my life is the righteousness of Jesus that has been imputed into my life through trusting in Him as my Lord and Savior (II Corinthians 10:20-21). Thus, as I take into account the whole of Scripture and the reality of man’s very imperfect state, including everything in this very imperfect world, I see the only meaning for the “perfect” that Paul can be alluding to in I Corinthians 13:10 is the Person of Jesus Christ when He returns, or when we as believers die and go home to be with Him. And the verse that clinches that truth for me is I Corinthians 13:12: “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known.” And once again, anyone who would say that he or she now “knows fully just as they have been fully known” since we have the Canon of the New Testament, or since the Body of Christ has come to maturity (and when did that remarkable feat ever occur; what was the

³⁶ Ray Summers & Thomas Sawyer, *Essentials New Testament Greek*, rev. ed. (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 41.

³⁷ William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1957), 816-817.

spiritual guage that was used to measure that “maturity”; and where in Scripture is that guage found and stated?), is living in an incredible self-delusion. The “then” that Paul is referring to in the above verse is referring to our “face to face” encounter with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and “then,” and only “then,” will we see “face to face,” and “know fully just as we also have been fully known.” Until that point, however, the greatest thing that everyone of us as believers in Jesus Christ need to pursue is the “love” of God demonstrated toward us in Jesus Christ, and allowing that love to be ministered in and through us as Paul delineates in I Corinthians 13:4-7 as stated above.

The argument that the completed Canon of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament was the point when the “perfect” arrived and the “miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit” ceased is equally as flawed and ungrounded as is the view that it was the maturity of the Body of Christ that ushered in the cessation of the “miraculous gifts of the Spirit.” With regard to the ultimate canonization of the New Testament, it actually came in three stages: the Councils of Hippo (393); the third Council of Carthage (397); and finally, the sixth Council of Carthage in 419.³⁸ The actual list below is from the sixth Council of Carthage in 419, and it interestingly included some of the Apocryphal books:

CANON XXIV. (Greek xxvii.)

That nothing be read in church besides the Canonical Scripture.

ITEM, that besides the Canonical Scriptures nothing be read in church under the name of divine Scripture.

But the Canonical Scriptures are as follows:

Genesis.	The Five Books of Solomon.
Exodus.	The Twelve Books of the Prophets.
Leviticus.	Isaiah.
Numbers.	Jeremiah.
Deuteronomy.	Ezechiel.
Joshua the Son of Nun.	Daniel.
The Judges.	Tobit.
Ruth.	Judith.
The Kings, iv. books.	Esther.
The Chronicles, ii. books.	Ezra, ii books.
Job.	Macchabees, ii books.
The Psalter.	

THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Gospels, iv. books.
 The Acts of the Apostles, i. book.
 The Epistles of Paul, xiv.
 The Epistles of Peter, the Apostle, ii.
 The Epistles of John the Apostle, iii.
 The Epistles of James the Apostle, i.

³⁸ F. F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 97.

The Epistle of Jude the Apostle, i.
The Revelation of John, i. book.

Let this be sent to our brother and fellow bishop, Boniface, and to the other bishops of those parts, that they may confirm this canon, for these are the things which we have received from our fathers to be read in church.³⁹

As seen above, therefore, the recognition of these books was not by an Ecumenical Council, but rather over a period of time:

While Paul's epistles and the four Gospels had probably won general acceptance by ca. 200, the great church historian Eusebius (ca. 260–340) could still list Christian Scriptures under three categories: books that were accepted in his day, others that were definitely not accepted, and a third category of “disputed” books on which opinions still differed (*Historia ecclesiastica* 3.25; Williamson 1965: 134). As is well known, the precise twenty-seven books that eventually constituted the canon of the NT are first listed in the Easter Letter of Athanasius in 367. The synods of Hippo (393) and Carthage (397) recognized the twenty-seven-book list, but their decisions were binding only in North Africa. By the fifth century a general consensus had developed, though doubts about individual books lingered on in certain localities for some time. Significantly, no ecumenical council made a ruling on the canon. This underlines the fact that the church did not *choose* the canon (that would have made the canon subordinate to the church); the church, over an extended period of time, *recognized* the canon that was already in existence.⁴⁰

Thus, two things stand out to us: (1) the Apocryphal Books were contained in the Old Testament Canon by the Early Church; (2) and secondly, this recognition of the twenty-seven books we have occurred in a semi-official manner from ca. 393-419 AD, which is twenty-six years. The question we have, therefore, based on the one theory that the “gifts of the Holy Spirit” ceased when the NT Canon was established, did they cease in 393 AD, 397 AD, or 419 AD? Or was their cessation a piece by piece process – that is, some ceased in 393, while others lasted until 397, and then the final ones dropped out in 419? And not only that, but it took some time for this recognition to spread throughout the civilized, Roman Empire where Christianity was established. Consequently, did the “gifts” last until in the more far off areas they actually received notice of the New Testament, canonical books, which might have taken a year or more? And, in North Africa, for example, when this final list of books was recognized on May 25, 419 AD,⁴¹ if someone was “praying in tongues” at that moment when the final decision was made, did they all of sudden stop “praying in tongues”? And what about someone who was going to pray for someone to be healed somewhere in North Africa or Judah, or Italy on May 25, 419, at

³⁹ Philip Schaff & Henry Wace, eds., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series, Volume XIV* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, reprinted 1983), 453-454.

⁴⁰ Charles Scobie, *The Ways of Our God: An Approach to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 55-56.

⁴¹ Philip Schaff & Henry Wace, eds., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series, Volume XIV* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, reprinted 1983), 440.

5:15 pm, and the decision of the sixth Carthage Council was finalized at 5:00 pm, was the power and gifting for healing suddenly stopped at 5:00 pm, and therefore, the person desiring healing could no longer receive it, missing it by 15 minutes? On the other hand, others have proposed that the “miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit” ceased when the last Apostle died, which was John on the Isle of Patmos. Let’s say that John died on July 19, 100 AD, at 3:22 and 15 seconds pm (I am obviously making up the year, day, and time for illustration purposes), and someone was “praying in tongues” at that very moment. Would they, when John breathed his last breath, all of sudden quit “praying in tongues”? Or again, if someone was going to pray for someone to be healed, and they began to pray at 3:22 and 16 seconds, did the power for the healing suddenly and abruptly stop because they waited too long to pray? Therefore, when you look at the reality of life and events such as described above for illustration purposes, but are none the less real, versus a far off, theological and doctrinal view that is void of reality of God’s eternal, miraculous power, then you begin to see to some degree the lack of coherence of both these positions – i.e., the cessation of the “miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit” with the passing of the last Apostle, or the cessation with the finalization of the New Testament Canon.

In addition, as we have already looked at I Corinthians 13:8-13 in its total context, we see that Paul had something specific in mind, versus some nebulous idea of “perfection,” and he certainly did not see his writings as some day comprising a corpus of literature called the New Testament, since he thought Jesus was going to return in his own lifetime.⁴² What we do know with reference to the New Testament Scriptures is that the “original hands” of the authors were fully inspired,⁴³ but we do not have any extant texts of their original writings, only copies. Thus, a very important, linguistic discipline has arisen called “textual criticism,” which Steve Lawson correctly alludes to in his session called, “Calvin’s Critique of Charismatic Calvinists TM13-4,”⁴⁴ and the text Steve is referring to is Mark 16:9-20, which includes a section where Jesus is talking about the “miraculous work of the Holy Spirit” being ministered in and through His followers, which includes “speaking in tongues.” There are quite a number of other places in the New Testament where “textual criticism” is very important in determining what was the “original hand” of the author. Thus, as the “original hands” of the authors are unequivocally the “inspired Word of God,” that which is not from the “original hand” of the author, although not necessarily inspired, is most likely there to be supportive of what the “original hand” of the text is saying. Thus, to call the New Testament “perfect” as we have it today is a misnomer – the “original hands” were definitely infallible, inerrant, and inspired by the Lord, but we are still working through various texts in determining just what were the “original hands.” And sometimes there may be disagreement over what was the “original hand” because we do not as yet “know fully just as we also have been fully known” (I Corinthians 13:12). However, we can

⁴² Adella Yarbro Collins, “Early Christian Apocalypticism,” in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992).

⁴³ Ted Cabal, “Inspiration of Scripture,” in *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 3003).

⁴⁴ Steve Lawson, “Calvin’s Critique of Charismatic Calvinists” TM13-4, page 5 of print out.

certainly rest assured that as we read our New Testament today, the Holy Spirit will minister God's Eternal Truth to us through His Inspired Word in the New Testament, around and beyond that which would be a copyist's additional note, letter, or word. I might also add, that those copyist's, additional notes have never, at any time, altered the foundational and eternal truths of the New Testament, but in large part they were added to help give clarity, in the same way you might make a note on a page in your Bible when God has made a truth clearer for you in His Word.

However, as we go back and look at Mark 16:9-20, the necessary question arises as to just when was that portion added to the end of Mark, if indeed it was added, and why was it added if it was not the original hand of Mark? The following comment gives some perspective on this issue:

Those who argue that Mark did write vv. 9–20 point out that all or at least some of these verses were known to Irenaeus and probably to Tatian⁷ in the late second century. Justin Martyr may have known the long ending at the middle of the second century. This information is important but in the opinion of most scholars it does not overthrow the evidence against the longer ending. As is also true for a number of textual problems in other New Testament books, both the shorter and longer readings existed by the late second century. We are still faced with the problem of deciding between them.⁴⁵

Irenaeus died ca. 200 AD⁴⁶; Tatian died ca. 160 AD⁴⁷; and Justin Martyr died ca. 165 AD.⁴⁸ If these Church Fathers were aware of the ending, then it had to begin to be circulated sometime between the late first and late second centuries AD. That being the case, the things mentioned in Mark 16:17-18 did take place in the book of Acts, apart from drinking “any deadly *poison*,” and so, if Mark didn't write it, whoever did was expressing that which was a reality to the Church during that time frame, apart from any idea that such events had come to cessation:

And these signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, **they will speak with new tongues**; ¹⁸ they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly *poison*, it shall not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover. (Mark 16:17-18)

The perception, therefore, is that whoever wrote this, the things he was writing about were a part of his world, and were very much in play whenever this portion of Scripture was penned. Thus, with regard to Church History, this portion of Mark may be assumed to represent that which was really happening, and there is no indication, based on this portion of Scripture, that these “miraculous gifts of the Spirit” had come to a point of cessation. So it may be quite safe to say that if this was a later edition to Mark's Gospel, the author of this section was writing about the reality of what he had seen and experienced with the ministry of the Gospel.

⁴⁵ Allen Black, *The College Press NIV Commentary: Mark* (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Company, 1995), Appendix.

⁴⁶ *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 2nd ed. s.v. “Irenaeus.”

⁴⁷ Ibid., “Tatian.”

⁴⁸ Ibid., “Justin Martyr.”

Reason # 3: Pennington states that the third reason continuationists support the present day ministry of the “miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit” is that: “the New Testament speaks only of the church age and therefore the gifts that began this age must continue throughout it. They say that we artificially divide the church age into the apostolic and the post-apostolic.”⁴⁹ Pennington counters this position by saying, “But unless they believe that there are Apostles today at the same level as Peter and Paul, and most Charismatics do not, they also divide the church age and they relate at least apostleship solely to the apostolic era. They have become defacto cessationism...cessationists, I should say, at least in part.”⁵⁰

In addressing this very important subject, we once again need to first of all go to the Scripture, since both conservative, Bible believing, and Bible based cessationists and continuationists say that Scripture is the foundation for their positions. As we do that, we discover first of all that nothing is mentioned about the cessation of the “miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit,” except in I Corinthians 13:10, and as we have already looked at that passage, we discovered that it was not just speaking of the cessation of what have been called “miraculous gifts,” but also of all aspects of our lives, including “knowledge” in all venues, let alone “knowledge” about biblical and spiritual matters. That is, even now as redeemed believers in Jesus Christ, with the Word of God at our disposal and the Holy Spirit living and abiding within us, we are still living in a fallen and corrupt nature that not only limits our understanding of the totality of God’s truth, but also our ability to have that truth lived out in our lives to its fullest and complete extent. Thus, the unequivocal necessity of the process of sanctification in our lives wherein God is continuously “conforming us to the image of His Son” (Romans 8:29) is an ongoing, unending process until we go home to be with Him. Therefore, the question before us is, were the supernatural manifestations of God’s Spirit, working in and through the Apostles, limited to the Apostles, or were these supernatural manifestations based on God’s sovereign distribution in His chosen times and for His specific purposes? In other words, do we see any scriptural evidence that supports the position that certain, supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit were limited and restricted to the initial twelve, as well as the other Apostles mentioned in Acts and Paul’s epistles, which would of course include the gift of “speaking in tongues”? Now it is absolutely true that the Apostles, who were eyewitnesses of Jesus and all that He did, said, and ministered, were foundational to the establishment of the Church within the first century AD, and their oral and written accounts of Jesus became the grid for determining that which was true, versus the false theologies of later writings and teachings about Jesus. However, did the supernatural anointing the Apostles received from Christ for ministry stop with them, or has it been disseminated, by the Holy Spirit, to other believers, according to God’s sovereign distribution, purpose, and timing across the past two millennia? Now once again, this is of course limiting the special place of the thirteen (including Matthias who was chosen to take Judas’ place – Acts 1:23-26) who, being “eyewitnesses” to the life, ministry, death, and

⁴⁹ Pennington, “A Case for Cessationism TM13-7,” page 2 of print out.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

resurrection of Jesus, were uniquely chosen by the Lord for that special, foundational role that no one else could fill (Acts 1:15-22). Consequently, there is no discussion about the Apostolic qualification that Peter enunciated when they were picking a successor to Judas, but was that unique qualification for an Apostle of being a “witness with us of His resurrection” (Acts 1:22) also a qualification for any other believer to be a recipient of the supernatural ministry of the Holy Spirit working in and through his or her life in ministering the Gospel? In order to answer that question, we need to look in the four Gospels, the book of Acts, and the Epistles to see if there is any such clearly defined qualification that limits Jesus’ followers from being vessels, enabled by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, through whom He would carry out His supernatural ministry of bringing the unsaved to a saving faith in Him through preaching, teaching, and living out the Word, as well as through whom He works His supernatural gifts of the Spirit, such as the “word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, healing, works of power, prophecy, discerning of spirits, kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues, helps, administrations, etc.” (I Corinthians 12:7-31).

The Gospels

As we go through the Gospels, we are going to take a harmonic approach, as that will open up to us the totality of what is being said with regard to the “miraculous ministry” of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the disciples, who later became the Apostles, as well as whether or not those same “miraculous ministries” are promised to all believers throughout the ages. Some of these accounts will be seen in all three of the Synoptic Gospels, while others will be relegated to individual Synoptics. For example, in the chronological, time sequence of Jesus’ ministry in Matthew’s Gospel, one of the first mentions made of “supernatural gifts” is in Matthew 7:21-23, but we do not find this saying in any of the other Synoptic Gospels:

Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ 23 And then I will declare to them, I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.’ (Matthew 7:21-23)

The significance of this passage is twofold: (1) For this passage to have any meaning for those to whom Jesus was speaking, they must have been familiar with the type of “miraculous” manifestations He described in verse 22 above; (2) The mark of a true follower of Jesus, therefore, was not, and is not, “miraculous” manifestations being exercised in their life, but rather, it is someone who was and is continuously submitting to Jesus’ Lordship in their lives in the face and midst of their own failures and inconsistencies. Thus, the true follower of Jesus appeals solely to the grace and mercy of God, demonstrated in the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the sins of mankind, and this grace and mercy is received through faith alone. In addition, for the true, born-again, child of God, God is persistently separating him and her into His “holiness,” by the means of His loving, corrective, and instructive “discipline”

(Hebrews 12:4-11). This statement by Jesus in Matthew 7:21-23, therefore, points to the fact as stated above that miracles of this sort were not uncommon among the people of Jesus' day.

That being said, Jesus was performing all types of “supernatural and miraculous” miracles with the people to whom He was ministering, including the miracles He mentioned in Matthew 7:22. In addition, Jesus was accused by the Pharisees and other Jews of “casting out demons by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons” (Matthew 12:24; Luke 11:15), but in His response to them, He asked the question, “And if I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? Consequently they shall be your judges” (Matthew 12:27; Luke 11:19). Therefore, it would appear by Jesus' statement that “casting out demons” was something that the Jews were not only familiar with, but were actually practicing, as can be seen in Acts 19:11-20, when the “seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest” (Acts 19:14), attempted to cast out a demon in a man “by Jesus whom Paul preaches” (Acts 19:13), but the demon responded with, “I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you? And the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded” (Acts 19:15-16). What is quite interesting and revealing about this portion of Scripture in Acts 19:13 is that the Greek, grammatical construction of this verse indicates that this was something these Jews were doing on a consistent basis. The following, therefore, is an amplified translation of that verse: “But there were also some Jewish exorcists continuously going about from place to place who attempted to continue to name over those continually having evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, ‘I continually adjure you *by* the name of Jesus whom Paul continually preaches” (Acts 19:13). In other words, long before the ministry of Jesus began, there were “Jewish exorcists” who “continuously went about” practicing exorcism, and after the conversion of Paul, these very same “Jewish exorcists” began to attempt to use the name of Jesus to “cast out demons.” In addition, it would also appear that these Jews were Pharisees because the Sadducees believed there was “no resurrection, nor an angel, nor a spirit; but the Pharisees acknowledge them all” (Act 23:8). Although the passage in Acts 19:11-20 makes no mention of it, Sceva, an apparent Pharisee, may have known Paul, who was also a Pharisee, and that may have been the reason his seven sons were using Paul's name in their attempted exorcism. Besides Jewish exorcism in Judea, we also see in Acts 8:1-24 a Samaritan named Simon, who, being a Samaritan, was very likely of mixed Jewish and Gentile lineage, and thus, he too was presumably familiar with Jewish “exorcism” as he used “magic arts” to astound the people in Samaria into believing he was “someone great” (Acts 8:9), with the result being that the people of Samaria were saying, “This man is what is called the Great Power of God (“This man is the one continually being called the Great Power of God” – *my amplified translation*)” (Acts 8:10). However, after he believed in Jesus and was baptized, “as he observed signs and great wonders taking place, he was constantly amazed” (Acts 8:13), so much so that “when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, saying, ‘Give this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit’” (Acts 8:18-19). Peter and John rebuked him and told him to repent, and Simon responded, “Pray to the Lord for me yourselves, so that nothing of

what you have said may come upon me” (Acts 8:24). Once again, the point to be made is that “miraculous” types of manifestations were not uncommon with the Jews of Jesus’ day, but rather were apparently quite common, and thus, the need for Jesus to make the statement He did in Matthew 7:21-23.

On the other hand, it would also appear that there were those Jews who were moving in the “miraculous” area of ministry in Jesus’ time who were legitimate, as we see in the following account:

John said to Him, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we tried to hinder him because he was not following us.” 39 But Jesus said, “Do not hinder him, for there is no one who shall perform a miracle in My name, and be able soon afterward to speak evil of Me. 40 For he who is not against us is for us. 41 For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because of your name as followers of Christ, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward. (Mark 9:38-41)

Thus, Jesus is saying here that there were and are those, other than His chosen disciples, who became His Apostles, who were doing “miracles” in His name, and of those people, Jesus said, “he who is not against us is for us.” This is a powerful statement with reference to the “miraculous” power that emanates from and through the name of Jesus for those who believe in Him apart from the Apostles. What does this say, therefore, if anything, to the cessationist view that the supernatural ministry of the Holy Spirit ceased with the death of the last Apostle, John, ca. 100 AD? If there were other people in Jesus’ day, besides Jesus’ disciples, who later became His Apostles, through whom the Lord was performing miraculous ministries that had nothing to do with His disciples, later turned Apostles, but rather, with the authority of Jesus’ name for those who believed in Him, then how can someone say that apart from the Apostles, the supernatural ministry of the Holy Spirit cannot be carried on? I am reminded of the account in Numbers 11:24-30 where two men were not in the immediate vicinity of “the tent,” but they were “in the camp,” and they too prophesied when the Spirit of God came upon them:

So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD. Also, he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people, and stationed them around the tent. 25 Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him; and He took of the Spirit who was upon him and placed Him upon the seventy elders. And it came about that when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do it again. 26 But two men had remained in the camp; the name of one was Eldad and the name of the other Medad. And the Spirit rested upon them (now they were among those who had been registered, but had not gone out to the tent), and they prophesied in the camp. 27 So a young man ran and told Moses and said, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." 28 Then Joshua the son of Nun, the attendant of Moses from his youth, answered and said, "Moses, my lord, restrain them." 29 But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!" 30 Then Moses returned to the camp, both he and the elders of Israel. (Numbers 11:24-30)

It is uncertain as to whether or not these two men, “Eldad and Medad,” were part of the original “seventy,” or whether they were perhaps two men apart from the “seventy” whom God sovereignly poured His Spirit upon,⁵¹ but what is certain is that they were not in the place where they were supposed to be from a human, organizational perspective, but in spite of that, God sovereignly poured out His Spirit upon them, irrespective of where they were supposed to be according to the Israelite’s organizational and theological perspective. Therefore, the reaction of the Israelite’s to the two men “prophesying in the camp,” versus “around the tent” where they were supposed to be, according to the Israelite’s planning, has consistently proven to be the same throughout biblical and extra-biblical history with regard to God’s sovereign move of His Spirit. Even very godly men, who love Jesus, have the tendency, as do we all, to put God in a neat, humanly devised, organizational and theological “box,” out of which, from our human perspective, He cannot and will not function and operate. However, both biblical and extra-biblical history have proven that attempt to not only be wrong, but at times, totally misrepresenting the True and Living God. Indeed, Moses’ response was the classic and truly biblical response of the man or woman who knows God can do anything He so chooses for His glory and for the dissemination of His truth: “Then Joshua the son of Nun, the attendant of Moses from his youth, answered and said, ‘Moses, my lord, restrain them.’ But Moses said to him, ‘Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD’s people were prophets, that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!’”³⁰ Then Moses returned to the camp, both he and the elders of Israel.” From Moses’ statement, it would appear that “Eldad and Medad” were not part of the original “seventy,” but once again, that is uncertain, but what is not uncertain is Moses’ response to Joshua, “Would that all the LORD’s people were prophets, that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!” The point to be made in all of this is that God is absolutely sovereign, and no human being can place God in any kind of theological or organizational “box,” out of which He cannot and will not function, even though many have repeatedly tried to do so over the past two millennia.

Another very important issue that needs to be understood is that both the legitimate, supernatural ministries of the Holy Spirit, and the illegitimate, supernatural ministries contrived by man and instigated by Satan have been coexisting since the fall of Satan, and they are still with us today and will continue to be so until the end (II Thessalonians 2 and Revelation 13; 16:12-16). One very good example of this conflict is that of Pharaoh’s “magicians” who were able to produce the first three “miraculous signs” of Moses (e.g., the staff to a snake [Exodus 7:8-13]; the water of the Nile to blood [Exodus 7:20-25]; the plague of frogs [Exodus 8:1-8]). However, Pharaoh’s magicians could not produce “gnats,” which was the fourth miracle (Exodus 8:16-19), and at that point, the magicians told Pharaoh that the miracles performed through Moses were a manifestation of “the finger of God” (Exodus 8:19). God continued to exercise seven more miracles through Moses that led to Israel leaving Egypt, and God’s ultimate deliverance from Pharaoh’s despotic control was His destruction of the Egyptian army in the Red Sea. Consequently, as we look back to Matthew 7:21-23, we see that Jesus made an

⁵¹ Philip J. Budd, *Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 5, Numbers* (Dallas: Word Books Incorporated, 1998), 128-129.

uncompromising statement about those who were trusting in their “works of miracles” as the grounds for their entrance into heaven: “I never knew you” (Matthew 7:23). In the Greek, the word “never” is a fascinating combination of three words in Greek: (1) οὐ (*ou*), which means “no or not”; (2) δέ (*de*), which is a conjunction meaning “and, or but”; (3) and ποτέ (*pote*), which refers to a measure of “time.” Thus, when put together as οὐδέποτε (*oudepote*), it means, “and at no time ever,” which is a very emphatic statement by Jesus indicating that “at no time” had there ever been a relationship between Him and the ones who are appealing to their “miraculous works” as the grounds for their entrance into heaven. In addition, the word for “knew” in Greek is ἔγνων (*egnōn*), and it is in what is called the Aorist tense, which implies a completed action. In this instance, therefore, it would be what is called the Constative Aorist,⁵² which means it looks at the whole of whatever is being described, and what is being described here is the whole of one’s life, from birth to death, as they stand before the Lord, and thus, throughout the whole of their life, they have never had a saving, faith based relationship with the Lord. The basic root for the Greek word “knew” is γινώσκω (*ginōskō*), and it implies “grasping the full reality and nature of the object under consideration. . . . to know in a personal way . . . , to understand . . . , to be acquainted with . . . , to be expert . . . , and to judge.”⁵³ Therefore, the source from which these people derived their “powers” was not from God. However, once again as stated above, Jesus in no way negated the “miraculous” as a whole, but simply drew an apparent distinction between “false and lying miracles,” versus those “miracles” whose derivation was and is from God. This contrast is also seen quite clearly in Jesus’ account of the “end of the age” in Matthew 24:24 and Mark 13:22 where He says, “for false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show signs and wonders, in order, if possible, to lead the elect astray” (Mark 13:22).

To further support the obvious, biblical truth that Jesus was not negating “miraculous gifts” as a whole, we see His commission of the disciples in Matthew 10:8: “Heal *the* sick, raise *the* dead, cleanse *the* lepers, cast out demons; freely you received, freely give.” The parallel to this commissioning in Matthew 10:8 is found only in Mark 3:14-15 and Luke 6:12-16. Mark reads as follows: “And He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him, and that He might send them out to preach, and to have authority to cast out the demons.” In this Markan account of their initial commission, the only supernatural ministry with which they were empowered was “to cast out demons,” but we know that later in Mark the disciples were “anointing with oil many sick people and healing them” (Mark 6:13). Luke, on the other hand, mentions nothing of any supernatural empowerment in their initial commission, but later in Luke, not only are the twelve disciples, who became the twelve Apostles, empowered to heal the sick and cast out demons, but also “seventy others” as well (Luke 10:1-20). The point being made is that Jesus’ twelve disciples (and in Luke’s Gospel, “seventy others” as well) were supernaturally empowered by the Lord to do a work that God was directing, versus what was being manipulated by man’s trickery as Jesus described in Matthew 7:21-23. In addition, Jesus also said in Matthew 10:8, “freely you

⁵² Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics - Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999), 557.

⁵³ Colin Brown, ed., *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, Vol. 2* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 392-393.

received, freely give,” but was that “reception” of supernatural ministry limited to the Apostles, and thus, was their “giving” limited to the people of their day to whom God ministered through them? Or is the maxim, “freely you received, freely give,” true for all believers, throughout the past two millennia, whom God empowers, according to His distributive will and purpose, for the supernatural ministry He wants to exercise in and through them in ministering His Gospel to others? As we mentioned in Luke 10:1-20, there were also “seventy others” who were anointed for supernatural ministry by Jesus in addition to the twelve disciples, so it would certainly appear that the maxim, “freely you received, freely give,” is for all believers, throughout history, until the end.

On the other hand, we do see in Matthew 17:14-21, Mark 9:14-29, and Luke 9:37-42 the inability of the disciples to cast out a demon from a young boy, and this is after they had been empowered by Jesus to do that very thing. However, Jesus told them that the reason they could not cast out the demon was “because of the littleness of your faith” (Matthew 17:20). In addition, in Mark’s Gospel Jesus said, “If you can? All things are possible to him who believes. Immediately, the boy’s father cried out and said, ‘I do believe; help my unbelief’” (Mark 9:23-24). Therefore, are we to believe that Jesus’ statement to this man about trusting Him for the healing and deliverance of his son only applied to the time of the Apostles, or during the time period of the formation of the New Testament Canon, or until the Body of Christ came into its mature state (I seriously pity the deceived person who embraces this theological perspective)? That is indeed a tragic, theological, and unbiblical position to hold to and embrace, if indeed, someone does. However, I see nothing in this passage, nor any surrounding passages, that would remotely intimate that the statement Jesus made in Mark 9:23-24 was only for the days of the Apostles, etc. In this same context of unbelief on our part hindering the supernatural ministry of God’s power in our midst, we find that when Jesus went to minister in Nazareth, His home town, “He did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief” (Matthew 13:58). Thus, what I see in these two accounts of doubt and disbelief is a Divinely inspired, Eternal Truth for all believers in Jesus Christ until He returns, or until we breathe our last breath and go home to be with Him – “All things are possible to him who believes” – and any who would relegate this statement of Jesus to a historical time period, versus for all of human existence, is tragically short-changing themselves, as well as any and all who would listen to and embrace such a misguided, theological perspective.

Therefore, we see nothing in the Gospels about God suspending the supernatural ministry of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers throughout the past two millennia until Jesus returns. What we clearly do see is that His gifts and Satan’s lying wonders will be working in contrast to each other until the end. However, in expanding our analysis of the maxim that Jesus appended to His commission in Matthew 10:8 for His disciples to go forth in the ministry for which He was enabling them, “freely you received, freely give,” what does this mean for us today, or does it mean anything? If, according to those who embrace a cessationist theology, the disciples alone, who were to become the Apostles, received such power to “heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, and cast out demons,” then are we to assume as well that they are the only

ones who have “freely received from Christ,” and, therefore, they are the only ones who can “freely give” that which they have received from Him? I do not believe that many, if any cessationist would embrace such a stance, but the statement of Jesus, “freely you received, freely give,” is integrally linked to the enabling, supernatural power He was giving His disciples, who would later become His Apostles. On the other hand, can someone take the statement, “freely you received, freely give,” and apply it to other areas of our Christian life, and in doing so, still be speaking the truth? Yes, they can, and the fact is that everything we receive from Jesus is “free,” in that it cannot be purchased by our “works of righteousness,” because we have ABSOLUTELY NONE: “For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and **all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment** (i.e., a “used menstrual cloth” – *my note*); And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away” (Isaiah 64:6). However, if this statement can legitimately be applied to all areas of our lives as believers, then where in the Gospels do we find anything that says these particular, supernatural empowerments are restricted to the Apostles during their lifetime alone? The answer is, “we do not,” and not only that, but we do not find in the Gospels anything remotely intimating a teaching or belief that the supernatural gifts will cease with the final compilation of the New Testament Canon, or with the so called “maturity” of the Body of Christ.

In contrast to the cessation of the supernatural ministry of the gifts of the Holy Spirit being taught and presented in the Gospels, we find with unmistakable clarity a promise of the continuation of the supernatural ministry of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in Mark 16:17-18, which we have already discussed briefly. But it is important to see this passage in its context historically in the Gospel of Mark:

And these signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; 18 they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it shall not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover. (Mark 16:17-18)

As we already briefly discussed the critical debate as to whether or not Mark 16:9-20 was from the original hand of Mark, what is unquestionable is the fact that the author of this portion of Scripture was discussing something that was occurring in the early Church – that is, these were current manifestations among believers, and the declaration about these manifestations was either prophetic with reference to “speaking with new tongues” in particular, since nothing like that had ever occurred before in a biblical setting, or it was a recapitulation of that which had already occurred and was still going on at the time of this addition to the Gospel of Mark. The reference about “picking up serpents” was also either prophetic, and we see that occurring with Paul in Acts 28:1-6, or it too was a recapitulation of what happened to Paul, and the writer of this addition was including it to demonstrate the power of God in the lives of His believers. Interestingly, the event recorded in Acts 28:1-6 may have occurred between 60-62 AD, which would put the date for Paul being “two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him” in Rome from between ca. 62-64 AD. Nero, who was Emperor from 54-

68 AD, began an intense persecution of Christians in 64 AD, blaming them for a fire that burned much of the city, and it is during this time period that many believe both Paul and Peter were executed.⁵⁴ If indeed these dates are correct for Paul's time in Rome and his ultimate death, the question that arises is, when did Luke compile Acts and the Gospel with his name?

Due to the fact that no mention is made by Luke in the Book of Acts of Paul's death, nor of the Neronian persecution of Christians that began in 64 AD, nor of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD by Titus, it would appear that a good choice for the date of Luke's writing Acts would be sometime before 64 AD.⁵⁵ With regard to Luke's Gospel, because the Gospels of Mark and Luke parallel each other quite significantly, and Luke makes the comment in the beginning of His Gospel that, "many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word have handed them down to us, it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write *it* out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus" (Luke 1:1-3), it is assumed that Luke wrote His Gospel after Mark's Gospel was written, and thus, borrowed much from Mark's account.

In 1962, Greek fragments from Cave 7 in Qumran were published, and in 1972, Jose O'Callaghan, a noted papyrologist, claimed that these fragments represent portions of the Gospel of Mark that date back to 50 AD, and since then, a German scholar named C. P. Thiede, has enthusiastically substantiated this fragment as being from Mark 6:52-53. However, there is much debate over this, but the very fact that two notable scholars such as these have affirmed in their minds that this fragment is from Mark and dates to 50 AD is compelling to at least consider this date from a papyrological perspective.⁵⁶ On the other hand, the vast majority of conservative, New Testament scholars who actually believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God, date the authorship of Mark between 60-65 AD. The Church Historian, Eusebius (263-339 AD), quotes from Papias of Hierapolis (ca. 65-140 AD) who wrote about Mark receiving from Peter directly his account of the life of Jesus and all that He did:

But now we must add to the words of his which we have already quoted the tradition which he gives in regard to Mark, the author of the Gospel. It is in the following words: "This also the presbyter said: Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately, though not indeed in order, whatsoever he remembered of the things said or done by Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor followed him, but afterward, as I said, he followed Peter, who adapted his teaching to the needs of his hearers, but with no intention of giving a connected account of the Lord's discourses, so that Mark committed no error while he thus wrote some things as he remembered them. For he was careful of

⁵⁴ Pheme Perkins & Mark Allan Powell, "Nero" in *The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2011).

⁵⁵ Kenneth O. Gangel, *Holman New Testament Commentary: Acts, Vol. 5* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 2.

⁵⁶ Daniel B. Wallace, "7Q5: The Earliest New Testament Papyrus?" *Westminster Theological Journal*, 56 (1), Spring, 1994.

one thing, not to omit any of the things which he had heard, and not to state any of them falsely.” These things are related by Papias concerning Mark.⁵⁷

Eusebius then goes on to describe Mark’s relationship with Peter as written by Clement of Alexandria (150-215 AD):

Again, in the same books, Clement gives the tradition of the earliest presbyters, as to the order of the Gospels, in the following manner: The Gospels containing the genealogies, he says, were written first. The Gospel according to Mark had this occasion. As Peter had preached the Word publicly at Rome, and declared the Gospel by the Spirit, many who were present requested that Mark, who had followed him for a long time and remembered his sayings, should write them out. And having composed the Gospel he gave it to those who had requested it. When Peter learned of this, he neither directly forbade nor encouraged it.⁵⁸

In addition, Eusebius also writes that Peter was in Rome during the reign of Claudius, who was the Roman Emperor from 41-54 AD, and thus, according to the historical records contained in Eusebius’ writings, Mark was with Peter at that time:

But this did not last long. For immediately, during the reign of Claudius, the all-good and gracious Providence, which watches over all things, led Peter, that strongest and greatest of the apostles, and the one who on account of his virtue was the speaker for all the others, to Rome against this great corrupter of life (this is a reference to Simon Magus of Samaria, who apparently never truly repented [Acts 8:4-24] – *my note*). He like a noble commander of God, clad in divine armor, carried the costly merchandise of the light of the understanding from the East to those who dwelt in the West, proclaiming the light itself, and the word which brings salvation to souls, and preaching the kingdom of heaven.⁵⁹

At this point it is also important to note, that with everything in biblical studies, so too here there are those who question Eusebius’ records,⁶⁰ but on the other hand, there are others,⁶¹ who believe Eusebius’ records are indeed credible.⁶¹ If Peter was indeed in Rome during the reign of Claudius (41-54 AD), and if Mark at some point during that time began to write his Gospel from Peter’s relating the ministry of Jesus to him, and then Nero became Emperor from 54-68 AD, and he began his persecution of Christians between 64-68 AD, during which time it is believed that Paul and Peter were killed, the dates of between 60-65 AD are quite plausible for the dating

⁵⁷ Philip Schaff & Henry Wace, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers 2.1: Eusebius: Church History, Life of Constantine the Great, and Oration in Praise of Constantine*, trans. Arthur Cushman McGiffert (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986), 172-173.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 261.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 115.

⁶⁰ Alfred A. Plummer, ed., *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914), xxxi-xxxii.

⁶¹ James A. Brooks, *The New American Commentary: Mark, Vol. 23* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 18-19.

of the completion of Mark's Gospel (although some would put a bit later, ca. 65-70 AD⁶²). As we went through the scenario of the dating of Luke's writing of Acts sometime before 64 AD, Luke's writing of his Gospel, therefore, would likely have come just before his writing of the Book of Acts based on Acts 1:1, but subsequent to the Gospel of Mark. If Luke wrote later, as some surmise, it would most likely be in the same time frame before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD and subsequent to Mark's Gospel, while some put his writing of Luke-Acts after 70 AD, and in doing so, they offer plausible, but not thoroughly convincing arguments for a date subsequent to 70 AD and after Paul's martyred death.⁶³ However, regardless of the specific time frame of the writing of Mark and Luke-Acts, these two Gospels and Acts were written some thirty years or more after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, which the latter was the major sending forth of the early Church in preaching and proclaiming the Gospel.

How does all of this analysis of dating with regard to Mark and Luke-Acts pertain to the viability of the present day ministry of the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit? In addressing the issue of the widespread dispersion of the Gospel during those first thirty years or more since Pentecost, and the fact that the only record we have of an Apostle going to Corinth and ministering is that of Paul in Acts 18:1-17, which, according to the date of Claudius' decree for the Jews to leave Rome, was about 49-50AD,⁶⁴ no mention is made of Paul laying hands on anyone there to be filled with the Holy Spirit, but Paul certainly addressed the issue of the use and misuse of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in that church, and in particular with the gift of tongues. It is believed that he wrote the epistle of I Corinthians ca. 55 AD,⁶⁵ and that would mean that within a five year period, the Corinthian Church had become a "full on, Charismatic fellowship," based on I Corinthians 12-14. But unlike as in Ephesus (ca. 53AD – Acts 19:1-7) when he found some "disciples" there who had only received "John's baptism," and Paul baptized them "in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying" (Acts 19:5-6), there is no mention made, whatsoever, about Paul "laying his hands" on anyone in Corinth, whereby the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they began "speaking in tongues"? If, according to the cessationist position, the administration of the infilling of the Holy Spirit, accompanied with "speaking in

⁶² Robert A. Guelich, *Word Biblical Commentary: Mark 1-8:26, Vol. 34A* (Dallas: Word Books Incorporated, 1998), xxxi-xxxii.

⁶³ Robert H. Stein, *The New American Commentary: Mark, Vol. 24* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 24-26.

⁶⁴ Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel, and Donald H. Juel; eds. Eldon J. Epp and Christopher R. Matthews (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 151. Paulus Orosius lived from ca. 385-418/20, and he was mentored by Augustine, who asked him to write his *Seven Books of History Against the Pagans*. It is in this work that we find the date of Claudius' decree that Orosius attributes to Josephus: "In the ninth year of the same reign, Josephus reports that the Jews were expelled from the City by Claudius" (Paulus Orosius, *The Seven Books of History Against the Pagans* [Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1964], 297).

⁶⁵ Richard E. Oster, *The College Press NIV Commentary: 1 Corinthians* (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Company, 1995), Introduction, Date.

tongues,” was something only accomplished by the Apostolic laying on of hands, and mention is made of Paul doing this in Ephesus, why don’t we see the same thing happening while he was teaching in Corinth, since of all of the New Testament Churches mentioned, the Corinthian Church was the one focused on with regard to the exercise of the “spiritual gifts”? A possible answer to that question may be found in Acts 18:24-28:

Now a certain Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John; and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. And when he wanted to go across to Achaia, the brethren encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him; and when he had arrived, he helped greatly those who had believed through grace; for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. (Acts 18:24-28)

Paul had left Corinth and gone back to Antioch through Ephesus, and he left Priscilla and Aquila at Ephesus (Acts 18:18-22), and that is why they were there when Apollos arrived. What does it mean that Priscilla and Aquila “explained to him the way of God more perfectly”? Whatever position one may take on the meaning of this statement is conjecture and hypothesis, but is there a fairly solid and obvious answer to this question that makes a lot of sense and fits in with the total context of the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit in a believer’s life? Thus, from my perspective, I believe that Priscilla and Aquila shared with Apollos the importance of the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

In the passage above from Acts 18:24-28, we are told that Apollos “had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John” (Acts 18:25). However, apparently upon hearing him “speak out boldly in the synagogue” (Acts 18:26), Priscilla and Aquila “took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately” (Acts 18:26). This is completely reminiscent of what happened in Ephesus on Paul’s return trip from Antioch when he came across those “twelve men” (Acts 19:7) who were indeed “disciples” (Acts 19:1), but were only baptized into “John’s baptism” (Acts 19:3), and they had not heard of the infilling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:2). However, when Paul explained to them what the meaning of John’s baptism was, versus baptism in the name of Jesus, they were then “baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying” (Acts 19:5-6). Thus, both Apollos and these twelve disciples in Ephesus were “acquainted only with the baptism of John,” but for them to move in the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, they all needed to be “baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus,” as well as receive the infilling of the Holy Spirit. With regard to Apollos, therefore, nothing is mentioned in the text about him being water baptized in Jesus name, or being filled with the Holy Spirit, but, as with the Ephesian disciples who were in the same place Apollos was, “being acquainted only with the baptism of John,” it certainly stands to biblical reason that

Priscilla and Aquila shared and ministered to Apollos both water baptism in Jesus' name and the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, with regard to Priscilla and Aquila ministering to Apollos when "they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately," I firmly believe the "explanation" they gave of "the way of God more accurately" was water baptism in Jesus' name and the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Now what is important to note is that neither Priscilla or Aquila were Apostles, but they apparently had the biblical authority as believers in Jesus Christ to carry out water baptism in Jesus' name, as did Philip in Acts 8:1-8 who not only baptized new believers in Jesus' name, but through whom also supernatural miracles were occurring (Acts 8:6-8). After Apollos was instructed in "the way of God more accurately," he went to the Greek province of Achaia, in which is the city of Corinth, and there it is said that "he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ" (Acts 18:28).

In Acts 18:25, before Priscilla and Aquila had "explained to him the way of God more accurately," it is said of Apollos, "This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John." The phrase, "being fervent in spirit" literally reads, "continually being enthusiastic in the spirit, he was continually speaking and continually teaching accurately and carefully the things concerning Jesus." Thus, the words, "in the spirit" is quite significant as to just what Luke, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, actually means by this statement. Some believe that this is simply a statement of his emotional fervency in sharing the Gospel, in much the same way might cheer for a team in a sport (e.g., the way Mississippi State football fans cheer when the Bulldogs play the Ole Miss Rebels and beat them!),⁶⁶ while others view "in the spirit" referring to "possession by the Spirit of God."⁶⁷ I personally opt for the latter view for two reasons: (1) the phrase in the Greek reads, **τῷ πνεύματι** (*tō pneumati*), and the **τῷ** (*tō*) is what is called the definite article in Greek, which is the same as our word "the," which in Greek implies definiteness, versus ambiguity, and so I view this as referring definitely to the Holy Spirit, versus a general form of enthusiasm; (2) in Romans 12:9-12, Paul is exhorting believers how to walk in a consistent, practical manner in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in verse 11, he says, "not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," and the phrase, "fervent in spirit" is identical in grammatical construction to that in Acts 18:25 concerning Apollos (e.g., "continually being enthusiastic in the spirit"). Consequently, as I look at these two passages, and the fact that Apollos "was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus," I believe that Apollos was born again, and thus, the initial word used for "accurately" in Acts 8:25 is the Greek adverb, **ἀκριβῶς** (*akribōs*), which simply means "accurately." However, in 8:26, a different form of this word is used from the adjective, **ἀκριβής** (*akribēs*), which means "strict and exact," and the form used is **ἀκριβέστερον** (*akribesteron*), which in Greek is the comparative form of the adjective. Thus, even as Apollos was "accurately speaking and teaching

⁶⁶ Conzelmann, 158.

⁶⁷ F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), 359-360.

the things of Jesus,” which had to include His virgin birth and deity, his sinless and perfect life, and His sacrificial death for the sins of fallen man, whereby those who believe in Him are clothed in His righteousness, and all of this was real “in the Spirit” with Apollos, who was himself born again, but there was something yet for him to experience and know, and that is what Priscilla and Aquila “explained the way of God to him more accurately (i.e., in greater accuracy and understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit in his life than what he previously knew), which obviously had to do with “Acts 2 and on.”⁶⁸

As a result of all that has now done in Apollos’ life through the ministry of Priscilla and Aquila, he now sets forth to Achaia, wherein Corinth is located, and “he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.” The phrase, “fervent in the Spirit” is not used here, but rather the adverb “powerfully,” which in Greek is εὐτόνωσ (eutonōs). This Greek word is made up of two words: (1) εὖ (eu), which is a Greek adverb, and when added to other words in a compound format, it emphasizes “abundance, prosperity, and ease”⁶⁹; (2) τόνωσ (tonōs), which in its normative, non-adverbial form is τόνωσ (tonos), and it comes from the Greek verb τείνω (teinō), meaning “to stretch.”⁷⁰ The consequent meaning of τόνωσ (tonos), therefore, is to stretch with “tension,” resulting in “lasting quality”⁷¹ to something. Thus, when these two words are combined, the amplified meaning is “that which gives a lasting benefit to an interpersonal relationship or experience,” and in the case of Apollos’ preaching and teaching in Achaia, which included Corinth, that meant communicating to the people to whom he was ministering the reality of them having a deep and personal relationship with Jesus through being born again, and also through being filled with and empowered by the indwelling Holy Spirit, which included the ministry of His “supernatural gifts” in and through their lives. Therefore, I believe that it was quite likely Apollos who was the one who introduced the Corinthian believers to the supernatural ministry of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but if it was Paul rather than Apollos, I do believe that Apollos encouraged the Corinthian believers in the use and exercise of those gifts in their lives, as well as in the ministry of the Church as a whole, and Apollos was not an Apostle, but rather a committed follower, preacher, and teacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. However, in the few brief years from the time the Corinthian believers began moving in the “supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit” through the ministries of Paul and/or Apollos (i.e., ca. 52/53-55 AD), correction needed to be administered due to their spiritual immaturity and misuse of the gifts in the public arena in particular, and that is where Mark 16:9-20 comes into play in this scenario, with the specific focus on “speaking in tongues.”

If we look at Mark 16:9-20 as being a late addition to the Gospel, the immediate question that arises is, when was it written and added? The answer to that is, no one knows for sure, but we do have some patristic and manuscript witnesses that attest to the longer addition. The oldest,

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th revised ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 704.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 1766.

⁷¹ Arndt and Gingrich, 829.

patristic witness would be Justin Martyr (ca. 110-165 AD), who, in his *First Apology*, chapter XLV, made a reference to the “apostles, going forth from Jerusalem, preached everywhere,” which is in line with Mark 16:20, “And they went out and preached everywhere.”⁷² Can we say that this is categorically a reference to Mark 16:20? No, we cannot, but what we can say is that in the context of what Justin was addressing in chapter XLV of his *First Apology*, which is evangelism and giving their lives for the Gospel, and that which is being attributed to Jesus in Mark 16:9-20 is the evangelistic sendoff for His disciples. There is no certain date as to when Justin may have written this *First Apology*, but let's assume it was ca. 140-150 AD, and if the reference Justin makes to the “apostles, going forth from Jerusalem, preached everywhere” is from Mark 16:20, then that would mean that this additional portion had been written by at least the middle of the second century AD.

Another early Church Father named Tatian (ca. 120-180 AD), who was a student of Justin Martyr, wrote a composition called the *Diatessaron*, which was a harmony of the Four Gospels. Unfortunately, there are no extant copies of the *Diatessaron* itself, but what we do have is a reference to it in Eusebius' (ca. 263-339 AD) *Church History*: “But their original founder, Tatian, formed a certain combination and collection of the Gospels, I know not how, to which he gave the title *Diatessaron*, and which is still in the hands of some. But they say that he ventured to paraphrase certain words of the apostle, in order to improve their style.”⁷³ What is important for us, however, is that even though there are no extant copies, the original was probably written ca. 170 AD, and it included the Mark 16:9-20 addition, and there are later works, which Eusebius alluded to, where inclusive analysis of the *Diatessaron* is done, and one of the earliest of these is *Saint Ephrem's Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron*, which was written around the mid fourth century AD in Syriac, and it is thought that Tatian himself wrote his *Diatessaron* in Syriac, which would mean that believers, apart from Greek and Latin speakers, were both aware of and perhaps even experiencing the very things that Mark 16:9-20 makes mention of.⁷⁴ In addition, further analysis of the sixth century Latin and eleventh century Arabic translations of the *Diatessaron* shows that they too verify that Tatian had access to the Mark 16:9-20 portion of Scripture in question.⁷⁵

Another Church Father, Irenaeus (ca. 120-202 AD), in his *Against Heresies*, which he began writing ca. 180 AD, quotes directly from Mark 16:19 in 3:10:5: “Also, towards the conclusion of his Gospel, Mark says: ‘So then, after the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God;’ confirming what had been spoken by the prophet: ‘The LORD said to my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy

⁷² Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of The Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325, Vol. I* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985), 178.

⁷³ Schaff & Wace, 209.

⁷⁴ Jan Joosten, “Tatian's *Diatessaron* and the Old Testament Peshitta,” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 120, 3 (Fall 2001); 501-523.

⁷⁵ James Snapp, Jr., “Mark 16:9-20 in Tatian's *Diatessaron*,” *The Heroic Age: A Journal of Early Medieval Northwestern Europe*, 15 (October 2012): <http://www.mun.ca/mst/heroicage/issues/15/snapp.php>.

footstool.’⁷⁶ However, there are no extant Greek manuscripts antedating Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, both dated in the mid-fourth century AD, that contain the extended portion of Mark, but Codex Washingtonianus (late fourth/early fifth century AD) and Codex Alexandrinus (mid fifth century AD) both have portions of the extension of Mark. In addition, Eusebius in his *Gospel Questions and Solutions to Marinus* makes the statement that, with regard to the extant manuscripts of Mark 16: 9-20 in his day, “the accurate ones” in “nearly all the copies” that he is familiar with end with verse 8, but those that contain verses 9-20 “may be spurious (περιττὰ ἄν εἶη – may be superfluous is a better translation, meaning it is excessive and unnecessary – *my note and translation*) because it is not found in the other Gospels. However, he goes on to say that there are those who believe the extension should remain because it is part of the total message of the Gospels as a whole.⁷⁷ Thus, Eusebius expresses both his doubts as to the validity of the extension being from the hand of Mark, but he also acknowledges the fact that because it has still remained in a number of texts (of which there are currently no extant copies), many people still hold on to it because for them, it represents the totality of the Gospel message.

Jerome (345-420 AD), who translated the Old and New Testaments into the Latin Vulgate between 382-405, has Mark 16:9-20 in his Latin translation. However, what is significant for us with regard to our examination of Mark 16:9-20 is both Jerome’s critical perspective about it in a letter written to a Christian lady named Hedibia in ca. 406-407, over twenty years after his translation of the Gospel of Mark and the other three Gospels into the Latin Vulgate, which translation he completed between 382-384. In addition, his translation of the Gospels was from a Greek manuscript that was closely aligned to the Codex Sinaiticus,⁷⁸ and even though the Sinaiticus does not have Mark 16:9-20 in it, Jerome’s Latin translation does. However, as Jerome’s response to Hedibia indicates, like Eusebius, he clearly had reservations about the authenticity of Mark 16:9-20 being from the hand of Mark. Hedibia asked a series of twelve questions, and question # 3 was the following: “How are the discrepancies in the evangelical narratives to be accounted for? How can Matt. 28:1 be reconciled with Mark 16:1, 2.”⁷⁹ Jerome’s response to Hedibia, as stated above, over twenty years after he completed the translation of the Greek text with the Gospels into Latin, is very much in line with what Eusebius wrote in his *Gospel Questions and Solutions to Marinus*, with the main difference being that Eusebius was writing in Greek and Jerome was responding in Latin. In addition, Jerome rephrased her question in his response to Hedibia:

⁷⁶ Roberts & Donaldson, 426.

⁷⁷ James A. Kelhoffer, “The Witness of Eusebius’ *ad Marinum* and Other Christian Writings to Text-Critical Debates concerning the Original Conclusion to Mark’s Gospel,” *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* (2001): 84-86, <http://www.diva-ortal.org/smash/get/diva2:385568/FULLTEXT02>

⁷⁸ *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 2nd ed., s.v. “Vulgate” (1451-1452).

⁷⁹ Philip Schaff & Henry Wace, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2.6.: Jerome: Letters and Select Works*, trans. W. H. Fremantle (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), 224.

In the first instance, you ask, why did Matthew say, then at the end of the Sabbath as it was dawning at the same time, the Lord arose (last chapter of Matthew), and Mark, he mentions the resurrection having occurred in the morning, therefore writing: “But when He had arisen, as it was dawning, He appeared in the morning to Mary Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons; and departing, she announced this to those who had been with Him, who were mourning and weeping. And as they were hearing that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe in it.”⁸⁰

From here, Jerome went in to explain to Hebibia that both writers, Matthew and Mark, were talking about the same time and the same event, but simply putting it in a bit different wording. However, that which is significant for us is his response to Mark 16 as a whole, which, as stated above, is almost identical to what Eusebius said, and there are those who think that Jerome simply copied and repeated Eusebius’ remarks, adding his own, personal perspective:

This question has a twofold solution: either we do not guarantee Mark’s testimony because in few instances is it mentioned in the Gospels (i.e., the various copies of the Gospel of Mark – *my note*), almost all of the Greek texts do not have the end of this chapter (i.e., chapter 16:9-20 – *my note*), especially when what is narrated by the other Evangelists seems different and contrary; or this response, that each spoke truth: Matthew, when the Lord arose at the end of the Sabbath, also Mark, when Mary Magdalene saw Him, which is, on the morning of the first day (of the week – *my note*).⁸¹

The point to be made in all of this debate among the early Church Fathers with regard to the ending of Mark 16:9-20 is that even in spite of the doubt many of them had with regard to this portion of Mark actually being from Mark’s hand, they still embraced it as a valid representation of the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit in the early Church, and for many, it also represented what the Holy Spirit was still doing, as we will read about later. But at this juncture, I want to actually look at the wording of Mark 16:17 with regard to the phrase, “they will speak with new tongues,” and in particular with the adjective “new,” and that is what our next analysis will be focused on.

In Mark 16:17, we read, “And these signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues,” and this is the only place in the New Testament where this adjective “new” is used in connection with “speaking in tongues.” In the Greek, the word for “new” is **καινός** (*kainos*), and it also means, “unused, unknown, strange, and remarkable.”⁸² In addition, the word for “tongues” in Greek is **γλῶσσα** (*glōssa*), and it refers both to the physical “tongue,” as well as a “language.”⁸³ Thus, in the New Testament where the phrase “speaking in tongues” is found, it is actually referring to “speaking

⁸⁰ *Saint Jérôme: Critique Sacree – Explications de Divers Passages de L’écriture Sainte*. Paritie I. A Hédbibia. Epistola CXX. Ad Hedibiam. Capitula XII. Quaestiomum Hedibiae Ad S. Hieronymum (<http://remacle.org/bloodwolf/eglise/jerome/hedibia.htm>).

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Arndt and Gingrich, 394-395.

⁸³ Ibid., 161.

in languages.” Therefore, if we apply these meanings in the above phrase, we read, “And these signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new, unused, unknown, strange, and remarkable languages.” What is the significance of these various meanings in relation to the rest of the New Testament references to “speaking in tongues,” as well as the one reference of Isaiah 28:11 used in I Corinthians 14:21? In order to answer that question, we need to look at the five other places where either an adjective or a noun is used to describe “speaking in tongues,” including the Isaiah 28:11 passage:

- (1) Acts 2:4: “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with **other** tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.” The word for “other” used here in the Greek is **ἕτερος** (*heteros*), and its basic meaning is “other, another, different, and strange.”⁸⁴ In addition to its basic meaning, however, **ἕτερος** (*heteros*) carries an added emphasis: “As a distinguishing adj. or adv. it denotes something which is not identical with what has been referred to previously. This may involve a more or less pronounced qualitative distinction, in which case the term acquires theological significance.”⁸⁵ What this means is that **ἕτερος** (*heteros*) is expressing “another” of a completely different type, and the other Greek word used for “other,” **ἄλλος** (*allos*), can also refer to “another” of a different type as in I Corinthians 15:39-41 (e.g., “flesh of men, beasts, etc.”), but quite frequently, it is referring to “another” of the same type, as in John 7:12 where one group of people were saying Jesus was good, but “another” (**ἄλλος** - *allos*) group of people were saying the opposite (e.g., “some were saying ‘He is a good man’, others [**ἄλλος** - *allos*] were saying, ‘No, on the contrary,) Thus, both groups were human beings of the same genus, but they had different opinions of Jesus. However, there is one usage of both **ἕτερος** (*heteros*) and **ἄλλος** (*allos*) together where the distinction between the two is clearly seen, and that is in Galatians 1:6-7: “I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different (**ἕτερος** - *heteros*) gospel; which is *really* not another (**ἄλλος** - *allos*); only there are some who are disturbing you, and want to distort the gospel of Christ.” In this comparative analogy, therefore, **ἕτερος** (*heteros*) is used to speak of “another Gospel” of a completely different genus, and **ἄλλος** (*allos*) is used to refer to something different, but of the same genus – i.e., **ἕτερος** (*heteros*) is being used to compare the Gospel with a religion such as Islam, which has no relationship to the truth of the Gospel, whatsoever, but **ἄλλος** (*allos*) is being used to compare an evangelical Baptist Church with an evangelical Presbyterian Church, where both are preaching the true Gospel and are of the same genus, but they have some secondary and tertiary differences. Consequently, could **ἕτερος** (*heteros*) in Acts 2:4 be referring to a “language” that is completely different from that of normal languages – perhaps, the “language of angels” (I Corinthians 13:1) – or is this simply referring to a different type of language from their Semitic roots of Hebrew and Aramaic, as well as Greek and Latin, which most in Judea at that time spoke? If the former is what is being described,

⁸⁴ Ibid., 315.

⁸⁵ Gerhard Kittel, ed, *Theological Dictionary Of The New Testament, Vol. II* (GrandRapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), 702.

then what we would have in Acts 2:1-13 would be both a miracle of “speaking” with the disciples and a miracle of “hearing” with those who were supernaturally enabled to understand what the group as a whole was saying in each of their individual languages. We will deal with this distinct possibility later, but suffice it to say at this point that whatever the disciples were speaking, it as a “language” completely foreign to them and bypassed their understanding of what they were saying (I Corinthians 14:2).

- (2) I Corinthians 12:10: “and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another *various* kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.” The phrase, “kinds of tongues,” in Greek is **γένη γλωσσῶν** (*genē glōssōn*), and the word **γένη** (*genē*) means “race, stock, family, nation, people, class, and kind,”⁸⁶ and from this Greek word we derive our English word, genus. In this context, it is best translated as “kinds,” or perhaps “classes” of languages. Once again, what does this phrase mean by “kinds,” or “classes of languages,” and what is Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, referring to specifically? Is this, perhaps, a lead up to what he says in I Corinthians 13:1: “If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal,” and if so, do the “kinds” and “classes” include “tongues/languages of angels,” as well as “tongues/languages of men”? Once again, we will explore this in greater depth later on, but it would certainly appear that the human “languages” and angelic “languages” would certainly fit in the “kinds of tongues/languages” Paul is making mention of.
- (3) I Corinthians 12:28: “And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, *various* kinds of tongues.” Here again, the phrase, “kinds of tongues” is exactly the same as verse 10 above, and everything stated above applies here too.
- (4) I Corinthians 14:21: “In the Law it is written, ‘By men of strange tongues and by the lips of strangers I will speak to this people, and even so they will not listen to Me,’ says the Lord.” The phrase, “strange tongues,” is written in Greek as **ἑτερογλώσσοις** (*heteroglōssos*), and it literally means, “speaking a foreign language.”⁸⁷ This word is actually made up of two Greek words: (a) **ἕτερος** (*heteros*), which means “other, another, different, and strange,”⁸⁸ and we have already looked at this word above in our analysis of Acts 2:4; (2) and **γλῶσσα** (*glōssa*), which here too has already been defined as referring to both to the physical “tongue,” as well as a “language.” What is fascinating about this verse is that the word “men” is not actually in the verse, but the translators understand **ἑτερογλώσσοις** (*heteroglōssos*) as referring to “men of other languages,” but once again, the word “men” is not actually in the verse, but it is assumed that it is referring to men because the word for “strangers” is **ἕτερος** (*heteros*), and it is in the masculine plural form. Thus, here again, what exactly is **ἑτερογλώσσοις** (*heteroglōssos*) referring to? As seen in Acts 2:4, there is a strong possibility that **ἕτερος** (*heteros*) may include “languages of angels,” as well as “languages of

⁸⁶ Arndt and Gingrich, 157.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 314.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 315.

men,” and the passage in Isaiah 28:11 from which this verse is taken is of immense value in helping us to understand what is being described and referred to.

- (5) Isaiah 28:11: “Indeed, He will speak to this people through stammering lips and a foreign tongue.” In this verse in the Hebrew, there are two words that are significant, “stammering” and “foreign.” The word “stammering” comes from the Hebrew noun, לַעֲגָ (la‘ag), which is actually plural, and thus, it would read, “stammerings.” However, this noun comes from the Hebrew verb (as does every Hebrew noun and adjective come from a corresponding Hebrew verb) לָעַג (lā‘ag), which means “to mock, deride, and stammer.”⁸⁹ The Hebrew word for “foreign” is the Hebrew adjective, אֲחֵר (‘aḥēr), which means “another, strange, and alien.”

It in turn comes from the Hebrew verb אָחַר (‘āḥar), which means “to remain behind, delay, tarry, hinder.”⁹⁰ Thus, the idea of “another” from the adjective אֲחֵר (‘aḥēr) has to do with the concept of “another who is coming behind.”⁹¹ Therefore, as we look at Isaiah 28:11, what is this verse saying in its context that Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, would use it in connection with “speaking in tongues” in the open assembly in I Corinthians 14:13-25? This passage in Isaiah is about the people of Judah rejecting the Word of the Lord He is giving them through Isaiah, and thus, God will send a people whose language they do not understand at all, the Assyrians, to bring judgment upon them, with the ultimate purpose to bring Judah to a place of brokenness and repentance (Isaiah 28-29).⁹² Paul, then, in using this passage as an attempt to establish order within the Church at Corinth with reference to “speaking in tongues” in the open assembly, is saying that just as the people of Judah rejected the clear Word of God He spoke to them through His servant Isaiah, a Word that was calling them to repentance and surrender to God’s leadership and rule over their lives, He will in turn demonstrate His incomparable power through the speech of a people they cannot understand, but which they will look upon as mere “stammerings” and “gibberish.” These people in turn will be the instrument in His hand to bring about His eternal plan to fruition in Judah, which will ultimately result in brokenness over their sin and turning to the “stone in Zion,” and this will be the work of God, working through a “speech” the Judeans do not understand, but which He will use to bring about His ultimate purpose and glory. That is why Paul says that “tongues are a sign, not to those who believe, but to unbelievers” (I Corinthians 14:22) of God’s power that transcends their comprehension and understanding, but for the unbeliever to come to a place of brokenness and repentance over his sin, the “tongues” must be accompanied by interpretation or prophesying so that “an unbeliever or an

⁸⁹ Francis Brown, *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1979), 541.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: Volume 2, Chapters 19-39* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969), 277-279.

ungifted man . . . is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you (I Corinthians 14:5, 24-25).

Thus, the “new tongues” mentioned in Mark 16:17 clearly fit in with the five, above mentioned manifestations of “speaking in tongues,” as well as with the “tongues of angels” mentioned in I Corinthians 13:1, and now we want to go forward and look specifically in the Book of Acts, as well as more in depth in I Corinthians and elsewhere, to see even more clearly what the Scripture is saying about the gift of “speaking in tongues.”

The Book of Acts

As we begin our study of “speaking in tongues” in the Book of Acts, we are going to approach it in a rather in depth, linguistic, exegetical manner in order to fully grasp, as much as possible, just exactly what is being said and communicated to the Body of Christ as a whole. We begin, therefore, with Acts 2:1-21:

And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent, rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. ⁵ Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men, from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were bewildered, because they were each one hearing them speak in his own language. ⁷ And they were amazed and marveled, saying, "Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans?" ⁸ "And how is it that we each hear *them* in our own language to which we were born?" ⁹ "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹ Cretans and Arabs-- we hear them in our *own* tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God." ¹² And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" ¹³ But others were mocking and saying, "They are full of sweet wine." ¹⁴ But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: "Men of Judea, and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give heed to my words. ¹⁵ "For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is *only* the third hour of the day; ¹⁶ but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ 'And it shall be in the last days,' God says, 'That I will pour forth of My Spirit upon all mankind; And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, And your young men shall see visions, And your old men shall dream dreams; ¹⁸ Even upon My bondslaves, both men and women, I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit And they shall prophesy. ¹⁹ 'And I will grant wonders in the sky above, And signs on the earth beneath, Blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke. ²⁰ 'The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the great and glorious day of the Lord shall come. ²¹ 'And it shall be, that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' (Acts 2:1-21)

Everything in the New Testament has its basis in the Old Testament, including “speaking in tongues,” which is what we see in the above passage as Peter relates what is happening on the Day of Pentecost with the fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32:

And it will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions.²⁹ "And even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.³⁰ "And I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, Blood, fire, and columns of smoke.³¹ "The sun will be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.³² "And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the LORD Will be delivered; For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem There will be those who escape, As the LORD has said, Even among the survivors whom the LORD calls. (Joel 2:28-32)

As you can see in the passage from Joel, nothing is said directly about “speaking in tongues,” but that which is clearly related to “speaking in tongues” throughout the New Testament is “prophesy,” which may be said to be an intelligible expression to others of praise and worship to God that often accompanies the gift of “speaking in tongues” (e.g., Acts 2:11; 10:46; 19:6; I Corinthians 12:10; 14:5-6, & 13-28). In addition, some of the above prophesy has yet to be fulfilled, in particular verses 30-31, but 32a is even quoted by Paul in Romans 10:13 as a present day reality to everyone who desires to receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

However, our focus for this exegetical analysis is centered on Acts 2:1-13, and we are going to look at these verses in segments:

(1) Acts 2:1-4: “And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.² And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent, rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.³ And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them.⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.”

Two things happened on Pentecost that to my knowledge have never been recorded again in Scripture, nor in Church history, and they are: (a) “a violent, rushing wind filled the whole house”; (b) and “tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each of them.” Biblically speaking, those two events were a onetime occurrence, but not the rest.

After this event, “they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.” The verb, “they began,” in the Greek is *ἄρχω* (*archō*), and it has two basic meanings: (a) “to rule over something or someone”; (b) and “to begin or start something.”⁹³ Thus, the idea of “ruling” implies that the subject of the verb is in control of whatever is the object of the “rule,” and in this instance, in the contextual and syntactical construction of this sentence in Greek, the clear meaning is that the people were “in control” of their own speaking, but the words were not coming from their own cognizance of speech, but rather the Holy Spirit was supernaturally producing the words

⁹³ Arndt and Gingrich, 113.

through them. In addition, the actual form of the verb ἄρχω (*archō*) that is used here in Acts 2:4 is ἤρξαντο (*ērchanto*), and it is what is called an aorist, middle, indicative verb. The word aorist is indicating the tense of the verb, which in Greek is emphasizing the fact that this event happened at some point, and indicative means that this event actually occurred. The word middle describes what type of action this is: active indicates simply that a person performed an action (Bill **hit** the ball); passive indicates that some type of action was performed against someone (Bill **was hit** by the ball); and middle indicates that the person himself performed that action toward, against, or within himself (Bill **hits** himself). Thus, in this instance, what the middle is indicating is that the disciples, who were filled with the Holy Spirit, were themselves doing the speaking from their own choosing, versus being in some type of ‘zombie’ state, or what is often referred to as an ‘ecstatic’ state, which implies they were not in control of their mental and emotional being. However, based on the Greek, an ‘ecstatic’ state could not be farther from the truth. Paul certainly makes clear in I Corinthians 14:13-19 that he is giving instruction concerning those who have the “gift of tongues” on how they are to use it in the church, which clearly means they are in control of “speaking” or not “speaking in tongues,” but the words themselves are those supernaturally emanating from the Holy Spirit within that believer. The phrase, “just as the Holy Spirit was giving them utterance” is demonstrating the fact that as they, of their own accord, opened their mouth and began to speak, the words that came forth from their speaking were not words originating from their thought process and formulation, but rather supernaturally from the Holy Spirit for each word. However, the word “utterance” in the Greek is not a noun, as one might think in reading the English translation, but rather it is a present active infinitive (the verb form is ἀποφθέγγεσθαι [*apophtheggesthai*], which appears to be middle/passive in form, but it is what is called a ‘deponent’ or ‘defective middle’, which means it is middle/passive in form, but active in meaning⁹⁴). In addition, the verb ἀποφθέγγομαι (*apophtheggomai*) means “to speak out and declare boldly or loudly.”⁹⁵ The verbal phrase, “was giving,” comes from the Greek verb δίδωμι (*didōmi*), which means “to give, grant, bestow, impart, impose, send, entrust, yield, and place,”⁹⁶ and it is in the imperfect tense, which emphasizes continued action in past time. Thus, a more amplified translation of this last phrase would be, “just exactly as the Holy Spirit was continually imparting to them to speak out.” But once again, I want to emphasize that these disciples were not in some ‘ecstatic’ state of emotional and mental departure from self-control and reality, but rather they were filled with the joy of the Lord as they were “speaking of the mighty deeds of God” (Acts 2:11), and that brings us to the next portion of Scripture.

- (2) Acts 2:5-13: “Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men, from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were bewildered, because they were each one hearing them speak in his own language. ⁷ And they

⁹⁴ Summers & Sawyer, 51.

⁹⁵ Arndt and Gingrich, 101.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 191-193.

were amazed and marveled, saying, ‘Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans?’⁸ And how is it that we each hear *them* in our own language to which we were born?⁹ Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes,¹¹ Cretans and Arabs-- we hear them in our *own* tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God.’¹² And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, ‘What does this mean?’¹³ But others were mocking and saying, ‘They are full of sweet wine.’”

In verse 6, we read, “And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were bewildered, because they were each one hearing them speak in his own language.” This verse has major significance because of the Greek, grammatical construction that is not necessarily observable in the English translation. A more literal translation of this verse would be, “but after this sound happened, the multitude came together, and they were confused, because each one was hearing out of them as a whole speak in his own dialect.” In other words, the Greek, grammatical construction may be seen as indicating that each of the different language groups represented at Pentecost was hearing the disciples as whole speak in their individual languages, so that what was occurring at Pentecost was both a miracle of speaking, as well as a miracle of hearing. I say, may be seen because the above, exegetical interpretation is entirely feasible, but I cannot say categorically that this is what is being conveyed because of the legitimate, optional, exegetical variants that the grammatical construction presents, but what I have given above is an unequivocal, legitimate, exegetical option, as the following observation indicates:

The disciples ἤρξαντο λαλεῖν ἑτέραις γλώσσαις (“they began to speak with other tongues” – *my note*) (→ I, 726). This decisive statement in the miracle of Pentecost can be expounded in two ways. It may express the fact that the disciples spoke in tongues, as explicitly described in 10:46; 19:6 and 1 C. 12:10, 30; 14:1 ff. Against this is the formal objection that it leaves ἑτέραις (“with other” – *my note*) untranslated, since the phrase γλώσσαις λαλεῖν (“with tongues to speak” – *my note*), as the other passages show, is quite adequate in itself to denote plainly the process of speaking in tongues. There is also the material objection that according to 1 C. 14:2 ff. the distinctive feature of tongues is unintelligibility, and therefore the very opposite of what constitutes the miracle of Pentecost. Hence, if we accept this interpretation, we must find the true miracle of Pentecost in the fact that the hearers were given the gift of hearing and understanding these tongues in their own languages without any interpretation. This view finds some support in Ac. 2:6 and 2:11: ἤκουον εἰς ἕκαστος τῆ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ λαλούντων αὐτῶν (“each one was hearing out of them as a whole speak in his own dialect” – *my note*), but it is not very convincing. The other possibility is to take it that λαλεῖν ἑτέραις γλώσσαις (“to speak with other tongues” – *my note*) means speaking in various languages which were different from the mother tongue of the speakers and which were previously unknown to them. This view alone does full justice to the later ἤκουον εἰς ἕκαστος τῆ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ λαλούντων αὐτῶν (“each one was hearing out of them as a whole speak in his own dialect” – *my note*) and to the enumeration of the various tongues. On the other hand, it does not explain the contemptuous statement in v. 13, which would seem to be appropriate only to speaking in unintelligible tongues. This leads many scholars to the

view that in its present form Ac. 2 unites two different accounts of which one narrates the commencement of speaking with tongues in the early Church and the other a miracle of speaking in foreign languages. If this is true, the expression *ἐτέραις γλώσσαις λαλεῖν* (“to speak with other tongues” – *my note*) is the link used by the author to join the two concepts.⁹⁷

What is being said in the above quote is that there are two, interpretive perspectives in Acts 2:6: (a) the miracle in this passage was that the disciples were enabled by the Holy Spirit to speak in foreign languages that they had not learned, but that the international group gathered there could understand their particular dialects that were spoken; (b) the miracle was that the disciples spoke in a supernatural language wherein the hearers were enabled by the Holy Spirit to understand as though they were actually hearing the group as a whole speak in their own, particular dialect. The two reasons for this are: (a) In I Corinthians 14:2, Paul writes, “For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men, but to God; for no one understands, but in *his* spirit he speaks mysteries” (I Corinthians 14:2). That is, at Pentecost, the disciples were not preaching the Gospel of salvation to those assembled there from foreign countries, but rather they were praising and worshipping God, “we hear them in our *own* tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God” (Acts 2:11), versus, a Gospel message about the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, which Peter later preached to them through his own mind and language (Acts 2:14-42). Consequently, according to I Corinthians 14:2, the true “gift of tongues” is not necessarily a known language by other men, but rather a language that is given by the Holy Spirit to someone for their personal time of prayer and worship to the Lord, but which may be interpreted, through the supernatural gift of interpretation, so as to give edification to others (I Corinthians 14:5); (b) In Acts 2:13 we read that others were saying, “They are full of sweet wine” (Acts 2:13), meaning, all they heard was unintelligible speech, which some call “gibberish.”

At this point, I want to give my own, personal testimony with regard to my coming to Christ and later receiving the supernatural “gift of tongues.” I was born and raised in Jackson, MS and grew up in a Southern Baptist Church. I was baptized when I was eight, but unfortunately I only got wet, as no one at the time shared with me what it truly meant to be born again. I began playing football in Junior High and into High School, and my senior year I received a football scholarship to Mississippi State University. During my high school years, I became very worldly, to say the least, and in December of 1964, a young girl in a Bible Club at my high school picked me out to pray for every day of 1965 that I would come to Christ. I graduated in June of 1965, and the conviction of the Holy Spirit was incredibly strong in my life, but I was intently running from God. When I came to Mississippi State in the fall of 1965, freshmen couldn’t play varsity at the time, so they used us as “dummies” for the varsity. As our varsity team was preparing to play Auburn, we were running Auburn’s offense against our varsity defense, and I wanted to show the varsity players that I was really “tough stuff.” I went to block a varsity linebacker, and when he saw me coming, he hit me

⁹⁷ Kittel, 702-703.

harder than I had ever been hit up to that point in my football career. He picked me up from the ground and said, “welcome to the SEC!” Later on after practice, he came up to me and said, “Justin, I want you to know that Jesus loves you and so do I.” I couldn’t believe it because up to that point, I thought all Christians were “panty waists,” but this guy was a “man’s man” who was one of the hardest hitting players on the field. I watched his life, both on and off the field, as well as other players who were also committed believers, and there was a distinct difference in their lives. I went to hear an evangelist speak at a nearby church who had played football at Alabama, and that night the conviction of the Holy Spirit came full circle: convicting me of my sin, of the righteousness of Jesus, and of the judgment that awaited me if I refused Christ. That was on a Friday night, and we had a game at Starkville the next afternoon, so all of the varsity players were in bed by 10:00 pm. I left the church and went straight to the room of the player who had hit me and told him what was happening to me. He got his Bible out and shared with me the “Roman Road,” and that night, October 1, 1965, I accepted Jesus Christ and was born again.

Soon after I got saved, a Baptist pastor told me that since I was attending a state university, I should begin studying the Bible on my own as though it was another course, and I did. Soon after that, a Presbyterian pastor told me about prayer and how I could, and should bring everything to God in prayer, and I began to do that as well. A little later, one of my professors who was an on fire believer in Jesus started a Bible study for new believers, and through his systematic approach to teaching the Scripture, I began to see that Jesus was unequivocally the same, yesterday, today, and forever!

As I continued to study the Scripture systematically, it gave me great insight into my academic studies, as I had a double major in history and philosophy and a minor in Spanish. However, toward the end of my junior year, I was beginning to think I was a very smart person, and although my faith was not shaken at all, my view of the Bible was beginning to be affected by my philosophical studies. Then, one night as I was praying about some theological/philosophical issues, the Holy Spirit spoke incredibly clearly to my mind and said, “If you do not take My Word as the Eternal Word of God and let it rule your life, you will never go beyond where you are.” At that point, I cried out to the Lord for His forgiveness for my arrogance and intellectual pride, and I went back to the Word as a child and began reading in the Book of Acts. As I did, I started reading about the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, and as I read through the Book of Acts, I also went to I Corinthians 12-14. It was all very fascinating to me, and on Sunday nights as I would return back to Starkville, MS from my weekend trip home to Jackson, MS, I would in turn listen to the radio, and I began hearing a broadcast called “Harvest Time” with a man named Nathaniel Urshen. He was a United Pentecostal pastor, and he taught that in order to truly be saved, one must be “baptized in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues,” as well as be baptized in water “in Jesus name” by a United Pentecostal pastor. I had never heard that doctrine before, even though I had known some “holiness” teenagers in my high school years who weren’t very “holy.” At any rate, I sent off for his material, and as I read it,

I saw the serious error in his teaching, as I knew I was saved based on biblical truth and the reality of Jesus in my life, and I also knew the Holy Spirit was residing in me. However, I also saw that there was something biblically true about the infilling of the Holy Spirit, as well as the “gifts of the Holy Spirit.” I then came across some teaching by two, very gifted preachers, W. A. Criswell of First Baptist Church in Dallas, TX, and R. B. Thieme who was pastor of Berachah Church in Houston, TX. Both of these men were cessationists, but as I read their material, I could not accept what they were saying either. I did not know Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek at the time, but I had been a very diligent student of the Word, and through my philosophy and history courses, I had learned to be a critical reader and thinker, not simply taking what someone says as the truth, but carefully comparing it with the totality of Scripture and history.

That summer, in August, 1965, two weeks before two-a-days began at Mississippi State, I was invited to speak at a youth conference at the First Baptist Church of Quitman, MS. When I met the young man who was to lead the worship at the conference, there was a glow and joy about him that reflected the love of Jesus in powerful way. He was a student at Mississippi College (a Southern Baptist College) in Clinton, MS, a suburb of Jackson, and as we began to talk, he told me about God dealing with him about his singing ministry. He had an incredibly powerful voice, and his songs were indeed anointed by the power of the Holy Spirit. He shared with me, however, that he became very proud about his singing ability, and he was beginning to use it to promote himself, versus Jesus. As time went by, he developed a throat condition that was severely affecting his singing, and he told me that the Lord spoke to his mind and said, “If you do not surrender your singing and voice to me completely for my glory, not yours, you will not have that ability anymore.” He said he came broken before the Lord and surrendered to His Lordship to a greater degree than he ever had before, and in doing so, he surrendered his voice to the Lord for Him to use for His glory, not for Randy’s glory (his name was Randy Posey). He then told me that as he was praying one night, he was filled anew with the Holy Spirit, and as he was, he began to praise and worship the Lord with a new found joy, and then he began to speak out in words that he did not know what he was saying, but what he felt was an intense desire to praise and worship the Lord. What really impressed me with what he was saying was that he in no way intimated that I was incomplete if I did not have that gift, nor was he more spiritual than any other believer, only that in his life, God gave him a deeper realization of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit working in and through him than he had before, and his love for Jesus and surrender to His Lordship over his life was far deeper. I could accept that because many of the things that he told me God had taught him through this, God had already taught me, and I had never “spoken in tongues” in my life. And it was at that point that he told me, “Justin, this is not a spiritual measuring stick between you and someone else, but for each individual believer, it is a deeper realization of the presence and power of Jesus working in your life through the Holy Spirit than what you had before.” And again, I could fully accept that. At that point, I asked if he would pray in tongues so I could hear it, since I had never heard it before. He was

reticent at first because this was something he exercised alone in his personal prayer time. However, he said he would for me, and in a very calm, normal tone, as though he was speaking Spanish, or German, or some other known, foreign language, he spoke a few words, and that was it. There was no emotional working up to it, no flailing around in a physically uncontrollable manner, he just simply spoke a few words, and that was it. He then explained how the Lord had made real to him I Corinthians 14:1-5 in his own life, and how he exercised this gift in his own life, and everything he said was perfectly in line with the Scripture, although I did not fully comprehend it from an experiential perspective. We did not discuss it anymore as we were involved in ministering to the youth at this conference, and in my free time, I was busy, both morning and early afternoon, in going through running and training, preparing for two-days- in two weeks at Mississippi State.

A couple of days later, as Randy and I were praying for the service that night, he was in one corner of the room, and I was in the other, and not once did he ever pray in tongues out loud as we were praying for the service together. However, as I was praying in particular for the salvation of particular youth that I had met at the conference, I felt as though I was literally being “clothed” with the power of the Holy Spirit, and as that happened, an inner joy and desire to praise and worship the Lord permeated my being, and I instinctively and instantly raised my arms in praising and worshipping the Lord in English, and then I began to speak in another language that I did not know, but in my heart and mind I was joyously praising the Lord in that language, as well as in English. I do not know how long I did it, but it was a totally natural response to the inward joy and praise I wanted to give to the Lord. Randy never laid his hands on me, nor did he ever say anything to me, but as I was praising the Lord in both English and the language given me by the Holy Spirit, Randy did the same in his corner. And what happened that night was indeed the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit as some of those whom I had been praying for came forward for prayer to receive Jesus, and other believers came forward to surrender their lives even more deeply to the Lordship of Jesus, but never did I or Randy mention what had happened that afternoon. The focus for us, therefore, was not “speaking in tongues,” but rather the person of Jesus Christ who came to save those young people from their self-destructive sins and usher them into an eternal relationship with him through the rebirth, and that is exactly what happened, as well as other young people who were already believers who surrendered more deeply to Jesus’ Lordship over their lives.

From that time until now, my personal prayer time often includes “praying in tongues” for various situations that are beyond my ability to even remotely comprehend, and one of the most severe of those instances was with the murder of my nineteen year old daughter over eight years ago. As I prayed continuously that week after her death, I was unable to pray cogently with my mind, so I prayed “in the Spirit” (I Corinthians 14:14-15), and as I did, the Lord ministered to me in a supernatural way that no human being could have even approached, and he showed me biblical truth that has sustained me to this very day regarding her death and the person who murdered her. This is not the time or place to go into that, but

let me simply say that the Holy Spirit will do for us what we are humanly incapable of doing when we come fully to rest in Him and His power, versus attempting to deal with situations in our own very flawed strength and reasoning. Thus, the supernatural “gift of tongues” is not about “making noise,” but rather it is about the Lord ministering in and through us to us, and then to others who need His healing balm in their lives, first of all in salvation, and then as believers, to lead us all into His “conforming us into the image of His Son” (Romans 8:29, in order that through His loving discipline, “we may share His holiness” (Hebrews 12:10) and experience “the peaceful fruit of *His* righteousness” (Hebrews 12:11).

- (3) Acts 2:29-42: “Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ “And so, because he was a prophet, and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat *one* of his descendants upon his throne, ³¹ he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay. ³² “This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. ³³ “Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. ³⁴ “For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, ³⁵ Until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet.’” ³⁶ “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ-- this Jesus whom you crucified.” ³⁷ Now when they heard *this*, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” ³⁸ And Peter *said* to them, “Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ “For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself.” ⁴⁰ And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation!” ⁴¹ So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls. ⁴² And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

This is the conclusion of Peter’s evangelistic message on the Day of Pentecost, with the result being that approximately 3000 Jews came to a saving faith in Jesus Christ. Thus, those who believed and repented were baptized, and their belief and repentance was the work of the Holy Spirit convicting them of their sin, of the righteousness of Jesus, and the judgment that awaited them if they refused (John 16:8-11), and this was all done as the Father, by means of the Holy Spirit’s conviction, was “drawing them to Jesus” (John 6:44). Thus, at the moment these people “received his word” in verse 41 (the word “received” in verse 41 comes from the Greek verb **ἀποδέχομαι** [*apodechomai*], and it means “to receive, welcome, grasp, or accept something from someone,” thus, to “receive God’s Living Word ministered to them through Peter by the power of the Holy Spirit⁹⁸) – i.e., the Word of Life that the Lord was ministering through Peter – they were indeed born again, and subsequently they “were

⁹⁸ Arndt and Gingrich, 85-88; 89; 176.

baptized” in water as a testimony of their commitment to Jesus. However, note that no mention is made at all of them being “filled with the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues,” but they were indeed born again by the Holy Spirit, and this rebirth may indeed be assumed to be a fulfillment of Peter’s statement to them that upon repentance of their sins they would “receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” The word “receive” in verse 38 is from the Greek verb, **λαμβάνω** (*lambanō*) which was used by Jesus in John 20:22 when He was with His disciples after His resurrection, and, in conjunction with Luke 24:44-49, “He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’” We will look at the above two passages in greater detail later, but suffice it to say that these “three thousand” were saved and born again exactly the same way the disciples were, as well as every human throughout history – by receiving the Holy Spirit upon ones repentance and belief in Jesus as his or her Lord and Savior. However, what is of extreme importance to note here is that “water baptism” was not the prerequisite for their rebirth by the Spirit, nor for them to receive the infilling of the Holy Spirit because as we will see later with Cornelius and his “household,” all of those who were gathered with him were born of the Spirit, filled with the Holy Spirit, and received the gift of tongues before a drop of water touched any of them. Water baptism, therefore, is not the means of salvation and our rebirth by the Holy Spirit, but rather repentance and belief in one’s heart are, and subsequent to that belief follows water baptism, which is the outward testimony of our salvation in Jesus Christ. But again, if “speaking in tongues” was THE SIGN of one receiving the Holy Spirit and being born again, or being filled with the Holy Spirit, then surely that would have been mentioned here, but there is no mention AT ALL of that occurring, but rather, “then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls.⁴² And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:41-42). Now is it possible and likely that after their rebirth and water baptism they were subsequently filled with the Holy Spirit and perhaps received the gift of tongues at that time? Yes it is both possible and likely that occurred, but what is of great significance is that if “speaking in tongues” was the ALL IMPORTANT SIGN OF ONE BEING FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT, why then is it not mentioned at all concerning these “three thousand” who come to Christ at Pentecost? I believe because IT IS NOT THE ALL IMPORTANT SIGN, but rather a sign and a manifestation of the infilling of the Holy Spirit that some believers receive, but not necessarily all, and those who don’t are no less filled with the Holy Spirit than those who have received the gift of “speaking in tongues.”

- (4) Acts 4:5-31: “And it came about on the next day, that their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem;⁶ and Annas the high priest *was there*, and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of high-priestly descent.⁷ And when they had placed them in the center, they *began to inquire*, “By what power, or in what name, have you done this?”⁸ Then Peter, **filled with the Holy Spirit**, said to them, “Rulers and elders of the people,⁹ if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well,¹⁰ let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ

the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead-- by this *name* this man stands here before you in good health. ¹¹ "He is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, *but* which became the very corner *stone*. ¹² "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." ¹³ Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John, and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were marveling, and *began* to recognize them as having been with Jesus. ¹⁴ And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in reply. ¹⁵ But when they had ordered them to go aside out of the Council, they *began* to confer with one another, ¹⁶ saying, "What shall we do with these men? For the fact that a noteworthy miracle has taken place through them is apparent to all who live in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. ¹⁷ "But in order that it may not spread any further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to any man in this name." ¹⁸ And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; ²⁰ for we cannot stop speaking what we have seen and heard." ²¹ And when they had threatened them further, they let them go (finding no basis on which they might punish them) on account of the people, because they were all glorifying God for what had happened; ²² for the man was more than forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed. ²³ And when they had been released, they went to their own *companions*, and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴ And when they heard *this*, they lifted their voices to God with one accord and said, "O Lord, it is Thou who didst make the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that is in them, ²⁵ who by the Holy Spirit, *through* the mouth of our father David Thy servant, didst say, 'Why did the Gentiles rage, And the peoples devise futile things? ²⁶ 'The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers were gathered together Against the Lord, and against His Christ.' ²⁷ "For truly in this city there were gathered together against Thy holy servant Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸ to do whatever Thy hand and Thy purpose predestined to occur. ²⁹ "And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Thy bond-servants may speak Thy word with all confidence, ³⁰ while Thou dost extend Thy hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Thy holy servant Jesus." ³¹ And **when they had prayed**, the place where they had gathered together **was shaken**, and **they were all filled with the Holy Spirit**, and *began* **to speak the word of God with boldness.**"

In the above passage, Peter and John have just been taken into custody for "proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead" (Acts 4:2), which was preceded by the healing of "a certain man who had been lame from his mother's womb . . . at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful" (Acts 3:2). What is significant for us in this passages is that as Peter began to testify before the Sanhedrin, Luke makes a declarative statement, "Then Peter, **filled with the Holy Spirit**, said to them" (Acts 4:8), and Peter went on to share with them that

Jesus is the promised Messiah and “there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). In other words, the “infilling” of the Holy Spirit in our lives is for the primary purpose of people seeing Jesus lived out in our lives, as well as hearing of His life changing Gospel that can set them free. In addition, after the Sanhedrin had “commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus” (Acts 4:18) and “had threatened them further, they let them go” (Acts 4:21), but once they returned to the other believers, “**when they had prayed**, the place where they had gathered together **was shaken**, and **they were all filled with the Holy Spirit**, and **began to speak the word of God with boldness**” (Acts 4:31). In verse 8 above, the word for “filled” in the Greek is *πλησθεῖς* (*plēstheis*), and it is an aorist passive participle, which means that this was something that happened before Peter began to speak (i.e., it occurred at Pentecost), and it was done to him by Someone, namely the Lord. But then as we come to verse 31, the Greek verb is *ἐπλήσθησαν* (*eplēsthēsan*), and it is an aorist passive indicative, which means that at that moment, they were all “filled again” with the Holy Spirit, including Peter and John. In Acts 2:4, we read again, “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance,” and the Greek verb used here for “filled” is again *ἐπλήσθησαν* (*eplēsthēsan*), which means this was another infilling of the Holy Spirit, but no mention is made here of “speaking in tongues,” but rather, they began “to speak the word of God with boldness” (Acts 4:31). Now, did some who had already received the “gift of tongues” on the day of Pentecost quietly pray to the Lord in tongues as Paul advises in I Corinthians 14:1-19? Very likely they did, but just as Paul states in I Corinthians 14:6, one’s personal prayer in tongues is for the purpose of being able to declare in clear, understandable language the Gospel message, and that is exactly what happened in Acts 4:31!

- (5) Acts 8:4-24: “Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word. 5 And Philip went down to the city of Samaria and began proclaiming Christ to them. 6 And the multitudes with one accord were giving attention to what was said by Philip, as they heard and saw the signs which he was performing. 7 For in the case of many who had unclean spirits, they were coming out of them shouting with a loud voice; and many who had been paralyzed and lame were healed. 8 And there was much rejoicing in that city. 9 Now there was a certain man named Simon, who formerly was practicing magic in the city, and astonishing the people of Samaria, claiming to be someone great; 10 and they all, from smallest to greatest, were giving attention to him, saying, ‘This man is what is called the Great Power of God.’ 11 And they were giving him attention because he had for a long time astonished them with his magic arts. 12 But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike. 13 And even Simon himself believed; and after being baptized, he continued on with Philip; and as he observed signs and great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed. 14 Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, 15 who came down and prayed for them,

that they might receive the Holy Spirit. 16 For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. 18 Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, 19 saying, 'Give this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.' 20 But Peter said to him, 'May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! 21 You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. 22 Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you. 23 For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity.' 24 But Simon answered and said, 'Pray to the Lord for me yourselves, so that nothing of what you have said may come upon me.'"

This passage of Scripture presents the first evangelistic outreach from Jerusalem after the martyrdom of Stephen, and in this chapter, we are seeing Philip, the deacon, go into Samaria. I stress the fact that Philip was a deacon, not an Apostle, but through Philip, "the multitudes with one accord were giving attention to what was said by Philip, as they heard and saw the signs which he was performing. For in the case of many who had unclean spirits, they were coming out of them shouting with a loud voice; and many who had been paralyzed and lame were healed" (Acts 8:6-7). Thus, what we see being carried out in and through Philip is the same that was being carried out in and through Jesus' disciples, who would become His Apostles, in the Gospels before His death, burial, and resurrection (e.g., Matthew 10:8; Mark 3:14-15; Luke 6:12-16), as well as what was promised would be occurring in the lives of Jesus' followers in Mark 16:17-18. However, in Acts 8, we see a very clear distinction being made between believers being born again by the Spirit of God and subsequently being filled with the Holy Spirit: "But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike" (Acts 8:12). Thus, after these people were born again "when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ," they were then subsequently "being baptized, men and women alike" as a result of their commitment to Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Consequently, what is stated as happening to these Samaritans who heard the Gospel and responded to it in belief and commitment of their lives to Jesus as their Lord and Savior is also clearly described in John's Gospel: "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12-13). Therefore, these were not partial, incomplete, born again believers, but rather, they were fully saved by God's grace and recipients of eternal life, in whom the Holy Spirit was dwelling:

But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, 5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His

mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:4-7)

However, there was something more that God had for them, as He does for all believers, and that is the infilling of the Holy Spirit, which is His continuing empowerment of believers to live in His strength and spiritual power, versus their own carnal and natural reasoning.

What is quite fascinating about this passage of Scripture is that Pentecostals have been associated almost universally with the term, “baptism with the Holy Spirit,” but in truth, one of the most respected, evangelical teachers and authors wrote about this some 120 years ago, and his name is Reuben Archer Torey (1/28/1856-10/26/1928). Torey was not a part of any Pentecostal movement or denomination, but rather he was a Congregational minister; the first Superintendent of Moody Bible Institute in Chicago; a worldwide evangelist; and the first Dean of BIOLA in Los Angeles. Torey’s classic work on the baptism of the Holy Spirit is entitled, *The Baptism with the Holy Spirit*, and it was published by Fleming H. Revell Company out of Chicago in 1895. In addition to his ministerial credentials, educationally, he was not bereft in any way, as he was a graduate of Yale University and Yale Divinity School, as well as having done further graduate study at Leipzig and Erlangen Universities in Germany. So this was a man well versed in biblical theology, languages, and history, not to mention the fact that he was a totally committed believer in Jesus Christ who was an exemplary servant of the Lord. Therefore, with regard to Acts 8:4-24, I want to quote a portion of his comments:

One can be regenerated and still not yet be baptised with the Holy Ghost. The same thing is evident from Acts viii: 12-16. Here we find a company of believers who had been baptised. Surely in this company of baptised believers there were some regenerate men. But the record informs us that when Peter and John came down they “prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (for *as yet he was fallen upon none of them*).” It is clear that one may be a believer, may be a regenerate man, and yet not have the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. In other words, the Baptism with the Holy Spirit is something distinct from and beyond His regenerating work. Not every regenerate man has the Baptism with the Holy Spirit, though as we shall see later, every regenerate man may have this Baptism. If a man has experienced the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit he is a saved man, but he is not fitted for service until in addition to this he has received the Baptism with the Holy Spirit.⁹⁹

What is important to examine now is the purpose of the “baptism with the Holy Spirit,” as well as the various terms that are used to describe it. As far as the purpose is concerned, we read in Luke 24:44-49 the following account of Jesus meeting with His disciples just prior to His ascension:

Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and

⁹⁹ R. A. Torey, *The Baptism With The Holy Spirit* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1895), 12-13.

the Psalms must be fulfilled." 45 Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; 47 and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 "You are witnesses of these things. 49 "And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high." (Luke 24:44-49)

The first question to resolve is just when were the disciples born again? Some believe that their rebirth occurred in John 15:3 when Jesus told them "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you."¹⁰⁰ The word for "clean" in the Greek is **καθαρός** (*katharos*), and it can be used to refer to "being clean from adulterating matter, as well as ceremonially and ritually clean and pure from moral guilt." Thus, when Jesus was saying that the disciples were "clean because of the word which I have spoken to you," it would appear, from the context of the whole of the Gospel of John, including the final chapters, that Jesus is referring to a "cleansing" of their mind and thinking in preparation for their soon coming rebirth of the Spirit – that is, this was a preparatory cleansing from their legalistic and works based righteousness of Judaism, leading them to their spiritual rebirth wherein the righteousness of Jesus would be imputed into them. This was during their celebration of the Passover, just before Jesus and His disciples left for the Garden of Gethsemane. On the other hand, I believe their spiritual regeneration occurred here in Luke 24:45, "Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures," and this corresponds to John 20:19-23:

When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you." 20 And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples therefore rejoiced when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus therefore said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you." 22 And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 "If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained." (John 20:19-23)

Assuming (as is most probably the case) that vers. 44 and 45 refer to words spoken by Jesus on the first Easter evening to the eleven and to Cleopas and his friend, then *the way* in which he opened their understanding is described by St. John (20:22) thus: "He breathed on *them*, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Among the new powers bestowed on them by this Divine gift, St. Luke especially dwells on the spiritual insight henceforth possessed by these men into the Scriptures of the Old Testament, hitherto only partly understood. This power was doubtless one of the great instruments of their success as preachers.¹⁰¹

In Luke 24:45, the word for "opened" in the Greek is **διανοίγω** (*dianoigō*), and it is also the verb used in Luke 2:23 that describes the physical birth of the "first born" child: "as it is

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 12.

¹⁰¹ H. D. M. Spence, ed., *St. Luke, Vol. 2*, new edition (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 275.

written in the Law of the Lord, ‘Every first-born male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord.’” Thus, may we then relate the physical birth of a child that “opens” the womb of his or her mother to the spiritual rebirth whereby the Holy Spirit “opens” up the mind of a new believer for them to walk in their newly received “righteousness of Christ” (Romans 3:21-26)? I absolutely believe we can, because Jesus goes on to clearly explain the Gospel message in Luke 24:46-47, and then in verse 48, Jesus says, “You are witnesses of these things,” which means not only visibly, but also internally through the regeneration of the Holy Spirit.

Then in John 20:22, Jesus “breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’” The word “breathed” in Greek is ἐμφυσᾷω (*emphusaō*), and it means “to breathe on,” and from this Greek word is derived the English word infuse, which means “to instill, fill with, and ingrain.” Thus, Jesus “instilled” in His disciples the indwelling Holy Spirit, whereby they were born again, God’s Word was opened to them, and the Gospel truth of Jesus’ life, death, burial, and resurrection became real in their lives, thereby making them not only visible witnesses of all that Jesus did, but also internal witnesses of His life changing truth that was now a living and vital part of their lives. In addition, the word “receive” in the Greek is λάβετε (*labete*), and it is an aorist imperative from the root verb λαμβάνω (*lambanō*). The aorist imperative emphasizes the beginning of an action, and thus, in this instance, the amplified translation would be, “Begin to receive now the Holy Spirit.”¹⁰² Consequently, what is clear to me is that Luke 24:44-49 and John 20:19-23 are presenting to us the rebirth of the disciples by the Holy Spirit coming into their lives and the full application of Jesus’ redemption being applied to them, whereby they are now living witnesses, both externally to all of the events in Jesus’ life, as well as internally of the life changing power of the Gospel.

However, in Luke 24:49 we read that Jesus said there was yet more that God wanted to do in their lives in sending them forth to live and preach His Gospel: “And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.” The actual wording of the phrase, “until you are clothed with power from on high,” is somewhat different in Greek from the English rendering. A more literal and amplified translation would be, “until the time you should clothe and put on yourself power out of Heaven.” This is a rather involved phrase grammatically, but it is also an incredibly important one in that it focuses on the subject as being the key as to whether or not the “power from on high” is received. There are three things to note, therefore, with the verb “clothed” in the Greek, which is ἐνδύσῃσθε (*endusēsthe*), from the root verb, ἐνδύω (*enduō*): (a) this is an aorist verb, which indicates action that occurs at a point in time; (b) it is in what is called the middle voice, which means the subject is performing the action to himself; (c) and it is in what is called the subjunctive mood, which indicates that the action is

¹⁰² H. P. V. Nunn, *The Elements of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923), 48; F. Blass, A. Debrunner, & R. W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 173; D. B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 485-486.

possible, but is contingent upon the subject. The following quote by Bob Utley helps to put this in focus: “The spiritual life is as much a gift and empowering from God as is spiritual salvation, but it must be received and implemented. It is not automatic!”¹⁰³

Thus, as we put all of this together, Jesus is telling His disciples that after they have gone to Jerusalem, there will come a point when they will be able to “cloth themselves” and “put on God’s power that emanates from Heaven.” However, just how will this “clothing” occur? According to the middle voice of the verb “clothed,” it would appear that perhaps by their choosing to surrender to the Lordship of Jesus through prayer and worship, this might certainly be the means by which “they put on the power of God from Heaven.” I can only say that in my own experience of receiving the infilling of the Holy Spirit, that is what certainly occurred in my life as I was seeking to surrender to Jesus’ control and Lordship over my life, and as I called out to Him, I was in turn filled with His Holy Spirit and received the “gift of tongues” wherein I instantly began to praise and worship the Lord in both English and the language given me by the Holy Spirit. At any rate, just as Utley said above, “it must be received and implemented. It is not automatic!”¹⁰⁴

The other important thing about the Greek verb ἐνδύω (*enduō*) is that it is a compound verb, with the Greek preposition ἐν (*en*), which means “in or with,”¹⁰⁵ and the Greek verb, δύνω (*dunō*), which means “to go down or set.”¹⁰⁶ Thus, when combined in this particular context, ἐνδύω (*enduō*) is referring to the Spirit of God, which is “set within” the believer, to permeate from within outwardly to all aspects of a person’s conscience life so as to be the guiding power and grid for a person’s choices, direction, and conduct in their life. However, this infilling is not just a onetime thing, but rather it is an ongoing “infilling” throughout one’s life as the following passage indicates: “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18). In this verse, the Greek verb for “filled” is πληροῦσθε (*plērousthe*), and it may be translated in either the middle or passive voice, which would make it “be filled,” or “fill yourself,” and it is also in the present tense, which implies a continuous and ongoing action. Thus, as above in Luke 24:49 with the Greek verb for “clothed,” here too one could also translate this as, “fill yourself with the Holy Spirit,” but here too, the question arises, how would one “fill himself or herself with the Holy Spirit”? And again, as Utley stated above, “it must be received and implemented. It is not automatic,” and thus, I believe it is the same way as with the disciples on Pentecost, and that is by surrendering on a continual basis to the Lordship of Jesus in one’s life, continually “abiding in His Word,” and consistently seeking the Lord in prayer for all aspects of one’s life as the following three passages indicate:

¹⁰³ Bob Utley, *Luke the Historian: The Gospel of Luke, Vol. 3A* (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2004), Lk. 24:49.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Arndt and Gingrich, 257-261.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 208.

And He was saying to *them* all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. ²⁴ "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. (Luke 9:23-24)

Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; ³² and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:31-32)

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

However, there is another very important aspect of this passage in Acts 8:4-24, and that has to do with Simon the sorcerer:

Now there was a certain man named Simon, who formerly was practicing magic in the city, and astonishing the people of Samaria, claiming to be someone great; ¹⁰ and they all, from smallest to greatest, were giving attention to him, saying, "This man is what is called the Great Power of God." ¹¹ And they were giving him attention because he had for a long time astonished them with his magic arts. ¹² But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike. ¹³ And even Simon himself believed; and after being baptized, he continued on with Philip; and as he observed signs and great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed. (Acts 8:9-13)

Simon had been using sorcery to captivate, manipulate, and exploit the people of Samaria for his own perverted and narcissistic usage, but what he saw being done in and through Philip far transcended anything he had ever seen, let alone done. And then we read the following:

Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, ¹⁹ saying, "Give this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." ²⁰ But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! ²¹ You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. ²² Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you. ²³ For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity." ²⁴ But Simon answered and said, "Pray to the Lord for me yourselves, so that nothing of what you have said may come upon me." (Acts 8:18-24)

The question arises, therefore, was Simon truly saved, or was he perhaps a typical example of the "second soil" Jesus described in Luke 8:13, where the plant grown from the shallow seed eventually "falls away" because in truth it has "no root" (Luke 8:13)? As we read Peter's assessment of Simon in Acts 8:20-23, it certainly appears that the "second soil" of Luke 8:13 is where Simon would fit: "But Peter said to him, 'May your silver perish with you, because

you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! 21 You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. 22 Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you. 23 For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity” (Acts 8:20-23). From Peter’s assessment, therefore, Simon’s “belief” certainly doesn’t appear to be genuine, but rather a shallow and superficial commitment. The point to be made from Simon the sorcerer’s response is that there are still those under the umbrella of Christianity who perpetrate a false and misdirected form of “supernatural power” attributed to the Holy Spirit, when in fact what they are purveyors of is deception and exploitation of beguiled individuals. The true and genuine power of the Holy Spirit is not for sale, nor can it ever be bought, but rather it is a free gift of God’s grace and mercy, received through genuine repentance and faith, as is everything God gives to us through Jesus Christ.

- (6) Acts 8:26-40: “But an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, “Arise and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza.” (This is a desert *road*.)²⁷ And he arose and went; and behold, there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure; and he had come to Jerusalem to worship.²⁸ And he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah.²⁹ And the Spirit said to Philip, “Go up and join this chariot.”³⁰ And when Philip had run up, he heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, “Do you understand what you are reading?”³¹ And he said, “Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.³² Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this: “He was led as a sheep to slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He does not open His mouth.³³ “In humiliation His judgment was taken away; who shall relate His generation? For His life is removed from the earth.”³⁴ And the eunuch answered Philip and said, “Please *tell me*, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself, or of someone else?”³⁵ And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him.³⁶ And as they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?”³⁷ And Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”³⁸ And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch; and he baptized him.³⁹ And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch saw him no more, but went on his way rejoicing.⁴⁰ But Philip found himself at Azotus; and as he passed through he kept preaching the gospel to all the cities, until he came to Caesarea.”

The reason for using this passage is that this is where Philip went immediately after the evangelistic outreach in Samaria, and in the above encounter, no mention is made of the Ethiopian eunuch’s salvation and relationship with the Lord being somehow depreciated because he did not receive the “baptism of the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues.” Now that is not to say that it did not happen after he believed in Jesus as His Lord and Savior and was born again by the Holy Spirit, or maybe later on in his life, but what is significant is that no

mention is made of it whatsoever, but rather that after Philip shared the Gospel with him, he was baptized as soon as they came upon some water. Now while verse 37 is not found in some of the earliest manuscripts, it is significant and important, as the following two quotes indicate:

37. This verse is added as follows: εἶπεν δὲ αὐτῷ (+ ὁ Φίλιππος E)· εἰ (ἐὰν E) πιστεύεις ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας σου (om. 323 *pc*) ἔξεστιν (σωθήσει E). ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ εἶπεν· πιστεύω τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ εἶναι τὸν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν (εἰς τὸν Χριστὸν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ E) E 36 323 453 945 1739 1891 *pc* (it vg^{cl} sy^{h**} mae Ir Cyp). These MSS (it should be noted that D is not extant from 8:29, 10:14) thus provide an answer to the question (v. 36), τί κωλύει and do so in the form of an elementary confession of faith. There is no racial qualification for baptism, but right belief is necessary. Most are agreed that this verse represents an accommodation of the text to later baptismal belief and practice; Cullmann (see above) is almost alone in defending it (but see also Rackham 123). If however the verse had been originally part of Luke's text it is hard to see what motive could have led to its omission; on the other hand, some copyists may have thought the shorter text dangerously inadequate. A further argument against the authenticity of the verse is that in the two clauses it seems to use the word πιστεύειν in different senses. In Philip's requirement that the Ethiopian should 'believe with his whole heart' the sense of the word is *fiducia*, whole-hearted confident trust in God (or Christ). This is Luke's own understanding of the word; see e.g. 2:44. In the reply the word denotes acceptance of a dogmatic proposition. The two senses are related, yet distinguishable. This is the first occasion in Acts on which Jesus is described as the Son of God (cf. 9:20, in Paul's preaching in Damascus; see the note). The author of the Third Gospel undoubtedly believed Jesus to be the Son of God (e.g. Lk. 1:32, 35), but metaphysical relations and pre-existence were not major concerns of his (or, it seems, of most of the earliest Christians). The words have been said (e.g. Weiser 214) to recall Rom. 10:9, but this is described by Paul as a summary of preaching rather than as a baptismal confession. They must however, even if not written by Luke, be regarded as one of the earliest witnesses to the second article in the baptismal creed (cf. e.g. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 1:2, ... καὶ εἰς ἓνα Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ...).¹⁰⁷

8:37] Verse 37 is omitted from the NIV text of Acts, and for good reasons. It is not found in the early manuscripts of Acts and seems to be a later scribal addition. It is given in a footnote of the NIV and consists of a profession of faith on the part of the eunuch. Evidently a scribe felt this was lacking and so provided the missing confession of faith. He did not need to do so. Luke had summarized Philip's sharing the gospel with the eunuch in v. 35, and one can assume it included an appeal for the eunuch to respond. The eunuch's desire for baptism would indicate a favorable response to Philip's appeal. The added verse, however, has considerable value. It seems to embody a very early Christian baptismal confession where the one baptizing asked the candidate if he believed in Christ with all his heart, to which the candidate would respond by confessing Jesus Christ as the Son of God. This old confession is of real significance to the history of early Christian confessions and would be appropriate to the baptismal ceremony today. To that extent we

¹⁰⁷ C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Acts of the Apostles, Vol. 1* (London: T & T Clark, Ltd., 1994; reprint edition, 2004), 433.

can be grateful to the pious scribe who ascribed to the eunuch the baptismal confession of his own day.¹⁰⁸

The point to be made is that if the “baptism with the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues” was a necessary requirement for salvation, then it would surely have been mentioned here, as this man returned to his country, Ethiopia, and began sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and perhaps he is partly responsible for the beginning of the Coptic Church in Egypt. What is necessary for salvation, therefore, is confession and repentance of one’s sins, belief in Jesus Christ as one’s Lord and Savior, resulting in the re-birth of the Spirit, and that is ultimately followed by water baptism, not in order to be saved, but because one is saved and is testifying to that truth. Indeed, the statement in verse 37 by the eunuch, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” was very important in the early church, but we do not see that confession being made in any of the other conversions in the Book of Acts except with Paul when he began preaching “in the synagogues, saying, ‘Jesus is the Son of God’” (Acts 9:20), but that was indeed a doctrinal statement to the Jews that Jesus was the promised Messiah.

- (7) Acts 9:1-22: “Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest,² and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.³ And it came about that as he journeyed, he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him;⁴ and he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”⁵ And he said, “Who art Thou, Lord?” And He *said*, “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting,⁶ but rise, and enter the city, and it shall be told you what you must do.”⁷ And the men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but seeing no one.⁸ And Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus.⁹ And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.¹⁰ Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Behold, *here am I*, Lord.”¹¹ And the Lord *said* to him, “Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying,¹² and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight.”¹³ But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Thy saints at Jerusalem;¹⁴ and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon Thy name.”¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;¹⁶ for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake.”¹⁷ And Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight,

¹⁰⁸ John B. Polhill, *The New American Commentary: Acts, Vol. 26* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 226.

and be filled with the Holy Spirit." ¹⁸ And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he arose and was baptized; ¹⁹ and he took food and was strengthened. Now for several days he was with the disciples who were at Damascus, ²⁰ and immediately he *began* to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God." ²¹ And all those hearing him continued to be amazed, and were saying, "Is this not he who in Jerusalem destroyed those who called on this name, and *who* had come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?" ²² But Saul kept increasing in strength and confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving that this *Jesus* is the Christ."

In the above account of Paul's conversion and subsequent infilling of the Holy Spirit, no mention is made at all of Paul receiving the "gift of tongues," but we know that he did receive this gift at some point in his life as he makes mention of it in I Corinthians 14:18-19: "I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all; ¹⁹ however, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind, that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue." Therefore, if "speaking in tongues" was the ultimate gift in one's personal experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit, then why, of all people, is there no mention of it here in Acts 9:1-22 with Paul concerning his conversion and subsequent infilling of the Holy Spirit? This certainly belies the teaching that emphasizes the "baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues." On the other hand, none of those whom I have read who emphasize the meaninglessness of what is called "speaking in tongues" today and label it as "gibberish" have even remotely done a credible, scholarly, and exegetically correct analysis of I Corinthians 12-14 – in fact, those whom I have read who embrace the cessationist position are tragically deficient in their approach and have as little exegetical and theological validity as a toothless and clawless dog that is used to guard one's home, and this of course is my personal opinion, with which others may indeed differ.

However, with regard to cessationists that I am personally aware of, I want to say that I consider them my brothers in Christ, and I pray for a number of them on a consistent basis for God's power and direction in their ministries, but I unequivocally view them as incorrect and misdirected in their cessationist perspective, as I have also seen many, very committed pastors and teachers who take an imbalanced and obsessive approach toward their eschatological perspective, and predict, with every major catastrophe in our country and the world, that Jesus' return has got to be very soon. With regard to the latter, there are two passages that are incredibly important:

But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. (Matthew 24:36)

And so when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; ⁸ but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses

both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." (Acts 1:6-8)

These two passages are as clear as they can be that NO MAN, AT ANY TIME, will be able to know and determine when Jesus is coming back, but in spite of that truth, there are still those who continually "interpret the signs" and believe they know that "the signs" point to His very soon return. The truth is, since His ascension, men have been doing this, and THEY HAVE ALL BEEN WRONG, AND JESUS HAS BEEN EXACTLY CORRECT, in the same way as those who have denied the present day ministry of the "supernatural ministry of the gifts of the Holy Spirit" have been wrong, and God's Word, through His inspired Apostles and writers, has been exactly correct as well.

On the other hand, we know that Jesus' return has been imminent from His ascension as John 14:2-3: "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also." The phrase, "I will come again," is actually not in the future tense, but rather in the present tense. Thus, the more literal and accurate translation would be, "I am coming," which means, from the moment He ascended, He has been in the process of returning, but His return is based on His timetable, not ours! In addition, the phrase, "I will receive you," is in the future, which means that either at our death, or in the rapture, whatever timing may be for us, we will be received by Jesus for all eternity, and that is absolutely something to rejoice about.

Until that time, however, of our death or His return, that which we need to be involved with is not attempting to determine when His return will be, but rather, as Jesus said in Acts 1:8, "when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." That witness, therefore, includes telling people that He is coming back, which is in conjunction with the primary emphasis of preaching and teaching the redemption Jesus has purchased for a lost and self-destructive humanity through His death and resurrection. That redemption can only be experienced through one's repentance of their sin and receiving Jesus, by faith, as their Lord and Savior:

But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart"-- that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, ⁹ that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; ¹⁰ for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. ¹¹ For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed." ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same *Lord* is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him; ¹³ for "Whoever will call upon the name of the LORD will be saved." (Romans 10:8-13)

Therefore, as with the disciples on Pentecost, as with Paul on the road to Damascus, and with all believers today, the primary purpose of the infilling of the Holy Spirit is to be a more effective witness of the Person of Jesus Christ to those who do not know Him, and that

means that it is the Holy Spirit, not our human genius, that makes the ultimate difference in our walk with the Lord as a witness to others who are on a temporal and eternal road to separation from God in Satan's hell. One of the other blessings that comes with the infilling many times is the "gift of tongues," which God gives to strengthen us personally that He may in turn through us minister to others to strengthen and encourage them (I Corinthians 14:1-19). We will be getting into this aspect in greater detail later on, but suffice it to say that "speaking in tongues" is a secondary aspect and blessing of the infilling of the Holy Spirit, whereas the first and most important is to empower us as believers in Jesus Christ to be positive and encouraging witnesses of Jesus' life in us.

- (8) Acts 10:30-48: "And Cornelius said, "Four days ago to this hour, I was praying in my house during the ninth hour; and behold, a man stood before me in shining garments,³¹ and he said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God.³² 'Send therefore to Joppa and invite Simon, who is also called Peter, to come to you; he is staying at the house of Simon *the* tanner by the sea.'³³ "And so I sent to you immediately, and you have been kind enough to come. Now then, we are all here present before God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord."³⁴ And opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand *now* that God is not one to show partiality,³⁵ but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right, is welcome to Him.³⁶ "The word which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all)³⁷ you yourselves know the thing which took place throughout all Judea, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed.³⁸ "*You know of* Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and *how* He went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil; for God was with Him.³⁹ "And we are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. And they also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross.⁴⁰ "God raised Him up on the third day, and granted that He should become visible,⁴¹ not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, *that is*, to us, who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead.⁴² "And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead.⁴³ "Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins."⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message.⁴⁵ And all the circumcised believers who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the Gentiles also.⁴⁶ For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered,⁴⁷ "Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *did*, can he?"⁴⁸ And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days."

This is a very significant passage with regard to one's conversion and rebirth, the infilling of the Holy Spirit, receiving the gift of tongues, and water baptism, and the significance is that God is sovereign, choosing to bring the lost to a saving relationship with Jesus in the

way and manner that He chooses, as well as leading new believers into the fullness of His Spirit in the way He chooses for them. In this instance, therefore, unlike the conversion of the three thousand on the Day of Pentecost, the Samaritans, the Ethiopian Eunuch, and Paul, who, upon their conversion, the text does not mention them at that time receiving the infilling of the Holy Spirit or the gift of tongues, whereas those gathered in Cornelius' home to hear the Gospel were born again, filled with the Holy Spirit, and received the gift of tongues in an apparent simultaneous action. In the midst of this outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Peter asks the question of the born again Jews who came with him to Cornelius' home, "Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *did*, can he?" What is significant is that Peter identifies what happened to these believers in Cornelius' home with what happened to him and the other disciples on Pentecost, and he refers to it as "receiving the Holy Spirit." One important question for us is, what exactly did Peter mean by the statement, "who have received the Holy Spirit just as we?" As we went through Luke 24:36-49 and John 20:19-23, we saw what I clearly believe was the rebirth of the disciples when Jesus "breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'" in John 20:22, and we can relate this to when "He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures" in Luke 24:45, at which time they experienced His redemption and became living witnesses of that redemption. However, He also told them in Luke that He was "sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power on high" (Luke 24:40). As we already discussed on pages 55-56, the Greek word "receive" in John 20:22 is **λαμβάνω** (*lambanō*), and that is the exact same verb used here in Acts 10:47, but here in Acts 10:47 it is an aorist indicative, **ἔλαβον** (*elabon*), versus the aorist imperative, **λάβετε** (*labete*), in John 20:22. And in this instance I would view it as a culminative aorist, which emphasizes the culmination of a process. The process being described here is their conviction by the Spirit of their sin, the righteousness of Jesus, and the judgment that follows if they refuse Christ (John 16:8-11). All of this is a result of God the Father drawing these people to Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit (John 6:44) to the point where they believe, are born again, and are also filled with the Holy Spirit, receiving the gift of tongues as an overt witness to the born again Jews who accompanied Peter that these Gentiles are truly born again. Consequently, as we look at John 20:22, Acts 2:1-13, and Peter's statement here in Acts 10:47, I would conclude that as the aorist imperative emphasizes the beginning of an action in John 20:22, which would be the ingressive aorist (i.e., the beginning of an action wherein emphasis is placed on entering into a state or condition implied by the verb itself¹⁰⁹), and the beginning action being described in John 20:22 is the reception of the Holy Spirit, whereby the disciples were born again, and that was

¹⁰⁹ Justin T. Alfred, *Simplified Greek*, (Colorado Springs, CO: Self-Published, 1995), 54; Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 558; A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1934), 834; H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, (Toronto: The Macmillan Company, 1927; 34th printing, 1969), 196; James A. Brooks, *Syntax of New Testament Greek: A Study Guide* (New Orleans: New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1972), 86.

merely the beginning of the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives, as well as in all believers' lives, Acts 2:1-13 was the manifestation of the continuation of the Holy Spirit infilling and empowering the disciples for ministry. In Acts 10:47, therefore, Peter is reasserting both the beginning and continuing work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of those gathered with Cornelius, and he is seeing it as a culminative work with regard to Jesus' promise to him and the other disciples from John 20:19-22, Luke 24:44-49, and Acts 2:1-13, but in no way is he saying the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives is finished – indeed, He was just beginning His work in and through them! Thus, from the rebirth begins the process of sanctification, which certainly includes at some point the initial infilling, as well as the continuous infilling of the Holy Spirit in our lives as believers in Jesus Christ, and with those infillings come the gifts that God distributes in the lives of His children as He chooses. But here in Acts 10:47 Peter is using the culminative aorist, not in any way saying the work of the Holy Spirit is finished in their lives, but, as stated above, that the initial aspect of being born again has been completed, along with their being filled with the Holy Spirit and also receiving the gift of tongues as happened to all of the disciples on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2:1-13. Thus, based upon the above exegetical analysis, I would completely and unequivocally reject the United Pentecostal and other such Pentecostal groups who maintain that the rebirth is evidenced with “speaking in tongues” as happened to the disciples on Pentecost and as is recorded here in Acts 10 with Cornelius and those assembled with him because we do not see this consistently recorded in the text, and if it was that essential, as is believing and repenting, then it would certainly be the consistent sign mentioned as are believing and repenting.

- (9) Acts 19:1-7: “And it came about that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus, and found some disciples, ² and he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” And they *said* to him, “No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.” ³ And he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” And they said, “Into John's baptism.” ⁴ And Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus.” ⁵ And when they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they *began* speaking with tongues and prophesying. ⁷ And there were in all about twelve men.”

As we look at this passage, we find a very interesting situation unlike any of the others because as Luke writes this, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he refers to these twelve men in Ephesus as “disciples,” which for us would tend to imply that they were “disciples of Jesus.” However, as the story proceeds we discover that they were actually “disciples of John” in that they were baptized “into John’s baptism.” Paul then clarified what “John’s baptism” was about by saying that “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus.” Now, the Book of Acts makes it abundantly clear from chapter 2 forward that the only people who could legitimately be baptized were those who had believed in Jesus as their Lord and Savior,

which belief was enabled by the “gift of faith” given by the Lord, and this resulted in their being born again, whereby the Holy Spirit indwelt their lives in giving them rebirth, and we have already seen this occur on the Day of Pentecost and in Samaria with Philip:

Now when they heard *this*, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" ³⁸ And Peter *said* to them, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ "For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself." ⁴⁰ And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!" ⁴¹ So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls. ⁴² And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. (Acts 2:37-42)

Now there was a certain man named Simon, who formerly was practicing magic in the city, and astonishing the people of Samaria, claiming to be someone great; ¹⁰ and they all, from smallest to greatest, were giving attention to him, saying, "This man is what is called the Great Power of God." ¹¹ And they were giving him attention because he had for a long time astonished them with his magic arts. ¹² But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike. (Acts 8:9-12)

Thus, when these twelve clearly heard and understood the Gospel, enabled by the Holy Spirit to do so, they immediately believed in Jesus as their Lord and Savior, were born again, and were water baptized, and then subsequent to their water baptism, “when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they *began* speaking with tongues and prophesying” (Acts 19:6). What is interesting here, versus in any of the other passages we have looked at, is that accompanying their “speaking in tongues” was “prophesying,” and the assumption is that this was done in the language the Ephesians spoke, which would be Greek, in that when Paul alludes to “prophesying” in I Corinthians 14:1-12, he is clearly referring to speaking in the known language of the people assembled in a place where the gifts are in operation. Only with Cornelius’ assembled group do we see another word associated with their “speaking in tongues,” and it is, “they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God,” which may indeed be referring to their exalting God in their known language, and this is indeed what happened to me when I received the infilling of the Holy Spirit and the gift of tongues – I both praised and worshipped the Lord in English and the gift of tongues just given me. On the Day of Pentecost, those assembled heard the disciples in their individual languages (and perhaps through a miracle of hearing as well) “speaking of the mighty deeds of God,” but it appears to be clear in Acts 2:1-13, that the disciples were not speaking in their known Aramaic, Hebrew, or Greek, but in and through the “gift of tongues” they just received. Thus, what we have in all of the above instances are differences in each situation with regard to individuals being born again, filled with the Holy Spirit, and

speaking in tongues, indicating that God, not man is sovereign in what He wants to do, and we must, as humans, recognize this all important biblical and theological truth.

I Corinthians 12-14

As we have been going over both the continuationist and cessationist approach toward the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and whether or not they are still legitimately in operation today, we have covered the major arguments of both. However, from my perspective, the cessationist view is tragically devoid of biblical, foundational truth, and its reasons are woefully deficient, as well as demonstrating a level of spiritual ignorance and, what might also be described as spiritual immaturity, especially in the view that the gifts of the Holy Spirit ceased when the church reached a level of “spiritual maturity” when they were no longer needed. Having been a believer now for fifty years (I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior on October 1, 1965), I can tell you that when I have ever thought of myself as “mature,” that is, having arrived at a certain level of knowledge of Scripture, theology, language study, etc. that was elevating to my narcissistic ego, in actuality I was demonstrating how very “immature” I really was. On page 15 I already discussed what “real maturity” is based on I Timothy 1:15: “It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost *of all*.” In essence, Paul the Apostle is emphatically saying of himself that he sees within himself now, toward the end of his life, sin that he didn’t even know was sin in his life, and he sees the depth of his wretchedness, but also that magnitude of the grace of God. And thus, far from being at a place of “spiritual maturity” where he no longer needs the operation of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit operating in his life, he sees that indeed in his weakness, the power of God is “perfected in weakness” (II Corinthians 12:1-10), and that includes whatever Gifts of the Holy Spirit the Lord may give him to operate in his life, which includes the “gift of tongues” (I Corinthians 14:1-19). Therefore, we will begin by looking at these chapters in chronological order.

I Corinthians 12

12:1-3(Greek): Περὶ δὲ τῶν πνευματικῶν, ἀδελφοί, οὐ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν. ² Οἴδατε ὅτι ὅτε ἔθνη ἦτε πρὸς τὰ εἰδωλα τὰ ἄφωνα ὡς ἂν ἤγεσθε ἀπαγόμενοι. ³ διὸ γνωρίζω ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐδεὶς ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ λαλῶν λέγει· Ἀνάθεμα Ἰησοῦς, καὶ οὐδεὶς δύναται εἰπεῖν· Κύριος Ἰησοῦς, εἰ μὴ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ.

12:1-3 (English): “Now concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware. ² You know that when you were pagans, *you were* led astray to the dumb idols, however you were led. ³ Therefore I make known to you, that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus is accursed”; and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.”

One of the first things you will note is that the English word “gifts” is not a part of the Greek text, but it is provided by the translators as a help in reading the Greek word πνευματικῶν

(*pneumatikōn*). The first question before us, therefore, is what did Paul actually mean and what was he referring to with the Greek word **πνευματικῶν** (*pneumatikōn*)? Interestingly, this use of the Greek word **πνευματικῶν** (*pneumatikōn*) is only found here in I Corinthians 12:1, and thus, it is what is termed a *hapax legomenon*, which means it is only used once in the Greek New Testament, and there is no use of it at all in the LXX. Thus, as we look at the context of the whole of I Corinthians 12, we will then be better able to discern just what Paul was referring to, and we begin by deciphering the Greek word in its genitive plural form.

The root word of **πνευματικῶν** (*pneumatikōn*) is **πνευματικός** (*pneumatikos*), which is a Greek adjective and it refers to the “inner life of a human being; having to do with the (divine) spirit, caused by or filled with the (divine) spirit, pertaining to/corresponding to the (divine) spirit; and in the neuter gender, it refers to spiritual things or matters, and in I Cor. 12:1, it may refer to spiritual gifts, and if in the masculine, the plural genitive may refer to those who possess spiritual gifts.”¹¹⁰ Therefore, the question before us now is, did Paul intend, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, for **πνευματικῶν** (*pneumatikōn*) to be understood as a neuter or masculine adjective? In I Corinthians 12:2, Paul writes, “You know that when you were pagans, *you were* led astray to the dumb idols, however you were led.” This syntactical construction in the Greek in this sentence is quite unusual, but it is also quite instructive with regards to the speech and affirmations uttered by nonbelievers, versus believers, and this is all related to what gender Paul intended **πνευματικῶν** (*pneumatikōn*) to be read as.

First of all, the word for “pagans” is the Greek word **ἔθνη** (*ethnē*), which is normally translated as “Gentiles,” but in this instance, it is thought that the alternate word “pagans” is what is intended because number one, he is writing to those who for the most part are “Gentiles” by birth and race, and they have remained “Gentiles” after their conversion, and secondly, the contrast he is making to their former lives clearly seems to invite this strong contrast between believers and nonbelievers – thus, “pagans” who are nonbelievers and were actively pursuing false “gods” and false “beliefs” through false “teachers,” versus believers who are now being led by the “Spirit of God” and worshipping and following their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. After this, follows the statement, “*you were* led astray to the dumb idols, however you were led,” and it is this phrase that contains the difficult, syntactical construction:

Paul begins his correction of their “ignorance” by reminding them of something from their pagan past of which they were well aware. The sentence itself is an *anacolouthon* (it doesn’t follow grammatically – *i.e.*, a *shift from an unfinished sentence to another sentence* – *e.g.*, ‘*you shouldn’t eat . . . – well that is your decision*’ – *my note*) since the “when” clause has no main verb. Either something dropped out in the transmission of the text, or else Paul himself intended his readers to supply a second “you were” at some point in the sentence. Literally it reads, “You know that when you were pagans, to mute idols whenever (or however) you would be led, being carried away.” The best solution is to repeat the verb “you were” with the final participle “carried away,” so that the sentence

¹¹⁰ Arndt and Gingrich, 685.

reads, “When you were pagans, you were carried away, as you were continually being led about to mute idols.”¹¹¹

The importance of what Fee is stating above is that there are two passive verb forms in this sentence: ἤγεσθε (*ēgesthe*) – “you were being led,” an imperfect active indicative verb from ἄγω (*agō* – “to lead”), indicating continuous action in past time; and ἀπαγόμενοι (*apagomenoi*) – “being led away,” a nominative masculine plural, present mid/pas participle from ἀπάγω (*apagō* – “to lead away”), also indicating continuous, ongoing action in relation to the main verb, “to lead,” which is indicating continuous action in past time. Some have thought that the “being led away” had to do with “constant processions that were a part of normal life in the Roman world (including Corinth). Such processions took place as part of religious festivals ‘in which the participants normally proceeded along a sacred route’ which brought them to an image in a sanctuary.”¹¹² And although this is certainly a viable possibility, and perhaps was indeed one of the things that Paul was referring to, two other quite viable possibilities are contained in the following quotes:

For the Corinthians, apparently, glossolalia constituted the principal sign of the presence and power of the Spirit of God. For Paul it was equivocal, ambiguous. If he had not regarded it as such, he would not have later used the analogy of the flute, harp, and bugle (“if even lifeless instruments ... do not give distinct notes, how will anyone know what is played?” 14:7), or have asked, “if, therefore, the whole church assembles and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad?” (14:23). The word “mad” translates a more or less technical term for the ravings of pagan religious devotees who experienced such vehement ecstasy while in the possession of their gods that they “blew a fuse.” “You know,” writes Paul, “you see with your mind’s eye what occurred at such events.” But however equivocal (there is ample evidence to suggest that the phrase “speaking in tongues” was a technical term already in use, developed in Judaism), Paul did not doubt that it could be a genuine activity of God. Verse 2 does not intend to distinguish the phenomenon in paganism from that in Christianity, but rather to draw an analogy—speaking in tongues exists within and outside the church. But if the Corinthians had assigned priority to that phenomenon, then it had been made the criterion of Christian existence, had been made to stand alone, without reference to origin, norm, or goal, without connection to anyone or anything other than itself. Then it had been loosed from what gave it meaning. Hence, after reminding his readers of the equivocal nature of speaking in tongues, Paul applies a test to it, brings it under a control.¹¹³

With a reference to the Corinthians’ former pagan practices, when they were *led astray to mute idols*, Paul distinguishes Spirit-inspired speech from non-Spirit-inspired speech. Just why Paul refers to their pagan experiences of “repeatedly being led [captive] before speechless idols” (more literal rendering; cf. Ps 115:7; Jer 10:14; Hab 2:18) is not

¹¹¹ Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), 576-577.

¹¹² Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 564.

¹¹³ Roy A. Harrisville, *Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament: I Corinthians* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1987), 206.

clear. If frenzied or ecstatic experiences are in view, the text itself does not say this directly. Some believe Paul is drawing a comparison with pagan experiences of glossolalia to devalue the Corinthians' overemphasis on this phenomenon in their Christian worship (Bassler 1982).¹¹⁴

Others see Paul's larger concern to be setting forth a pagan example against which they are to understand both "inspired utterances" and the significance of "tongues." If so, then it seems probable that what is in view is their former experience of "ecstasy" or "inspired utterances" as pagans. Although neither verb on its own necessarily implies this, the unusual compounding of the verbs, with emphasis on the Corinthians' being acted upon by others (implied in the two passive verbs), seems to lead in this direction.¹¹⁵

Carried away. Led along; that is, deluded by your passions, deluded by your priests, deluded by your vain and splendid rites of worship. The whole system made an appeal to the senses, and *bore along* its votaries as if by a foreign and irresistible impulse. The word which is used (*ἀπαγόμενοι*) conveys properly the idea of being carried into bondage, or being led to punishment, and refers here doubtless to the strong means which had been used by crafty politicians and priests in their former state to delude and deceive them.

Unto these dumb idols. These idols which could not speak—an attribute which is often given to them, to show the folly of worshipping them; Ps. 115:5; 135:15; Hab. 2:18, 19. The ancient priests and politicians deluded the people with the notion that oracles were uttered by the idols whom they worshipped, and thus they maintained the belief in their divinity. The idea of Paul here seems to be, (1.) That their idols never could have uttered the oracles which were ascribed to them, and consequently that they had been deluded. (2.) That these idols could never have endowed them with such spiritual privileges as they now had, and consequently that their present state was far preferable to their former condition.

Even as ye were led. Were led by the priests in the temples of the idols. They were under strong delusions and the arts of cunning and unprincipled men. The idea is, that they had been under a strong infatuation, and were entirely at the control of their spiritual leaders—a description remarkably applicable now to all forms of imposture in the world. No system of paganism consults the freedom and independence of the mind of man; but it is everywhere characterized as a system of *power*, and not of *thought*; and all its arrangements are made to secure that power without an intelligent assent of the understanding and the heart.¹¹⁶

Thus, what I believe we see being described by Paul in I Corinthians 12:2 is both the former "false tongues" they had been exposed to in their "pagan religions," as well as the "false oracles" that the "false, pagan priests" claimed were coming from the "dumb idols," that is, from wooden, stone, or metal "idols" that had no ability to speak or communicate. My reasoning for believing that Paul was very likely referring to "false tongues" is that forty years ago when I was pastoring in Louisiana, I took a mission trip to Haiti with one of my deacons, and while there, we witnessed a Voodoo meeting, in which I heard the Voodoo priest speaking in a form of

¹¹⁴ Alan F. Johnson, *The IVP New Testament Commentary Series: 1 Corinthians, Vol. 7* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2004), 218.

¹¹⁵ Fee, 577-578.

¹¹⁶ Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament: 1 Corinthians* (London: Blackie & Son, 1884-85; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Company, 1983), 225-226 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

“tongues” that was unequivocally not Creole French, which is the language of the Haitians. At the time, I immediately sensed a demonic presence in that meeting with everything that was occurring, and especially so when the Voodoo priest began to speak in the demonic “tongues” he was uttering. Therefore, here in I Corinthians 12:2, Paul is beginning to make his clear distinction between the genuine, godly, Holy Spirit generated “utterances,” versus the false, ungodly, and demonic generated utterances.

This in turn leads us into I Corinthians 12:3 “Therefore I make known to you, that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, ‘Jesus is accursed’; and no one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord’, except by the Holy Spirit.” A more amplified translation of the above verse would be: “Therefore, I continually make known to you that no one within whom the Holy Spirit is living continually speaks and continually says, ‘Jesus is Accursed’, and no one is continually enabled to continually say, ‘Jesus is Lord’, except only by the indwelling Holy Spirit in their life.” Thus, regardless of the “tongues” that were coming forth from the Voodoo priest in Haiti, his denial of the divinity and Lordship of Jesus fully exposed the “spirit” that was indwelling him and motivating him to deny Jesus through demonic “tongues,” as well as in Creole French. Therefore, although the “processions” of the ancient “Roman culture” might be a part of what Paul is referring to, I believe Paul is referring to something far more sinister, and that is the direct, satanic activity that captured the hearts and minds of the Corinthians, leading them into “false” and demonically spawned religious practices, led and guided by “false” and demonically spawned teachers and priests.

And with reference to the Greek word *πνευματικῶν* (*pneumatikōn*) as to whether it is masculine or neuter, based on the following verses, I believe Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is using the neuter form, emphasizing various types of “manifestations” of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers because as we shall see, the Greek word *χαρισμάτων* (*charismatōn*) is unequivocally referring to what we would call the “Gifts of the Holy Spirit.” That being the case, from my perspective, what we see in the following verses of 4-11 is a delineation of those “manifestations,” which no one man, denomination, or Christian, social culture can claim exclusive possession and exercise of – they are for the entire body of Christ throughout the ages until Jesus returns.

12:4-11 (Greek): Διαιρέσεις δὲ χαρισμάτων εἰσὶν, τὸ δὲ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα· ⁵ καὶ διαιρέσεις διακονιῶν εἰσιν, καὶ ὁ αὐτὸς κύριος· ⁶ καὶ διαιρέσεις ἐνεργημάτων εἰσιν, ὁ δὲ αὐτὸς θεὸς ὁ ἐνεργῶν τὰ πάντα ἐν ᾤσιν. ⁷ ἑκάστῳ δὲ δίδεται ἢ φανέρωσις τοῦ πνεύματος πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον. ⁸ ᾧ μὲν γὰρ διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος δίδεται λόγος σοφίας, ἄλλῳ δὲ λόγος γνώσεως κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα, ⁹ ἑτέρῳ πίστις ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ πνεύματι, ἄλλῳ δὲ χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων ἐν τῷ ἐνὶ πνεύματι, ¹⁰ ἄλλῳ δὲ ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων, ἄλλῳ [δὲ] προφητεία, ἄλλῳ [δὲ] διακρίσεις πνευμάτων, ἑτέρῳ γένη γλωσσῶν, ἄλλῳ δὲ ἑρμηνεῖα γλωσσῶν· ¹¹ πάντα δὲ ταῦτα ἐνεργεῖ τὸ ἐν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα διαιροῦν ἰδίᾳ ἑκάστῳ καθὼς βούλεται.

12:4-11 (English): “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. ⁶ And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who

works all things in all *persons*.⁷ But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.⁸ For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit;⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,¹⁰ and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another *various* kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.¹¹ But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.”

Once again, the Greek word **χαρισμάτων** (*charismatōn*), which is the genitive plural of the neuter noun **χάρισμα** (*charisma*), is the Greek word that means “gift,”¹¹⁷ and it is here in I Corinthians 12:4 that Paul actually attaches “gifts” being given by the Holy Spirit. So, Paul goes from mentioning the overall “manifestations” of the Holy Spirit to “varieties of gifts” of the Holy Spirit, and in doing so, Paul makes it quite clear that it is “the same Spirit” for every believer, everywhere, and throughout history until Jesus returns. In verse five the Greek word for “ministries” is **διακονιῶν** (*diakoniōn*), and it too is a genitive plural noun, but of the feminine gender, and it comes from the root word **διακονία** (*diakonia*), whose primary meaning is “service.”¹¹⁸ It is related to the word **διάκονος** (*diakonos*), which is the word used for “deacon”¹¹⁹ in the Greek New Testament, and both of these nouns are derived from the same Greek verb **διακονέω** (*diakoneō*), which means “to wait on someone, to serve, and to care for.”¹²⁰ Therefore, based on the above analysis, it would exegetically be proper to say that the Office of Deacon is indeed a ministry of the Holy Spirit, guided and directed by the Lord, as verse five concludes with, “it is the same Lord” who is distributing these “ministries” according to His sovereign will, purpose, and calling. Verse six is an encapsulation, if you will, of verses four and five as Paul writes, “And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all *persons*.” The Greek word for “effects” is **ἐνεργημάτων** (*energēmatōn*), and it too, like **χάρισμα** (*charisma*), is a genitive plural neuter noun, coming from the root word **ἐνεργημα** (*energēma*), which basically means “activity and experience,” and it comes from the Greek verb **ἐνεργέω** (*energeō*), which means “to work, to operate, to produce, and to effect something or someone.”¹²¹ Thus, one might say the word **ἐνεργημα** (*energēma*) has a plethora of applications of the Holy Spirit working in and through the lives of believers demonstrating the life of Jesus in ways that a believer may not even be aware of. Then, in summation of verse six, Paul says it is “same God who works all things in all *persons*,” and in this last statement, we see what I clearly believe is a reference to the Trinity working in and through the lives of believers – the “same Spirit” in verse four; the “same Lord” in verse five; and the “same God” in verse six. In addition, the word “works” in verse six comes from the Greek verb **ἐνεργέω** (*energeō*) above, thus, it is indeed the One, True, All Powerful God through His Holy Spirit and through the Lord Jesus Christ – the One

¹¹⁷ Arndt and Gingrich, 887.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 183.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 183-184.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 183.

¹²¹ Ibid., 264-265.

God in Three Persons – who is doing His work in us for His purposes and glory, not ours! Then in verse seven, Paul makes a summation of verses four through six by saying, “But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.” The Greek word translated “manifestation” is **φανέρωσις** (*phanerōsis*), and as a noun it means “disclosure or announcement,”¹²² which is a generalized term meaning the work of the Holy Spirit is “made manifest” in someone’s life according to God’s will and purpose in whatever way, method, and manner God may choose, and it is for the “common good.” This last phrase comes from the Greek word **συμφέρον** (*sumpheron*), and unlike the other Greek words above that happen to be nouns, in the English translation this word would also appear to be a noun, but in actuality it is a participle, which is a verbal adjective. Its root is the verb **συνφέρω** (*sumpherō*), and it means “to bring together, to help, to confer a benefit, and to be advantageous, profitable, or useful.” In this instance as a present active participle, and a present participle functions in a contemporaneous action with the main verb, which here happens to be “is given,” which is also a present passive verb, and the present tense in Greek emphasizes a continuous and ongoing action. Thus, verse seven is saying that God is continually giving and producing the “manifestation” of His Holy Spirit in the lives of His children in order that this “manifestation” will continually “bring together, help, and be advantageous” for everyone – for the believers in the body of Christ that they may grow in Christlikeness, and for nonbelievers in order that they might come to a saving faith in Jesus.

In verses eight through ten, Paul delineates specific “gifts” given by the Holy Spirit, and in verse ten, he says, “and to another the effecting of miracles,” which is somewhat of an open ended statement in that this comprises a multitude of specifically unnamed “miracles.” The phrase, “effecting of miracles,” is written in Greek as **ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων** (*energēmata dunameōn*). Once again, **ἐνεργήματα** (*energēmata*) comes from the root, neuter noun already mentioned above, **ἐνεργημα** (*energēma*), which basically means “activity and experience,” and it comes from the Greek verb **ἐνεργέω** (*energeō*), which means “to work, to operate, to produce, and to effect something or someone,” and in this instance, **ἐνεργήματα** (*energēmata*) is a plural neuter noun. Thus, the literal translation would be, “activities of miracles,” and again, as just stated, the verb from which it is derived is **ἐνεργέω** (*energeō*), which means “to work, to operate, to produce, and to effect something or someone.” The word “activities,” however, indicates this is a multiplicity of various works done and accomplished by the Holy Spirit in and through the life of a believer, versus just one thing. On the other hand, it may very well be that for a specific believer, the Holy Spirit accomplishes one specific miracle through him or her, but again, that is up to God’s sovereign choosing, will, and purpose. The word translated as “miracles” is **δυνάμεων** (*dunameōn*), and it literally means “power, miracle, and wonder,”¹²³ and the NIV gives the translation as “miraculous powers.” However, in both translations, this is indeed a manifestation of the Holy Spirit, working in and through a believer’s life, accomplishing “activities” that are beyond the human psyche to understand, as well as human ability to perform,

¹²² Ibid., 861.

¹²³ Ibid., 206-207.

and as previously stated, this wording would incorporate a plethora of all types of “miraculous workings” of the Holy Spirit, versus just a few specific ones.

However, also in verse ten we read, “to another *various* kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.” The phrase in Greek, “kinds of tongues,” is **γένη γλωσσῶν** (*genē glōssōn*), and the question before us, therefore, is, just what does the word “kinds” (**γένη** – *genē*) actually mean when applied to “tongues” (**γλωσσῶν** – *glōssōn*) in this passage? The Greek word **γένη** (*genē*) is a neuter plural noun from its root form, **γένος** (*genos*), and it refers to “descendants of a common ancestor, family, relatives, nation, people, class, and kind, such as a species of plants, etc.”¹²⁴ Therefore, a cessationist might look at the above definition and focus on the “nation” in order to emphasize the fact that the “tongues” referenced here are known languages from different people groups only. On the other hand, a continuationist would possibly look at **γένος** (*genos*) and say that the word comprises both the known languages, as well as the “class” of languages that Paul mentions in I Corinthians 13:1, “If I speak with the **tongues of men and of angels**, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.” Thus, **γένος** (*genos*) can clearly and legitimately refer to “kinds” or “classes” of languages, which would unequivocally include “tongues of angels,” if this is indeed a literal “language” Paul is referring to, versus some type of metaphorical emphasis. There are 150 usages of the Greek noun **γένος** (*genos*) in all four of its cases, both singular and plural, throughout the LXX, the Apocrypha, and the New Testament, and in those passages where “kind” is the translation, it is clear that **γένος** (*genos*) is referring to a “kind/class” of a “species,” if you will, of whatever is under discussion. Below are eight examples, aside from the three in I Corinthians 12 and 14, where **γένος** (*genos*) is translated as “kind/class”:

- 1) Genesis 1:11: “And God said, Let the earth bring forth the herb of grass bearing seed according to its **kind** (**γένος** – *genos*) and according to its likeness, and the fruit-tree bearing fruit whose seed is in it, according to its kind (**γένος** – *genos*) on the earth, and it was so.”
- 2) Genesis 1:21: “And God made great whales, and every living reptile, which the waters brought forth according to their **kinds** (**γένη** – *genē*), and every creature that flies with wings according to its **kind** (**γένος** – *genos*), and God saw that they were good.”
- 3) Genesis 6:20: “Of all winged birds after their **kind** (**γένος** – *genos*), and of all cattle after their **kind** (**γένος** – *genos*), and of all reptiles creeping upon the earth after their kind (**γένος** – *genos*), pairs of all shall come in to thee, male and female to be fed with thee.”
- 4) Genesis 40:17: “And in the upper basket there was the work of the baker of every **kind** (**γενῶν** – *genōn*) which Pharaoh eats; and the fowls of the air ate them out of the basket that was on my head.”
- 5) II Chronicles 4:11-13: “And Chiram made the fleshhooks, and the fire-pans, and the grate of the altar, and all its instruments: and Chiram finished doing all the work which he wrought for king Solomon in the house of God: ¹² two pillars, and upon them an embossed work for the capitals on the heads of the two pillars, and two nets to cover the heads of the capitals which are on the heads of the pillars; ¹³ and four hundred golden bells for the two nets, and

¹²⁴ Ibid., 155.

two **rows** (**γενῆ** – *genē*) of pomegranates in each net, to cover the two embossed rims of the capitals which are upon the pillars.”

- 6) Daniel 3:7: “And it came to pass when the nations heard the sound of the trumpet, and pipe, and harp, and sackbut, and psaltery, and all **kinds** (**γενους** – *genous*) of music, all the nations, tribes, *and* languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image which king Nebuchadnezzar had set up.”
- 7) Mark 9:14-29: “And when they came *back* to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them, and *some* scribes arguing with them. ¹⁵ And immediately, when the entire crowd saw Him, they were amazed, and *began* running up to greet Him. ¹⁶ And He asked them, “What are you discussing with them?” ¹⁷ And one of the crowd answered Him, “Teacher, I brought You my son, possessed with a spirit which makes him mute; ¹⁸ and whenever it seizes him, it dashes him *to the ground* and he foams *at the mouth*, and grinds his teeth, and stiffens out. And I told Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not *do it*.” ¹⁹ And He answered them and said, “O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to Me!” ²⁰ And they brought the boy to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit threw him into a convulsion, and falling to the ground, he *began* rolling about and foaming *at the mouth*. ²¹ And He asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood. ²² “And it has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!” ²³ And Jesus said to him, “‘If You can!’ All things are possible to him who believes.” ²⁴ Immediately the boy’s father cried out and *began* saying, “I do believe; help my unbelief.” ²⁵ And when Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again.” ²⁶ And after crying out and throwing him into terrible convulsions, it came out; and *the boy* became so much like a corpse that most *of them* said, “He is dead!” ²⁷ But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him; and he got up. ²⁸ And when He had come into *the house*, His disciples *began* questioning Him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” ²⁹ And He said to them, “This **kind** (**γένους** – *genos* – that is, type of “unclean spirit” that Jesus specifically named as a “deaf and dumb spirit,” versus some other type of demonic spirit) cannot come out by anything but prayer.”
- 8) Matthew 13:47-50: “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering *fish* of every **kind** (**γένους** – *genous* – that is, as we all know, there are a plethora of various types of fish in the ocean, and I can personally attest to that as I have trolled from shrimp in the Gulf of Mexico, and we pulled up types of fish I had never seen before); ⁴⁸ and when it was filled, they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down, and gathered the good *fish* into containers, but the bad they threw away. ⁴⁹ “So it will be at the end of the age; the angels shall come forth, and take out the wicked from among the righteous, ⁵⁰ and will cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Therefore, from looking at the eight examples above where **γένους** (*genos*) is translated as “kind” (the translation of “rows” in II Chronicles 4:13 is referring to two different “rows of pomegranates,” which perhaps could be “two different kinds of pomegranates” as indicated in

the following article: <https://www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/morton/pomegranate.html>), we can see that the above references are in essence to a different “kind” within a certain type of “species,” if you will, of whatever the subject is that is under discussion. And here in I Corinthians 12:10, it would appear that “kinds of tongues” would semantically include the “tongues of men and of angels” in I Corinthians 13:1 as a different variety of the “species” of language emanating from the mouths of human beings – thus, there is the “kind” of language originating with humans, spoken by humans, and there is the “kind” of language originating with angelic communication, that is also spoken by humans, and both of these are seen as “manifestations” of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. And with all of this, I Corinthians 12:11 sums it all up, “But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills,” and the Greek word for “works” in this verse is *ἐνεργεῖ* (*energei*), coming from the root verb *ἐνεργέω* (*energeō*), which means “to work, to operate, to produce, and to effect something or someone.” In addition, *ἐνεργεῖ* (*energei*) is what would be called the progressive present, meaning that it is emphasizing an ongoing, continuous action, which in this instance is that of the Holy Spirit “continually working, operating, producing, and effecting in believers” His work in “conforming us to the image of Jesus” (Romans 8:29), while at the same time operating His “gifts” and “manifestations” for the glory of Christ, not our human glory!

12:12-13 (Greek): Καθάπερ γὰρ τὸ σῶμα ἓν ἐστὶν καὶ μέλη πολλὰ ἔχει, πάντα δὲ τὰ μέλη τοῦ σώματος πολλὰ ὄντα ἓν ἐστὶν σῶμα, οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστός· ¹³ καὶ γὰρ ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι ἡμεῖς πάντες εἰς ἓν σῶμα ἐβαπτίσθημεν, εἴτε Ἰουδαῖοι εἴτε Ἕλληνες εἴτε δοῦλοι εἴτε ἐλεύθεροι, καὶ πάντες ἐν πνεῦμα ἐποτίσθημεν.

12:12-13 (English): “For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. ¹³ For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”

What is significant about the above passage in light of the Charismatic Movement, Pentecostalism, and the “Strange Fire” critique is verse 13 that states, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.” The term, “the baptism of the Holy Spirit,” has been associated with what has been termed the “empowerment of the Holy Spirit,” the “second blessing” by some, “receiving the Holy Spirit,” and “the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues.” Indeed, as we have gone through the Book of Acts, we have seen that there is, unequivocally, an empowerment of believers by the infilling of the Holy Spirit, but we saw in Acts 4:23-31 that the disciples were “re-filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak the word of God with boldness.” However, no mention is made at that point of them “speaking in tongues,” although we know that many of them did from Pentecost forward. The point to be made is that I Corinthians 12:13 is talking about our rebirth as believers in Jesus Christ when the

Holy Spirit “immerses” us into the Body of Christ, and we become one with all true, born-again believers in Jesus. From that point forward, there are continuous infillings of the Holy Spirit, and through those infillings His “manifestations” and “gifts” are ministered in and through us. Thus, all the terms that I believe are associated with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit are:

- (1) “you are to stay in the city until you are **clothed with power** from on high” (Luke 24:49);
- (2) “you shall be **baptized with the Holy Spirit** not many days from now” (Acts 1:5);
- (3) “you shall receive power when **the Holy Spirit has come upon** you” (Acts 1:8);
- (4) “they were all **filled with the Holy Spirit**” (Acts 2:4);
- (5) “they were all **filled with the Holy Spirit**” (Acts 4:31);
- (6) “Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, ¹⁵ who came down and prayed for them, that they might **receive the Holy Spirit**.
- (7) ¹⁶ For **He had not yet fallen upon** any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they *began* laying their hands on them, and **they were receiving the Holy Spirit**” (Acts 8:14-16);
- (8) “And Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight, and **be filled with the Holy Spirit**.’ ¹⁸ And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he arose and was baptized; ¹⁹ and he took food and was strengthened” (Acts 9:17-19);
- (9) “And it came about that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus, and found some disciples, ² and he said to them, “**Did you receive the Holy Spirit** when you believed?” And they *said* to him, “No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.” ³ And he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” And they said, “Into John's baptism.” ⁴ And Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus.” ⁵ And when they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.
- (10) ⁶ And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, **the Holy Spirit came on them**, and they *began* speaking with tongues and prophesying. ⁷ And there were in all about twelve men” (Acts 19:1-7).

However, as we have already mentioned, nothing is said at all about the Samaritan believers “speaking in tongues” when they began “receiving the Holy Spirit,” and after Paul was saved, no mention is made at all of him “speaking in tongues,” and all that is said about the Ethiopian eunuch is that after Philip “preached Jesus to him” (Acts 8:35), they came to some water, and the eunuch wanted to be baptized, “And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch; and he baptized him. ³⁹ And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch saw him no more, but went on his way rejoicing” (Acts 8:38-39). There is no mention, whatsoever, of Philip laying his hands on the eunuch “to be baptized/filled/receive/or coming upon” by the Holy Spirit on the eunuch, but at the moment he believed, he was born again by the Holy Spirit who at that moment

indwelt the eunuch, and he was “baptized into one body” by the Holy Spirit and “made to drink of one Spirit” (I Corinthians 12:13) with every other believer in the world at that time, as well as today, some two thousand years later!

12:27-31 (Greek): Ὑμεῖς δὲ ἐστε σῶμα Χριστοῦ καὶ μέλη ἐκ μέρους. ²⁸ Καὶ οὕς μὲν ἔθετο ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ πρῶτον ἀποστόλους, δεῦτερον προφήτας, τρίτον διδασκάλους, ἔπειτα δυνάμεις, ἔπειτα χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων, ἀντιλήψεις, κυβερνήσεις, γένη γλωσσῶν. ²⁹ μὴ πάντες ἀπόστολοι; μὴ πάντες προφήται; μὴ πάντες διδάσκαλοι; μὴ πάντες δυνάμεις; ³⁰ μὴ πάντες χαρίσματα ἔχουσιν ἰαμάτων; μὴ πάντες γλώσσαις λαλοῦσιν; μὴ πάντες διερμηνεύουσιν; ³¹ ζηλοῦτε δὲ τὰ χαρίσματα τὰ μείζονα. Καὶ ἔτι καθ’ ὑπερβολὴν ὁδὸν ὑμῖν δείκνυμι.

12:27-31 (English): “Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it. ²⁸ And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, *various* kinds (γενῆ – *genē*) of tongues. ²⁹ All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not *workers of miracles*, are they? ³⁰ All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they? ³¹ But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.”

In the above passage, we see γένη (*genē*) used to describe the “manifestation” of “tongues” (γλωσσῶν – *glōssōn*), but what we also see is that Paul is clearly stating that “All are not” and “do not” practice all of the “gifts” and “manifestations” of the Holy Spirit, including “speaking in tongues.” Then, verse 31, which is one of the most important, but oftentimes, most overlooked verse in this whole section, states the presentation that he is about to give that should be the overriding grid for our lives as believers in Jesus Christ, “But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.”

I Corinthians 13

13:1-3 (Greek): Ἐὰν ταῖς γλώσσαις τῶν ἀνθρώπων λαλῶ καὶ τῶν ἀγγέλων, ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω, γέγονα χαλκὸς ἤχων ἢ κύμβαλον ἀλαλάζον. ² καὶ ἐὰν ἔχω προφητείαν καὶ εἰδῶ τὰ μυστήρια πάντα καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γνῶσιν καὶ ἐὰν ἔχω πᾶσαν τὴν πίστιν ὥστε ὄρη μεθιστάναι, ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω, οὐθέν εἰμι. ³ κἂν ψωμίσω πάντα τὰ ὑπάρχοντά μου καὶ ἐὰν παραδῶ τὸ σῶμά μου ἵνα καυχῆσμαι, ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω, οὐδὲν ὠφελοῦμαι.

13:1-3 (English): “If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² And if I have *the gift of prophecy*, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have

love, I am nothing.³ And if I give all my possessions to feed *the poor*, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.”

The interpretation of I Corinthians 13:1 is varied and quite interesting as one can immediately see an interpretive analysis of two types: those who deny any real, supernatural language of a divine nature emanating from man, thus, “tongues of angels” is merely a metaphor describing speech that might be equaled as great as that from heaven, but not to be understood as literally “angelic language.”¹²⁵ On the other hand, others see this as an actual reference to an actual “angelic dialect.”¹²⁶ Therefore, from the position of someone who has actually received this “gift” and “manifestation” of the Holy Spirit and experienced it in his life, I personally see Paul’s reference to “tongues of angels” as a literal language that transcends human language and is indeed a “gift” and “manifestation” of the Holy Spirit. That being said, which in turn legitimizes the present day ministry of the “gift of tongues” in the lives of believers, Paul goes on to put this and all the other gifts in proper perspective with regard to what is the true measure of “spirituality” – walking and living in the Love of Christ!

13:4-7 (Greek): Ἡ ἀγάπη μακροθυμεῖ, χρηστεύεται ἡ ἀγάπη, οὐ ζηλοῖ, [ἡ ἀγάπη] οὐ περπερεύεται, οὐ φυσιοῦται, ⁵ οὐκ ἀσχημονεῖ, οὐ ζητεῖ τὰ ἑαυτῆς, οὐ παροξύνεται, οὐ λογίζεται τὸ κακόν, ⁶ οὐ χαίρει ἐπὶ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ, συγχαίρει δὲ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ· ⁷ πάντα στέγει, πάντα πιστεύει, πάντα ἐλπίζει, πάντα ὑπομένει.

13:4-7 (English): “Love is patient, love is kind, *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant, ⁵ does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*, ⁶ does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

Without any question, anyone who sincerely reads the above passage and honestly applies it to his or her life will immediately see the “lack of love” throughout their life. And thus, the affirmation of I Corinthians 13:1-3 in which “true and genuine spirituality” is compared with “pseudo and carnal spirituality” with regard to the “manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit” minus the “love of Christ” ruling and guiding one’s heart and mind! In each of the above statements about what love is in verses 4-7 in contrast to what it is not, it is quite clear that the possessing of a certain “gift” or “gifts” in NO WAY necessarily equals spirituality. But rather, the control of one’s life by the love of Christ, manifest in a person’s life, wherein others see Jesus and not them, is indeed genuine mark of true and godly spiritual growth. For me personally, verses 4-7 above may be epitomized in the amplified translation of John 3:30: “He (i.e., Jesus) must continually increase, and I must choose to continually be decreased.” In addition to John 3:30,

¹²⁵ Joseph Agar Beet, *A Commentary on St. Paul’s Epistles to the Corinthians* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1882), 230.

¹²⁶ Fee, 630-631.

Luke 22:24-27 also evidences the love described above in I Corinthians 13:4-7 above in Jesus' description of what "true greatness" is:

And there arose also a dispute among them *as to* which one of them was regarded to be greatest. ²⁵ And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called 'Benefactors.' ²⁶ "But not so with you, but let him who is the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as the servant. ²⁷ "For who is greater, the one who reclines *at the table*, or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines *at the table*? But I am among you as the one who serves. (Luke 22:24-27)

Another passage of the same venue has Jesus describing the Pharisees, and in many ways, as we will read later in I Corinthians 14, it appears that the "Pharisaical pride" of narcissism was perhaps a root of the problem of insensitivity toward others Paul addresses in I Corinthians 14:

Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, ² saying, "The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; ³ therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say *things*, and do not do *them*. ⁴ "And they tie up heavy loads, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves are unwilling to move them with *so much as* a finger. ⁵ "But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries, and lengthen the tassels *of their garments*. ⁶ "And they love the place of honor at banquets, and the chief seats in the synagogues, ⁷ and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called by men, Rabbi. ⁸ "But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. ⁹ "And do not call *anyone* on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. ¹⁰ "And do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, *that is*, Christ. ¹¹ "But the greatest among you shall be your servant. ¹² "And whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted. (Matthew 23:1-12)

Thus, Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is attempting to correct the "false view" of spirituality with regard to the "manifestation" of the "gifts of the Holy Spirit" in comparison to the truth of genuine, Christ-centered spirituality, which is all about Jesus being seen in our lives, versus us being seen and recognized for the sake of our own, narcissistic egos. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus speaks again about "true spirituality" versus "false spirituality":

Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. ² "When therefore you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. ³ "But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing ⁴ that your alms may be in secret (); and your Father who sees in secret will repay you. (Matthew 6:1-4)

The word for "secret" in Greek is **κρυπτός** (*kruptos/krytpos*), and from this word comes our English word "crypt" – thus, let us do our work as though in a "grave," unto the Lord and not unto men, and we shall receive the "reward of the inheritance" (Colossians 3:23-24).

13:8-13 (Greek): Ἡ ἀγάπη οὐδέποτε πίπτει· εἴτε δὲ προφητεῖαι, καταργηθήσονται· εἴτε γλῶσσαι, παύσονται· εἴτε γνώσις, καταργηθήσεται. ⁹ ἐκ μέρους γὰρ γινώσκομεν καὶ ἐκ μέρους προφητεύομεν· ¹⁰ ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ τὸ τέλειον, τὸ ἐκ μέρους καταργηθήσεται. ¹¹ ὅτε ἦμην νήπιος, ἐλάλουν ὡς νήπιος, ἐφρόνουν ὡς νήπιος, ἐλογιζόμην ὡς νήπιος· ὅτε γέγονα ἀνὴρ, κατήργηκα τὰ τοῦ νηπίου. ¹² βλέπομεν γὰρ ἄρτι δι' ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι, τότε δὲ πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον· ἄρτι γινώσκω ἐκ μέρους, τότε δὲ ἐπιγνώσομαι καθὼς καὶ ἐπεγνώσθην. ¹³ Νυνὶ δὲ μένει πίστις, ἐλπίς, ἀγάπη, τὰ τρία ταῦτα· μείζων δὲ τούτων ἡ ἀγάπη.

13:8-13 (English): “Love never fails; but if *there are gifts of prophecy*, they will be done away; if *there are tongues*, they will cease; if *there is knowledge*, it will be done away. ⁹ For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; ¹⁰ but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. ¹¹ When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. ¹² For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known. ¹³ But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

In this passage, Paul is making a very clear distinction between the temporal and eternal, and the temporal are the “gifts” and “manifestations” of the Holy Spirit, and that which is eternal is the Eternal Love of God manifested in and through the Person of Jesus Christ. However, that being said, for those who believe that the “gifts of the Holy Spirit” ceased at some point (this has been covered extensively on pp. 12-21), verse 8 has some interesting, grammatical perspectives that need to be addressed.

“Love never fails” may be read in an amplified manner, “Love continually at no time ever fails,” with the Greek verb *πίπτει* (*piptei*) in the present tense. The Greek word *οὐδέποτε* (*oudepote*) is made up of three Greek particles: (1) *οὐ* (*ou*), which means “not”; (2) *δέ* (*de*), which is the conjunction “and”; (3) and *ποτε* (*pote*), which means “at some time or other.” Thus, when put together, *οὐδέποτε* (*oudepote*) becomes an adverb that means, “and never at any time.” However, in the next three statements about the temporality of “prophecy, tongues, and knowledge,” we find that the verbs attached to them are also in the present tense, but there is a difference in voice, with the verb “done away” concerning “prophecy” and “knowledge” being in the passive voice, and “cease” used with “tongues” is in the middle voice. Thus, cessationists argue that “prophecy” and “knowledge will be done away” implies that this will be God doing away with these “gifts and manifestations” through His sovereign Hand, but the middle voice used with “tongues” implies that they will “cease” in and of themselves, which they see as occurring at some point in time (when the last Apostle died; when the Scripture was finally canonized; or when the church reached a point of spiritual maturity, no longer needing such “gifts and manifestations”). This interpretive analysis is solely based on a theological perspective, but it cannot be substantiated or supported by grammatical exegesis as the passive and middle voices can easily be explained by simple observation of the totality of I Corinthians 12-14. Indeed, the passive voice used with “will be done away” certainly implies God’s

sovereign Hand at work, causing these “gifts and manifestations” to be eliminated, and when we read in I Corinthians 14 about the function of the “gift of tongues” within a believer’s life, it is easy and clear to see that whether or not that believer who has received this “gift” either “speaks, prays, or sings” in tongues, he or she is in control of whether or not to exercise that “gift” (I Corinthians 14:1-19), and we will look into that extensively when we come to I Corinthians 14. Thus, the middle voice in I Corinthians 13:8 is quite likely speaking of the cessation of that “gift” in a believer’s life when that believer dies and no longer has a need to exercise that “gift” because he or she is in the very presence of God, worshipping Him in a manner that we cannot even begin to fathom on this side of eternity!

Once again, we dealt rather extensively with what the word “perfect” most likely means and does not mean on pages 12-21, and so we will not go over that again. But it is important to simply say that in the context of this whole section, and especially the comparison of God’s Eternal Love in Jesus, versus the temporality and very flawed exercise of His “gifts and manifestations” in fallen, corrupt, but redeemed men and women, the “perfect” can be nothing else but the Person of Jesus Christ, and the “coming” of that “perfect” must be either at the death of the believer and his coming face to face with His Creator, or the return of Jesus Christ for His Church and all that follows that return. Verse 11 speaks to me of our growth in Christ in this life on earth, and metaphorically, when we come “face to face” with our Creator in heaven, “When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things.” That is, as we grow in Christ, we begin to put away “childish things” or our narcissistic, self-centered perspective and begin to embrace His discipleship in our lives at ever greater extents (Luke 9:23-24). But on the other hand, it will not be until we stand before God in glory that all such “childish things” will be “done away.”

Likewise, in my opinion, based on God’s Eternal Word and having walked with the Lord for fifty years, I KNOW OF NO MAN who now, in this life, I would even remotely say has “perfect knowledge” of all truth! Thus, for me, verse 12 is speaking of one thing, and one thing only, and that is our coming “face to face” with our creator in heaven, “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known.” Any man or woman who would venture to say that we as fallen, corrupt, yet redeemed believers can remotely arrive at “full knowledge” of God’s Eternal Truth in this life through His Eternal Word is either purposefully lying in order to manipulate others to follow him or her, or either he or she is incredibly blind to who and what they really are, and perhaps not even born again! As I already mentioned and briefly exegeted I Timothy 1:15 on page 15, Paul, at the end of his life, saw himself as he really was, while at the same time seeing the absolute depth and inclusiveness of God’s grace mercy through Jesus Christ, in whose righteousness alone we have any hope at all! That in turn leads Paul to conclude I Corinthians 13 with verse 13, “But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” Indeed, as we grow in Christ we begin to see ever more clearly that it is the Love of God, expressed to us in the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ that is the ONLY THING that has eternal and lasting value, as everything else is mere breath that passes away with the air we breathe.

I Corinthians 14

14:1-5 (Greek): Διώκετε τὴν ἀγάπην, ζηλοῦτε δὲ τὰ πνευματικά, μᾶλλον δὲ ἵνα προφητεύητε. ² ὁ γὰρ λαλῶν γλῶσση οὐκ ἀνθρώποις λαλεῖ ἀλλὰ θεῷ· οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἀκούει, πνεύματι δὲ λαλεῖ μυστήρια· ³ ὁ δὲ προφητεύων ἀνθρώποις λαλεῖ οἰκοδομὴν καὶ παράκλησιν καὶ παραμυθίαν. ⁴ ὁ λαλῶν γλῶσση ἑαυτὸν οἰκοδομεῖ· ὁ δὲ προφητεύων ἐκκλησίαν οἰκοδομεῖ. ⁵ θέλω δὲ πάντας ὑμᾶς λαλεῖν γλώσσαις, μᾶλλον δὲ ἵνα προφητεύητε· μεῖζων δὲ ὁ προφητεύων ἢ ὁ λαλῶν γλώσσαις ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ διερμηνεύῃ, ἵνα ἡ ἐκκλησία οἰκοδομὴν λάβῃ.

14:1-5 (English): “Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual *gifts*, but especially that you may prophesy. ² For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men, but to God; for no one understands, but in *his* spirit he speaks mysteries. ³ But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. ⁴ One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church. ⁵ Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but *even* more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying.”

At the end of I Corinthians 12:31, Paul writes to the Corinthian Church, “But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.” The question has been raised as to whether or not the Greek verb translated “earnestly desire/desire earnestly” (ζηλοῦτε – *zēloute*) is a present imperative or present indicative verb. The root verb is ζηλόω (*zēloō*), which means “to strive, desire, and to exert oneself earnestly.”¹²⁷ However, this verb is what is called a “contract verb,”¹²⁸ and what that means is that the final two vowels of the verb (in this case, the ο and the ω) combine to form a new, final, vowel form, which for the second person plural, either imperative or indicative, is a combination of the ο, plus the ε of the second person plural, and that combination (ο+ε) equals ου.¹²⁹ Thus, the form for the second person plural indicative and imperative for ζηλόω (*zēloō*) is the exact, same form, (ζηλοῦτε – *zēloute*), and that in turn raises the question of which form is ζηλοῦτε (*zēloute*), indicative or imperative? If these two verbs in I Corinthians 12:31 and 14:1 are indicatives, then the translations would follow thus, “And/But you are earnestly desiring the greater gifts (I Corinthians 12:31),” and “and/but you are desiring spiritual manifestations” (I Corinthians 14:1). On the other hand, if they are imperatives, then the translations would be as they are already in the above texts, “But/And earnestly desire the greater gifts” (I Corinthians 12:31), and “and/but/yet desire earnestly spiritual manifestations” (I Corinthians 14:1). However, from my perspective, as I see this epistle of Paul being one of a corrective nature overall, dealing with a variety of issues (e.g., from water baptism [1:1-17], to gross, sexual immorality [5:1-8], to improperly approaching

¹²⁷ Arndt and Gingrich, 338.

¹²⁸ Summers and Sawyer, 129-133.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 131-132.

communion [11:17-34], to name a few), I see here, in I Corinthians 12-14, corrective guidance being given with regard to the nature, significance, and exercise of the gifts and manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. Therefore, as a result of Paul's corrective guidance being given, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, I view ζῆλοῦτε (*zēloute*) in both instances as an imperative, enjoining the Corinthian believers to “put first things first,” if you will, with regard to the biblical focus, place, and use of the gifts and manifestations in the lives of believers in Jesus Christ.

However, with regard to “speaking in tongues” in particular, we first of all focus on 14:2, “For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men, but to God; for no one understands, but in *his* spirit he speaks mysteries.” This is a fascinating statement by Paul, that “speaking in tongues” is not something that is addressed “to men, but to God,” and that would include the Day of Pentecost when those assembled heard the 120 disciples “speaking of the mighty deeds of God” (Acts 2:11). Paul goes on to say in I Corinthians 14:2 “for no one understands, but in *his* spirit he speaks mysteries.” This too is a very interesting statement because in Acts 2:11 we also read that all of the people assembled in Jerusalem for Pentecost, who were from different linguistic backgrounds from all over the Middle East, declared concerning the disciples who were “speaking in tongues,” that in each person’s language represented there, “we hear them in our *own* tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God” (Acts 2:11). Thus, this is part of the reason that some believe the miracle at Pentecost was a “miracle of hearing” as much as a “miracle of speaking.” That is, the miraculous gift given the disciples of an “unknown language” whereby they were praising God, and the “miracle of hearing” whereby all of the assembled from different countries said, “we hear them in our *own* tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God” (Acts 2:11), meaning, according to those who believe this was equally a “miracle of hearing” that each person there heard the disciples as a whole (“we hear them in our *own* tongues”) speaking in their individual languages. Why is this belief even credible? The reason is that Paul states, “For one who speaks in a tongue **does not speak to men, but to God;** for **no one understands,** but **in *his* spirit he speaks mysteries.**” An amplified translation of this verse would be, “For one who is continually speaking in a tongue is continually not speaking to men, but to God; for continually not one person understands, but in the Spirit/spirit he continually speaks mysteries.” Now what is also interesting about this passage, is that some have said the inability to understand what is being said applies only to the one who is actually “speaking in tongues,” which means “he is the one who does not understand” what he is saying, but others, who perhaps speak the language he is speaking, can understand. The only problem with that approach is that the substantive in Greek used to translate the English term, “no one,” is οὐδείς (*oudeis*), and it is made up of two words: (1) οὐ (*ou*), which means “no and not”¹³⁰; (2) and εἷς (*eis*), which means “one.”¹³¹ The Greek letter δ (*d*) is merely a connective for these two words, whereby a consonant, δ (*d*), is between the two vowels, υ (*u*) and ε (*e*), making it phonetically more clearly pronounceable – οὐδείς (*oudeis*), versus οὐεἷς (*oueis*) – in

¹³⁰ Arndt and Gingrich, 594-595.

¹³¹ Ibid., 229-231.

separating the vowels υ (*u*) and ϵ (*e*) with the consonant, δ (*d*). Thus, when these two words are combined, οὐδείς (*oudeis*) means “no one and nobody.”¹³² That being said, therefore, it does not make for good or accurate exegesis to say that the οὐδείς (*oudeis*) in 14:2 is simply referring to the one speaking, but not to others, when in fact, οὐδείς (*oudeis*) clearly means “not anyone at all.” Now, can God and does God manifest a known language through a believer, who has no understanding what he or she is saying, to someone else who can understand the language? Quite simply put, God can and does do whatever He wishes, including giving someone a language that he or she does not understand, but someone else can, and I personally experienced that when I was pastoring in Louisiana. Another pastor and I were laying hands on a Christian lady as she was praying to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and as she was filled, she received the “gift of tongues,” and she began to speak in Hebrew saying, שְׁלוֹמַם עֲלֵיכֶם (šālôm ‘ălêkem), which is the modern Hebrew greeting for, “Peace upon you.” I almost fell over as I heard her speak because she was a cajun lady who had never heard me, or anyone else for that matter, use that phrase, and when I told her what she was saying, she began to weep with joy as she told me that was exactly what was flooding her soul – the peace of God! However, that was the only time that ever happened to me, and I believe it was for the distinct purpose for God to personally minister to that Christian lady. Now although שְׁלוֹמַם עֲלֵיכֶם (šālôm ‘ălêkem) grammatically is the second masculine plural, pronominal suffix in Hebrew, it has become the colloquial greeting in Modern Hebrew for “Peace to you” for any and everyone, including singular, female individuals. Thus, God supernaturally took a phrase used today, gave it to that woman, and ministered to her His great love and peace that she needed at that particular time. But as just stated for me personally, that is the only time that ever occurred with me, and thus, according to I Corinthians 14:2, it is indeed the exception, versus the rule.

In addition to the fact that typically, “no one understands” what the person “speaking in tongues is saying,” including the individual who is doing the speaking, he or she is speaking “to God,” and “in *his* spirit he speaks mysteries” (I Corinthians 14:2). What, therefore, by and through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, does Paul mean by “mysteries,” and why, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, would he use it? In Greek, the word for “mysteries” is μυστήρια (*mustēria*), and it comes from the root noun μυστήριον (*musterion*), which is a neuter noun, with μυστήρια (*mustēria*) being the accusative neuter plural of μυστήριον (*musterion*). The meaning of μυστήριον (*musterion*) is “a secret, secret rite, secret teaching, and mystery,”¹³³ and it occurs in the whole of the Bible and the Apocrypha fifty-one times: in the Old Testament, nine times in the book of Daniel alone; in the Apocrypha fourteen times; and in the New Testament, twenty-eight times. The following are the nine usages in the Book of Daniel in the LXX in three of the genders:

- (1) Daniel 2:17-19: “So Daniel went into his house, and made known the matter to Ananias, and Misael, and Azarias, his friends. And they sought mercies from the God of heaven

¹³² Ibid., 596.

¹³³ Ibid., 531-532.

concerning this mystery (**μυστηριον** – *mustēriou*); that Daniel and his friends might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. Then the mystery (**μυστήριον** – *musterion*) was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night; and Daniel blessed the God of heaven, and said, . . .”

- (2) Daniel 2:27-30: “And Daniel answered before the king, and said, the mystery (**μυστήριον** – *musterion*) which the king asks *the explanation of* is not *in the power* of the wise men, magicians, enchanters, *or* soothsayers to declare to the king. But there is a God in heaven revealing mysteries (**μυστήρια** – *mustēria*), and he has made known to king Nabuchodonosor what things must come to pass in the last days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are as follows, O king: thy thoughts upon thy bed arose *as to* what must come to pass hereafter: and he that reveals mysteries (**μυστήρια** – *mustēria*) has made known to thee what must come to pass. Moreover, this mystery (**μυστήριον** – *musterion*) has not been revealed to me by reason of wisdom which is in me beyond all *others* living, but for the sake of making known the interpretation to the king, that thou mightest know the thoughts of thine heart.”
- (3) Daniel 2:46-47: “Then king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and gave orders to offer to him gifts and incense. And the king answered and said to Daniel, of a truth your God is a God of gods, and Lord of kings, who reveals mysteries (**μυστήρια** – *mustēria*); for thou has been able to reveal this mystery (**μυστήριον** – *musterion*).”
- (4) Daniel 4:1-6: “I Nabuchodonosor was thriving in my house, and prospering. I saw a vision, and it terrified me, and I was troubled on my bed, and the visions of my head troubled me. And I made a decree to bring in before me all the wise men of Babylon, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. So the enchanters, magicians, soothsayers, *and* Chaldeans came in: and I told the dream before them; but they did not make known to me the interpretation thereof; until Daniel came, whose name is Belteshazzar, according to the name of my God, who has within him the Holy Spirit of God; to whom I said, O Belteshazzar, chief of the enchanters, of whom I know that the Holy Spirit of God is in thee, and no mystery (**μυστήριον** – *mustēriou*) is too hard for thee, hear the vision of my dream which I had, and tell me the interpretation of it.

In the above examples in Daniel, clearly the “mysteries” being referred to are “mysteries” that only God can reveal to someone, as Daniel makes it very clear that the revelation of these “mysteries” did not come by his natural “wisdom” (Daniel 2:30), but rather from God alone. Consequently, it would appear that what John MacArthur and his ilk refer to as “gibberish” is indeed, according to I Corinthians 14:2, a “language” that is spoken to God of “mysteries” to the natural mind and understanding. If on the other hand these were known languages (e.g., German, Spanish, modern Greek and Hebrew in my case of natural understanding), then by one’s natural “reason and wisdom” an understanding could be had as to what was said. Now that did happen to me one time as I related above with the lady in south Louisiana in the church I was

pastoring, but that has been the only time that I was EVER able to understand what was being said with my natural “reason and wisdom.”

As we now look in the New Testament in those passages that use the Greek word **μυστήριον** (*mustērion*), we will begin to see a consistent pattern of meaning:

- (1) Matthew 13:11-17: “And the disciples came and said to Him, ‘Why do You speak to them in parables?’ ¹¹ And He answered and said to them, ‘To you it has been granted to know the mysteries (**μυστήρια** – *mustēria*) of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. ¹² For whoever has, to him shall *more* be given, and he shall have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. ¹³ Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. ¹⁴ And in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, ‘You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; And you will keep on seeing, but will not perceive; ¹⁵ For the heart of this people has become dull, And with their ears they scarcely hear, And they have closed their eyes Lest they should see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart and return, And I should heal them.’ ¹⁶ But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. ¹⁷ For truly I say to you, that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see *it*; and to hear what you hear, and did not hear *it*’.”

Here in this passage, Jesus had just finished telling the parable of the “sower,” but He had not yet given them the explanation, and, therefore, He was telling them that the Eternal Truths that He was sharing with them are a “mystery” to the natural reasoning of man’s mind, but to those who are His children, the “mystery” will be made clear. Indeed, as believers in Jesus Christ, it is the Holy Spirit alone who reveals to us God’s Eternal Truths, NOT OUR GREAT LEARNING AND WISDOM! And as Jesus quotes Isaiah 6:9-10 (from the LXX), He makes it abundantly clear that apart from God drawing someone unto Himself and by the Holy Spirit, giving them understanding, man’s “eyes, ears, and heart” are completely closed to God’s Eternal Truths! Thus, even as born again believers in Jesus Christ whenever we might attempt to understand and explain God’s “mysteries” by our natural wisdom and learning, we will fail in clearly and simply presenting His Eternal Truth to others. But even in spite of us in such instances, God will cause His Word to “not return to Him empty” (Isaiah 55:6-13). On the other hand, as the Lord takes us through His breaking process, where our focus becomes more about Jesus and less about ourselves, then things that before were not clear, He makes clear in our lives.

- (2) Mark 4:10-12: “And as soon as He was alone, His followers, along with the twelve, *began* asking Him *about* the parables. ¹¹ And He was saying to them, ‘To you has been given the mystery (**μυστήριον** – *mustērion*) of the kingdom of God; but those who are outside get everything in parables, ¹² in order that while seeing, they may see and not perceive; and while hearing, they may hear and not understand lest they return and be forgiven’.”

This is the same situation as above in Matthew 13:7-11 where Jesus is presenting the parable of the “sower,” and the same truth is presented verses 11-12.

- (3) Luke 8:9-10: “And His disciples *began* questioning Him as to what this parable might be.¹⁰ And He said, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries (**μυστήρια** – *mustēria*) of the kingdom of God, but to the rest *it is* in parables, in order that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.”

This is a repeat of the above two passages concerning Jesus speaking about the parable of the “sower.”

- (4) Romans 11:25-32: “For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery (**μυστήριον** – *mustērion*), lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in;²⁶ and thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, ‘The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob.’²⁷ And this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins’.²⁸ From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of *God’s* choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers;²⁹ for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.³⁰ For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience,³¹ so these also now have been disobedient, in order that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy.³² For God has shut up all in disobedience that He might show mercy to all.”

In the above verses, Paul is explaining front about God’s plan for the Jewish race that He chose, and that the temporary hardening of their hearts toward the Gospel is all a part of God’s ultimate plan of redemption for the Jews. Thus, in verse 25, Paul is saying that this truth is indeed a “mystery” of God that cannot be comprehended by our natural wisdom and reasoning, but only by the illumination and understanding given by the Holy Spirit. However, he also makes it clear that by one attempting to “be wise in your own estimation,” one will completely miss God’s ultimate plan and purpose for the Jews. Indeed, we see that today with those professed evangelicals who are promoting and have adopted either Covenant Theology or Replacement Theology, in which Covenant Theology believes that the modern “nation of Israel has no place in God’s future plans,”¹³⁴ and Replacement Theology teaches “that the church has replaced, or superseded, Israel in God’s future plans.”¹³⁵ Thus, Paul is saying that contrary to the above two positions, God indeed has a plan for the Jews, and according to Ezekiel 37-39, it would be quite hard to believe that the formation of Zionism through Theodore Hertzl in the late 19th century and the rebirth of Israel in 1948 have no part in God’s unfolding of His Eternal Plan for Israel as outlined in Ezekiel 37-39. Therefore, this too is a “mystery” that God unfolds to His children through His Holy Spirit, versus the natural wisdom and learning of man.

- (5) Romans 16:25-27: “Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery (**μυστηρίου** –

¹³⁴ H. Wayne House, “The Future of National Israel,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 166:664 (October, 2009), 464.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

mustēriou) which has been kept secret for long ages past, ²⁶ but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, *leading* to obedience of faith; ²⁷ to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.”

In this passage, the “mystery” here is the Eternal Truth of God’s redemption of mankind through the Person of Jesus Christ.

- (6) I Corinthians 2:1-5: “And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony (**μυστήριον** – *mustērion*) of God. ² For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. ³ And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. ⁴ And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.”

The above passage has to be one of the most riveting statements made by Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, with regard to the “mysteries” of God and how they are comprehended and disseminated among men and women, as well as boys and girls – by the “power of the Holy Spirit,” versus the “wisdom of men.” Indeed, as Jesus stated in John 6:44, “No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him,” and He stated in John 16:8-11 that the “drawing” is accomplished by the Holy Spirit: “And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment; ⁹ concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; ¹⁰ and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you no longer behold Me; ¹¹ and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.” Thus, it is not by our great wisdom and learning that the “mysteries” of God are revealed to us, but rather as we become less and Jesus becomes more in our lives that we indeed truly come to a place of comprehending the Eternal Truths of God in Jesus Christ, and the following passage certainly affirms that reality:

For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And the cleverness of the clever I will set aside.” ²⁰ Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not *come to* know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. ²² For indeed Jews ask for signs, and Greeks search for wisdom; ²³ but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, ²⁴ but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. ²⁶ For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; ²⁷ but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, ²⁸ and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, ²⁹ that no man should boast before God. ³⁰ But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us

wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,³¹ that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord." (I Corinthians. 1:18-31)

What is fascinating about the above passage is the number of times the word “foolish” is used by Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to describe the things of God in the world’s eyes, and perhaps even in the eyes of some believers. Paul actually uses three words in the above passage that all mean “foolish”: (a) **μωρία** (*mōria*), which is a feminine noun, and it is used in verses 18, 21, and 23; (b) **μωρός** (*mōros*), which is an adjective, and it also means “stupid,” and it is used in verses 25 and 27; (c) and lastly is the Greek verb **μωραίνω** (*mōrainō*) used in verse 20. As I read the above passage, what strikes me is that the overriding emphasis is not on the pursuit of knowledge and learning in and of itself as the measure of intellectual stature and superiority over others, and which by some would also equate with godliness and spirituality. But rather, Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, focuses on the fact that such a pursuit of knowledge for the sake of personal glory, adulation, and narcissistic recognition by men is the absolute antithesis of God’s measure of genuine spiritual and intellectual growth that results in true spirituality and godliness: “but **God has chosen the foolish things of the world** to shame the wise, and **God has chosen the weak things of the world** to shame the things which are strong,²⁸ and **the base things of the world and the despised**, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are,²⁹ **that no man should boast before God.**³⁰ But **by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,**³¹ that, just as it is written, “**Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord**” (I Corinthians 1:27-31). On the other hand, Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, makes it quite clear that there is nothing spiritual, godly, or beneficial about being ignorant and uninformed as a pastor, teacher, and follower of Jesus Christ: “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth” (II Timothy 2:15). The English phrase “handling accurately” comes from the Greek verb **ὀρθοτομέω** (*orthotomeō*), and it is made up of two words: (a) **ὀρθός** (*orthos*), which is an adjective, and it means “straight up, upright, straight, in a straight line, correct, and true”;¹³⁶ (b) and **τέμνω** (*temnō*), which is a verb derived from Classical Greek, but not found at all in the NT or the LXX, but it does occur twice in the Apocrypha (4 Maccabees 9:17 & 19:19), and its basic meaning is “to cut or hew.”¹³⁷ Thus, when put together, **ὀρθοτομέω** (*orthotomeō*) means “to cut a path in a straight direction, or to cut a road across country (that is forested or otherwise difficult to pass through) in a straight direction.”¹³⁸ And in this particular instance, **ὀρθοτομέω** (*orthotomeō*) is used as a present active participle, emphasizing a continuous

¹³⁶ Arndt and Gingrich, 583-584.

¹³⁷ Liddell and Scott, *Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon, Abridged* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1976), 698.

¹³⁸ Arndt and Gingrich, 584.

and ongoing pursuit, and it is used in conjunction with the main verb, which in this case, is an aorist imperative – “be diligent” – along with an aorist infinitive – “to present” – and in this construction, I see these as both as constative aorists, which looks at the whole of an action, regardless of the time, as a single unit.¹³⁹ Therefore, what Paul is saying is that our lives as a whole as pastors and teachers in particular should be characterized by a “continuous pursuit of the Eternal Truth of God’s Word as we metaphorically cut through His Word, and all of its related and pertinent studies, as one cutting through a dense forest.” That includes both formal (all the way to a PhD as there are many godly, broken men who reflect the person of Jesus Christ in their scholarship, versus their own, narcissistic self-promotion), as well as informal education that is equal to a legitimate, solid PhD pursuit (e.g., Charles Spurgeon who was every bit the scholar in his day of anyone who taught at Oxford or Cambridge), and whichever path one takes (which in truth might be a combination of both) his or her work needs to be done “heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men;²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve” (Colossians 3:23-24).

Now a very legitimate question may be raised as to how do the above references with regard to our motivation for learning and being equipped to share the Gospel have anything to do with the issue we are discussing concerning the continuation or cessation of the “gift of tongues” in particular? The answer is that from the time of MacArthur’s first book on the cessation of the “gift of tongues,” which was *The Charismatics* published in 1978, to *Strange Fire: The Danger of Offending the Holy Spirit with Counterfeit Worship* published in 2013, his objective, scholarly approach toward a discussion about the present day ministry of the “Gifts of the Holy Spirit” leaves a great deal to be desired, and that is being very complimentary. And after reading the other participant speakers at his “Strange Fire Conference” at his church from October 16 – 20, 2013, the same can also be said of them. Now that is not to say that the men who spoke were purposefully in a knowing fashion skewing the facts of this issue in a deceitful way (as we see Barack Obama doing politically, calling “good evil, and evil good”), but it is to say that their unbiased and objective scholarship is seriously lacking, and as a result of that, their views and opinions are quite skewed. Therefore, for those of us who are continuationists, we must take into account the whole of Scripture, language studies, history, historical theology, and the practical manifestations of Pentecostalism over the past 100 years around the world as we approach this study in the same way we would approach any and all other controversial, theological subjects facing the Body of Christ today.

- (7) I Corinthians 2:6-16: “Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away;⁷ but we speak God’s wisdom in a mystery (μυστηρίῳ – *mustēriō*), the hidden *wisdom*, which God predestined before the ages to our glory;⁸ *the wisdom* which none of the rulers of this age

¹³⁹ A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1934), 831-834, 891-892, 1115-1116.

has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; ⁹ but just as it is written, ‘Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, And *which* have not entered the heart of man, All that God has prepared for those who love Him.’ ¹⁰ For to us God revealed *them* through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. ¹¹ For who among men knows the *thoughts* of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the *thoughts* of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. ¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, ¹³ which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*. ¹⁴ But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. ¹⁵ But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man. ¹⁶ For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.”

Once again, this is a continuation of I Corinthians 2:1-5, which we just went over, and these 11 verses above are a restatement of what Paul just said with an added emphasis that apart from the Spirit of God giving a human being spiritual illumination, NO MAN can even begin to comprehend the “mystery” of God.

- (8) I Corinthians 4:1-5: “Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries (**μυστηρίων** – *mustērion*) of God. ² In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy. ³ But to me it is a very small thing that I should be examined by you, or by *any* human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself. ⁴ For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord. ⁵ Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, *but wait* until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of *men's* hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.”

What a powerful statement Paul makes here, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that we are “stewards of the mysteries of God,” and as such, as we go before “the judgment seat of Christ” (II Corinthians 5:10), the Lord “will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of *men's* hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.” This is a reiteration of I Corinthians 3:11-15:

For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³ each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is *to be* revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. ¹⁴ If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. ¹⁵ If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire. (I Corinthians 3:11-15)

Thus, as we who are believers are “stewards of the mysteries,” and especially those of us who are pastors and teachers, the disclosure of “the motives of *men's* hearts should put the

“fear of God” in all of us, as that will be a time of the Ultimate Truth for every believer, and once again, especially for those of us who are pastors and teachers. Consequently, we should take quite seriously Paul’s admonition in II Corinthians 10:3-5: “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, ⁴ for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. ⁵ *We are* destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and *we are **taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,***” which means we need to constantly examine our motives – are they about us being seen or Jesus being seen, and that is the all important question. In the following two passage, Jesus speaks expressly about our motives and those which God blesses, versus those which doesn’t even recognize:

Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. ² "When therefore you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. ³ "But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing ⁴ that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you. (Matthew 6:1-4)

Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, ² saying, "The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; ³ therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say *things*, and do not do *them*. ⁴ "And they tie up heavy loads, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves are unwilling to move them with *so much as* a finger. ⁵ "But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries, and lengthen the tassels *of their garments*. ⁶ "And they love the place of honor at banquets, and the chief seats in the synagogues, ⁷ and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called by men, Rabbi. ⁸ "But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. ⁹ "And do not call *anyone* on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. ¹⁰ "And do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, *that is*, Christ. ¹¹ "But the greatest among you shall be your servant. ¹² "And whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted. (Matthew 23:1-12)

- (9) I Corinthians 13:1-3: “If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² And if I have *the gift of* prophecy, and know all mysteries (**μυστήρια** – *mustēria*) and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ And if I give all my possessions to feed *the poor*, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.”

Clearly in this passage Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is saying that regardless of the spiritual gifts and knowledge of “all mysteries” one may have in his or her life, along with the actions of love and sacrifice being demonstrated to others, none of those things can surpass the “love of God” ruling and operating in one’s life, without which,

everything else “profits me nothing.” What an incredible truth of what truly is the measure of true spirituality in the eyes of God!

- (10) I Corinthians 14:1-5: “Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual *gifts*, but especially that you may prophesy. ² For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men, but to God; for no one understands, but in *his* spirit he speaks mysteries (**μυστήρια** – *mustēria*). ³ But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. ⁴ One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church. ⁵ Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but *even* more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying.”

This is the passage from which we began our pursuit of what the word “mysteries” actually means in its context. We will return to this passage at the end of the analysis of this delineated list of New Testament passages that contain (**μυστήριον** – *mustērion*).

- (11) I Corinthians 15:50-57: “Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery (**μυστήριον** – *mustērion*); we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “Death is swallowed up in victory. ⁵⁵ ‘O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?’ ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; ⁵⁷ but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Here, Paul is speaking about the “mystery” of the “change” (**ἀλλάσσω** – *allassō*) that will occur for every believer in Christ in the resurrection, and without any question, this is a divine “mystery” that we will never fully comprehend on this side of heaven. Thus, there are things clearly presented in the Scripture that remain a “mystery” to our understanding even though we are presently reading these truths, which means that the “mysteries” associated with “speaking in tongues” mentioned in I Corinthians 14:2 are those things communicated in the “tongues” one is speaking, but which the person who is “speaking in tongues” has no natural understanding what is actually being said.

- (12) Ephesians 1:3-14: “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, ⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love ⁵ He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, ⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷ In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, ⁸ which He lavished upon us. In all wisdom and insight ⁹ He made known to us the mystery (**μυστήριον** –

mustērion) of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him ¹⁰ with a view to an administration suitable to the fulness of the times, *that is*, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth. In Him ¹¹ also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, ¹² to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. ¹³ In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God's own* possession, to the praise of His glory.”

In Ephesians 1:9, the “mystery” Paul is referring to is the “redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us.” Indeed, this “mystery” of God’s love poured out upon us who are corrupt to the very core of our being, and THERE IS NOT ONE THING WE CAN DO TO EARN SUCH LOVE AND FORGIVENESS is a “mystery” beyond “mysteries,” but yet to those of us who have received this forgiveness and grace, we readily embrace it through His grace and rejoice in His unspeakable love for us!

- (13) Ephesians 3:1-13: “For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles-- ² if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you; ³ that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery (*μυστήριον – mustērion*), as I wrote before in brief. ⁴ And by referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery (*μυστηρίῳ – mustēriō*) of Christ, ⁵ which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; ⁶ *to be specific*, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, ⁷ of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power. ⁸ To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, ⁹ and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery (*μυστηρίου – mustēriou*) which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things; ¹⁰ in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly *places*. ¹¹ *This was* in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹² in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him. ¹³ Therefore I ask you not to lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf, for they are your glory.”

As Paul makes clear in verse 6, the “mystery” he is referring to is “, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power.” One aspect of this “mystery” being made known to the Jews, and subsequently to the Gentiles, was the revelation given to Peter in Acts 10, in which God was calling Peter to go and share the

Gospel with the Gentile Cornelius and his household, and Peter did, and Cornelius and his household were saved (Acts 10:1-48).

- (14) Ephesians 5:25-33: “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; ²⁶ that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless. ²⁸ So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; ²⁹ for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church, ³⁰ because we are members of His body. ³¹ For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. ³² This mystery (**μυστήριον** – *mustērion*) is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. ³³ Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and *let* the wife *see to it* that she respect her husband.”

The “mystery” of “Christ and the church” in relation to the husband and wife relationship of believers is indeed a “mystery,” but that “mystery” is absolutely foundational to the proper functioning of a husband and wife relationship that God established in the Garden of Eve, but it has been tragically distorted through man’s fall and subsequent inherited narcissistic depravity. However, it is only as a man and woman submit to the Lordship of Jesus that they can even begin to have a relationship that Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, delineates in Ephesians 5:25-27.

- (15) Ephesians 6:18-20: “With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, ¹⁹ and *pray* on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery (**μυστήριον** – *mustērion*) of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in *proclaiming* it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”

In this passage, Paul is obviously asking for prayer that he will be enabled, supernaturally by the Holy Spirit, “to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel,” which indeed is a “mystery” to the natural mind that can only conceive of a “works based salvation,” versus a “grace based salvation,” because “the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God” (II Corinthians 4:4). Thus, Paul is fully cognizant that it is not by his “persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power” (I Corinthians 2:4) that the Gospel will penetrate the hardness and darkness of men’s and women’s minds in order that they might surrender to the “drawing” of God to Jesus and repent, believe, and be born again (John 6:44; 16:8-11; 3:1-8, 16-21).

- (16) Colossians 1:24-29: “Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body (which is the church) in filling up that which is lacking in Christ's afflictions. ²⁵ Of *this church* I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, that I might fully carry out the *preaching* of the

word of God, ²⁶ *that is*, the mystery (**μυστήριον** – *mustērion*) which has been hidden from the *past* ages and generations; but has now been manifested to His saints, ²⁷ to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery (**μυστηρίου** – *mustēriou*) among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ²⁸ And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ. ²⁹ And for this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.”

Here too, Paul is once again identifying the “mystery” that God has called him to proclaim, which is, “Christ in you, the hope of glory,” and which, as just stated above in connection with Ephesians 6:18-20, can only be communicated by the “power of the Holy Spirit,” versus through the “words of wisdom” of man’s natural, corrupt, and depraved intellect. Therefore, this mystery is ALWAYS integrally linked to the “power of the Holy Spirit” conveying this message to the darkened, corrupt, and depraved heart and mind of man.

- (17) Colossians 2:1-5: “For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf, and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face, ² that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and *attaining* to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, *resulting* in a true knowledge of God’s mystery (**μυστηρίου** – *mustēriou*), *that is*, Christ *Himself*, ³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. ⁴ I say this in order that no one may delude you with persuasive argument. ⁵ For even though I am absent in body, nevertheless I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Christ.”

The “mystery of God” is “Christ *Himself*, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,” and without any question, this is utterly nonsensical and “foolishness” to the natural mind, which is fully set on its own self-deification that has been inherited from the Fall of Man onward (Genesis 3:1-8). Consequently, the “mystery of God” is continually being presented as being about Jesus and all that He is in reality, but this reality is only made real at this time to those who become “His children” through the rebirth of the Holy Spirit (John 3:1-8, 16-21). When I say at this time, I am referring to the present time of world history before the coming again of Jesus, and when that happens, then “every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:10-11).

- (18) Colossians 4:2-4: “Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with *an attitude of* thanksgiving; ³ praying at the same time for us as well, that God may open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery (**μυστήριον** – *mustērion*) of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; ⁴ in order that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.”

Here again, as in Ephesians 6:18-20, Paul is fully aware that the preaching, teaching, and overall communication of the Gospel of Jesus, which is indeed “the mystery of Christ,” can only be communicated to the darkened, corrupt, and depraved heart of the natural man by the power of the Holy Spirit, not through man’s “wisdom of words.” And thus, he is beseeching the Colossian believers “to continue to persist (present imperative of **προσκαρτερέω** – *proskarterō*) in prayer” in order that “God may open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, . . . in order that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.” The “mystery” that Paul is consistently referring to throughout his epistles, is “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27), and so too here.

- (19) II Thessalonians 2:1-12: “Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him,² that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.³ Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,⁴ who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.⁵ Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?⁶ And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he may be revealed.⁷ For the mystery (**μυστήριον** – *mustērion*) of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains *will do so* until he is taken out of the way.⁸ And then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;⁹ *that is*, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,¹⁰ and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.¹¹ And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false,¹² in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.”

This use of “mystery” is specifically relating to “lawlessness,” which in Greek is **ἀνομία** (*anomia*), which literally means “a frame of mind opposite the ‘righteousness’ of God, thus, those who in essence despise the Law of God.”¹⁴⁰ Therefore, when we look through the Scripture to see examples of this “lawlessness,” one of the places is Psalm 14:1-3, which Paul quotes in Romans 3:9-18 from the LXX. However, this passage in the Masoretic Text reads as follows:

The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; there is no one who does good.² The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God.³ They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one. (Psalm 14:1-3)

¹⁴⁰ Arndt and Gingrich, 71.

Perhaps the most fascinating thing about the above passage is the word for “no” in the Hebrew that is used, which is אֵין (*’ayin*), and it is the most emphatic, negative, particle in biblical Hebrew, meaning “non-existence.”¹⁴¹ Thus, as the “fool” says that God “does not exist,” God in turn responds by saying “there does not exist anyone who does good, there does not exist even one.” However, the absolute and unequivocal depravity of man goes back much further to after the Fall of Man in Genesis 6:5: “Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” The word for “intent” in Hebrew is יָצַר (*yēšer*), and it means “form, framing, and purpose, as a potter forms pottery; what is framed in the mind, as imagination, device, purpose; and it is common in the sense of impulse.”¹⁴² That is, even before we are even cognizant of our thoughts, their formation is “evil” from their very inception. It is as if you are putting in a patio in your back yard, and you clear the grass, level the ground off, put stakes in the ground with string attached to them for the outline form of your patio, and then you hammer in the wooden forms up to which the concrete will flow and stop, thus constituting the form and outline of your patio. But before you even begin to mix the concrete for the actual substance of your patio, you put in the “wooden forms,” and that is the concept here with יָצַר (*yēšer*), that before the cognizant understanding of our thoughts, their inceptive formation is “continually evil.” This certainly is in line with Isaiah 64:6: “For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; and all of us wither like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.” The Hebrew words for “filthy garment” are עֲרִימַת בִּגְדוֹ (*begged idîm*), and it literally means “cloth of menstruations,” which for a woman, second only to leprosy, was considered the apex of uncleanness in her life (Leviticus 15:19-24). Therefore, the “mystery of lawlessness” has to do with the total corrupt and depraved nature of mankind, which, apart from God’s intervening grace and mercy, leads man to his own self-destruction, as well as that of others (Psalm 14:1-3; Jeremiah 17:9), and here in II Thessalonians 2:1-12, we see this displayed in man’s attempt to deify himself, which is the temptation Satan confronted Eve with in the Garden: “For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:5). From this attempt at self-deification by the Antichrist, evil will manifest itself on this earth as never before, ushering in the Great Tribulation: “And then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; ⁹ that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, ¹⁰ and with

¹⁴¹ Francis Brown, 34-35.

¹⁴² Ibid., 428.

all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.¹¹ And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false,¹² in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness” (II Thessalonians 2:8-12).

- (20) I Timothy 3:8-16: “Deacons likewise *must be* men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain,⁹ *but* holding to the mystery (**μυστήριον** – *mustērion*) of the faith with a clear conscience.¹⁰ And let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach.¹¹ Women *must* likewise *be* dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things.¹² Let deacons be husbands of *only* one wife, *and* good managers of *their* children and their own households.¹³ For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.¹⁴ I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long;¹⁵ but in case I am delayed, *I write* so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.¹⁶ And by common confession great is the mystery (**μυστήριον** – *mustērion*) of godliness: He/God (textual variants have both, but the textual evidence tends to support more assuredly the “He” as being from Paul’s original hand – *my note*) who was revealed in the flesh, was vindicated in the Spirit, beheld by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.”

There are two usages of “mystery in this passage: the first has to do with “deacons” and their responsibility of “holding to the mystery (**μυστήριον** – *mustērion*) of the faith with a clear conscience.” Here again, this “mystery of the faith” used in this context has most certainly to do with the deity of Jesus, made manifest in the flesh, and His dwelling in born again believers – “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27). Thus, this amazing and liberating truth needs to first of all be a “reality” with a man who is being considered to be a deacon, and secondly, his lifestyle should give evidence of that belief being manifest in all venues of his life (verses 8-12).

The second usage of “mystery” has to do with the deity of Jesus Christ, and as noted in the text above, the alternative reading in the KJV and NKJV have “God,” whereas other versions have “He.” Without getting into an in depth analysis of the textual variants, it would appear that the original writing from Paul’s hand was “He,” which as you read the remainder of the verse, is clearly and unequivocally referring to “God.” Thus, this incredible and wonderful “mystery,” beyond all human expectation and explanation, is that “God in Jesus was revealed in the flesh, was vindicated in the Spirit, beheld by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.” Thus, the deity of Jesus, without any question, is the incredible greatness of God’s plan of redemption for all mankind who believe in Him and receive Him as Lord and Savior:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.² He was in the beginning with God.³ All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.⁴ In Him was life, and the life

was the light of men. ⁵ And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. ⁶ There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came for a witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸ He was not the light, but *came* that he might bear witness of the light. ⁹ There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. ¹¹ He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. ¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, ¹³ who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:1-13)

- (21) Revelation 1:17-20: “And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as a dead man. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, ‘Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, ¹⁸ and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. ¹⁹ Write therefore the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall take place after these things. ²⁰ As for the mystery (**μυστήριον** – *mustērion*) of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches’.”

In the above passage, the word “mystery” is clearly referring to Jesus’ explanation to John about “the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands.” Thus, “mystery” in this context is once again an Eternal Truth that God is revealing to a human being, who in this instance is John the Apostle on the Isle of Patmos.

- (22) Revelation 10:1-7: “And I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire; ² and he had in his hand a little book which was open. And he placed his right foot on the sea and his left on the land; ³ and he cried out with a loud voice, as when a lion roars; and when he had cried out, the seven peals of thunder uttered their voices. ⁴ And when the seven peals of thunder had spoken, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying, ‘Seal up the things which the seven peals of thunder have spoken, and do not write them.’ ⁵ And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his right hand to heaven, ⁶ and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things in it, and the earth and the things in it, and the sea and the things in it, that there shall be delay no longer, ⁷ but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then the mystery (**μυστήριον** – *mustērion*) of God is finished, as He preached to His servants the prophets.”

The phrase, “the mystery of God is finished” has numerous interpretations, but I really like what Leon Morris says because it is inclusive of the whole of verse 7, which nits together both the Old Testament prophets, as well as the fulfillment of God’s promises of salvation through Jesus Christ, and I am also going to reference his quote from Revelation 1:20, which he makes mention of in the quote below:

For *mystery* see on 1:20. The word is not uncommon in the New Testament and the very expression we have here occurs elsewhere (1 Cor. 2:1 [see mg.]; Col. 2:2; the plural without the article in 1 Cor. 4:1; cf. Eph. 1:9). Moffatt translates it here ‘the secret purpose of God’. The word is usually associated with the gospel and this may be in mind when John uses the verb *euēngelisen* (*announced*), which usually means ‘preach the gospel’. There is that about the gospel which unassisted reason would never attain. Left to ourselves we would never have worked out that God would save men in this way. It has to be revealed.

The good news was proclaimed to *his servants the prophets* (cf. Amos 3:7). We should probably understand *prophets* here to mean the New Testament prophets as well as the great prophets of the Old Testament. God has one purpose through the ages and it comes to its climax at this point. From the very beginning he has planned to bring his people to salvation, and thus his whole purpose is coming to its culmination. It involves the judgment of evil, but also the deliverance and vindication of his people. John’s readers are to reflect that the mighty world forces of which they were so conscious, far from being triumphant, are about to be overthrown decisively. A purpose that God has planned before the world and has matured throughout all ages will not lightly be abandoned. *The mystery of God* will indeed be accomplished.¹⁴³

Mystery does not mean what is ‘mysterious’ in our sense of the term, but something that people could never work out for themselves but which has now been made known by God (see the notes on 1 Cor. 2:7; 2 Thess. 2:7, TNTC). It is often used of the content of the gospel message. Here it means that Christ makes known the meaning of certain symbols which we could not have guessed.¹⁴⁴

- (23) Revelation 17:1-7: “And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, ‘Come here, I shall show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters,² with whom the kings of the earth committed *acts of* immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality.’³ And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns.⁴ And the woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality,⁵ and upon her forehead a name *was* written, a mystery (**μυστήριον** – *mustērion*), ‘BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.’⁶ And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. And when I saw her, I wondered greatly.⁷ And the angel said to me, ‘Why do you wonder? I shall tell you the mystery (**μυστήριον** – *mustērion*) of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns.’”

The use of “mystery” in the above passage is connected directly to the name of the “harlot,” as well as to “the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which

¹⁴³ Leon Morris, *Revelation: Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, Vol. 20* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1987), 138.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 60.

has seven heads and ten horns. Once again, Leon Morris has an excellent, exegetical analysis of the use of these two words in the above context:

Mystery (see note on 1:20) will indicate that the meaning of the harlot's name is not open and obvious to all. It is a subject for revelation, and indeed the angel proceeds to reveal it (v. 7). NIV takes *mystery* to be part of the name, but this is very improbable. It is a way of bringing out the significance of what follows. Moffatt renders by way of symbol', NEB 'with a secret meaning' and JB 'a cryptic name'. Such translations bring out the point that the name has meaning, but obscure the fact that its significance is not discerned other than by revelation. The angel makes it known to John and John to believers. But the worldly would not know it at all.¹⁴⁵

The angel inquired why John had wondered and proceeded to explain *the mystery* (for this term see note on 1:20) *of the woman and of the beast she rides*. There is but one *mystery* for these two. They belong intimately together and to know the one is to know the other. The beast is again characterized by his heads and horns (see notes on 12:3; 13:1).¹⁴⁶

Thus, in the above two usages of "mystery," what we see once again is the fact that it is only by "revelation" from God that these critically important aspects related to the Return of Christ can be understood, perceived, and properly acted upon.

Therefore, having gone over all of the uses of **μυστήριον** (*mysterion*) in the Old and New Testaments, we see that in essence, its usage is for the purpose of describing something that can only be made known to human beings by way of divine revelation. Consequently, as we go back to I Corinthians 14:2, it would seem that what Paul is describing in the context of that passage is a communication with God that in the words that are being spoken, unknown and unintelligible to the one speaking, are contained "mysteries" that indeed edify the individual speaker as they transcend his or her natural understanding: "For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men, but to God; for **no one** (οὐδείς – oudeis [i.e., "not one person," including the one doing the speaking – *my note*]) understands, but in *his* spirit he speaks mysteries.³ But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation.⁴ One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church" (I Corinthians 14:2-4). The following is an outstanding analysis of this passage by Gordon Fee:

This argument may best be analyzed in light of its structure. With two balanced pairs (vv. 2–3) Paul first contrasts tongues and prophecy as to who is addressed (in bold) and therefore as to their basic purpose (in italics); the second pair (v. 4) then interprets the first pair in terms of who is being edified. Thus:

For

a) The one who speaks in tongues speaks *not* to people,

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 198.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 199-200.

but to God

Indeed, no one understands him;
he speaks *mysteries* by the Spirit.

On the other hand,

b) The one who prophesies speaks **to people**,
edification,
encouragement,
comfort.

a) The one who speaks in tongues edifies himself;
on the other hand,

b) The one who prophesies edifies the church

Paul's emphasis—and concern—is unmistakable, the edification of the church. The one activity, tongues, edifies the speaker but not the church because it is addressed to God and “no one understands him.” The other activity, prophecy, edifies the church because it is addressed to people and speaks “edification, encouragement and comfort” to them.

Although trying to cool their ardor for congregational tongues-speaking, Paul does not disparage the gift itself; rather, he seeks to put it in its rightful place. Positively, he says three things about speaking in tongues,¹⁹ which are best understood in light of the further discussion on prayer and praise in vv. 13–17: (1) Such a person is “speaking to God,” that is, he or she is communing with God by the Spirit. Although it is quite common in Pentecostal groups to refer to a “message in tongues,” there seems to be no evidence in Paul for such terminology. The tongues-speaker is not addressing fellow believers but God (cf. vv. 13–14, 28), meaning therefore that Paul understands the phenomenon basically to be prayer and praise.

(2) The content of such utterances is “mysteries” spoken “by the Spirit.” It is possible that “mysteries” means something similar to its usage in 13:2; more likely it carries here the sense of that which lies outside the understanding, both for the speaker and the hearer. After all, “mysteries” in 13:2 refers to the ways of God that are being revealed by the Spirit to his people; such “mysteries” would scarcely need to be spoken back to God.

(3) Such speech by the Spirit is further described in v. 4 as edifying to the speaker. This has sometimes been called “self-edification” and therefore viewed as pejorative. But Paul intended no such thing. The edifying of oneself is not self-centeredness, but the personal edifying of the believer that comes through private prayer and praise. Although one may wonder how “mysteries” that are not understood even by the speaker can edify, the answer lies in vv. 14–15. Contrary to the opinion of many, spiritual edification can take place in ways other than through the cortex of the brain. Paul believed in an immediate communing with God by means of the S/spirit²⁶ that sometimes bypassed the mind; and in vv. 14–15 he argues that for his own edification he will have both. But *in church* he will have only what can also communicate to other believers through their minds.¹⁴⁷

One very significant aspect of Fee's exegetical analysis is that in verse 2, and the following, therefore, is an amplified translation of verse 2 based on his interpretive analysis: “For one who is speaking in a tongue/tongues is not speaking to men/people, but to God; for there is not one person who is understanding with his natural mind, but in/by/through/with the Spirit he is

¹⁴⁷ Fee, 655-657.

continually speaking mysteries.” Thus, Fee, as do I, interprets *πνεύματι δὲ λαλεῖ μυστήρια* (*pneumati de lalei mustēria*) as referring to the “Holy Spirit,” versus the “human spirit,” as is found translated in many versions, including the NAS which I use, as well as in many commentaries. The word “Spirit” in the Greek in this verse is *πνεύματι* (*pneumati*), and in this context it is clearly in the instrumental case: “The instrumental also uses the same form as the dative and expresses *means* or *instrument*, as the name implies. ὁ ἀπόστολος διδάσκει νόμοις (The apostle teaches *with laws*).”¹⁴⁸ Thus, in the above amplified translation, “in/by/through/with” are used to express the “means and agency” by which the believer is “speaking/praying in tongues.” On the other hand, the believer who is “speaking/praying in a tongue” is indeed praying in and through “his human spirit,” but it is the Holy Spirit who is giving the “words” being spoken, which words fully transcend his human understanding and cognition. I use the word “praying” because Paul also uses it to express in what way and how this particular “gift” operates in a believer’s life:

Therefore let one who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret.¹⁴ For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful.¹⁵ What is *the outcome* then? I shall pray with the spirit and I shall pray with the mind also; I shall sing with the spirit and I shall sing with the mind also.¹⁶ Otherwise if you bless in the spirit *only*, how will the one who fills the place of the ungifted say the “Amen” at your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying?¹⁷ For you are giving thanks well enough, but the other man is not edified.¹⁸ I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all;¹⁹ however, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind, that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue. (I Corinthians 14:13-19)

Paul expressly states, referring to himself, “For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful.” Thus, “praying in a tongue/tongues” is a completely, unequivocal, legitimate term to use as to the function of “tongues” in a believer’s life. But here Paul clearly states that when he is “praying in a tongue, his spirit prays, but his mind is unfruitful,” meaning that the Holy Spirit in and through him is praying in and through “his spirit,” but he doesn’t understand anything being said in his natural mind and reasoning. However, he doesn’t limit this gift to “praying,” but he also says he “sings with/by/through/in the spirit/Spirit,” but in both instances, he says that he “prays and sings with his mind also” in order that he “may instruct others” for their edification (vss. 15-19), that is, with his natural reasoning and understanding. Here too, Fee gives an excellent analysis of this passage:

Paul now elaborates the principle set forth in v. 14, with an eye toward turning it into application in vv. 16–17. In light of the simple reality stated in v. 14, he asks rhetorically, “So what shall I do?” His answer is that he will do both. On the one hand, “I will pray with my S/spirit²¹,” meaning, as vv. 14 and 19 make certain, “I will pray in tongues.” Although this is obviously not Paul’s present concern, it joins with v. 18 in suggesting that such was his regular practice and that he was edified thereby even if his mind did not enter into such praying. On the other hand, the combination “but also”²⁴ indicates that the

¹⁴⁸ Summers and Sawyer, 17.

emphasis lies here, “I will *also* pray with my understanding,” meaning “I will also pray and praise in Greek for the sake of others.”

Although it is not explicitly stated here, this contrast between praying and singing with my S/spirit and my mind ultimately aims at relegating the former to the setting of private praying, while only the latter is to be exercised in the assembly. This is implied both in vv. 16–17, where he allows that the tongues-speaker is praising God all right, but to no one else’s benefit, and especially in v. 19, where this distinction is made explicitly.

To “praying” Paul adds “singing with the S/spirit” and “with the understanding.” Singing was a common part of worship in Judaism and was carried over as an integral part of early Christian worship as well, as v. 26 and Col. 3:16//Eph. 5:19 illustrate. The evidence from Colossians and Ephesians suggests that some of the singing was corporate; the language of these passages²⁸ further indicates that besides being addressed as praise to God, such hymns served as vehicles of instruction in the gathered community. Furthermore, both passages, as well as this one, indicate that some of the singing might best be called “a kind of charismatic hymnody,” in which spontaneous hymns of praise were offered to God in the congregation, although some may have been known beforehand. The present passage, as well as v. 26, indicates that some of this kind of singing was “solo.” This text also adds a dimension to our understanding of “speaking in tongues.” Not only did one *pray* in this way, but one also *praised* God in song in this way. Hence the verbs in vv. 16–17 that pick up this theme are “bless” and “give thanks.”¹⁴⁹

One other important aspect of I Corinthians 14 is the fact that nowhere in this chapter does Paul every question the validity of their “gift of tongues” as being from God, and the only time any question is brought up about the validity of the “gifts” is in his statement in I Corinthians 12:2-3: “You know that when you were pagans, *you were* led astray to the dumb idols, however you were led. ³ Therefore I make known to you, that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus is accursed”; and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.” We have already discussed these two verses and what they mean on pages 67-71, but what is significant through the remainder of chapters 12-14 is that there never is a question about the validity of “gifts of the Spirit” that he is discussing with the Corinthians as to whether or not they are from God – from these three chapters, we may draw the clear conclusion that Paul sees them as being a genuine expression of the Holy Spirit in the Corinthian Church. However, without any question, what Paul does bring up is the exercise of the “gifts of the Holy Spirit” in the assembly of the church, and how some of those in Corinth are misusing in particular the “gift of tongues” in the open assembly.

Therefore, as we go back and look at I Corinthians 14:4-12, we see Paul’s emphasis of focusing on ministry to others through the “gift of tongues” as a goal in our lives, versus a narcissistic and self-centered view of the exercise of that particular gift:

One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church. ⁵ Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but *even* more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying. ⁶ But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in

¹⁴⁹ Fee, 670-671.

tongues, what shall I profit you, unless I speak to you either by way of revelation or of knowledge or of prophecy or of teaching?⁷ Yet *even* lifeless things, either flute or harp, in producing a sound, if they do not produce a distinction in the tones, how will it be known what is played on the flute or on the harp?⁸ For if the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle?⁹ So also you, unless you utter by the tongue speech that is clear, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air.¹⁰ There are, perhaps, a great many kinds of languages in the world, and no *kind* is without meaning.¹¹ If then I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be to the one who speaks a barbarian, and the one who speaks will be a barbarian to me.¹² So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual *gifts*, seek to abound for the edification of the church. (I Corinthians 14:4-12)

Verse 4 cannot be understated as to the personal, spiritual blessing that is derived through the “gift of tongues” being exercised in a believer’s life in their personal prayer and devotional life, as I personally have experienced that in my life for forty-seven years. However, that “personal edification” is not a self-centered, narcissistic focus, but rather an expression of the same “personal edification” one receives from “praying with the mind” and “abiding in God’s Word” through personal Bible study and devotional reading. On the other hand, my wife and I have experienced verse 6 in our lives in counseling situations where individuals or couples have come to us with incredibly difficult and convoluted situations, about which we had no idea what to tell them. However, as one of us would be talking with the couple or individual, the other one of us would be quietly, to himself or herself, be praying in tongues about the situation, and consistently God would give us His Word and Counsel for them that fully transcended anything we would have come up with using our natural reason. Thus, as we prayed in tongues about the situation, God would in turn give us His wisdom as to what to share with the individual or couple in English, which is what verse 6 is talking about, “But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, what shall I profit you, unless I speak to you either by way of revelation or of knowledge or of prophecy or of teaching?”

However, when we first started out in pastoring in South Louisiana, we were invited to an Assembly of God Church, as the pastor lived a few houses down from us, and we were friends. Up to that point, we had never been in a Pentecostal Church, and so we were casually sitting somewhere in the middle of the sanctuary. The pastor came to the pulpit and asked everyone to join in prayer about a particular matter, and at that point, almost everyone in the church stood up and began praying out loud in tongues with arms raised and waving. My wife and I were utterly shocked, as we had never seen that occur, but from that experience (and one other one like it in another Pentecostal Church, where people actually got up and began falling over chairs and running around inside and outside the church while praying in tongues out loud) we then could readily understand what Paul was writing about in I Corinthians 14 with regard to church order concerning the use of tongues in a public setting. Thus, for Janie and me, we saw the reality of Paul’s anointed wisdom and guidance, inspired by the Holy Spirit, as he wrote the following:

If therefore the whole church should assemble together and all speak in tongues, and ungifted men or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad?²⁴ But if all

prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all;²⁵ the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you.²⁶ What is *the outcome* then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. **Let all things be done for edification.**²⁷ If anyone speaks in a tongue, *it should be* by two or at the most three, and *each* in turn, and let one interpret;²⁸ but if there is no interpreter, **let him keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God.**²⁹ And let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment.³⁰ But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, let the first keep silent.³¹ For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted;³² and **the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets; for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.** (I Corinthians 14:23-33)

The above passage makes it clear that when one is “praying/singing in tongues,” it is not some ecstatic speech as many describe it, but rather it is the Holy Spirit, praying or singing through a believer’s human spirit, in words they do not know or recognize with their human reasoning, but as they do it, they are indeed being edified by the Holy Spirit within their inner man. On the other hand, the believer who has this gift is totally in control of when to or not to speak, as verse 32 above clearly states, “and the spirits of the prophets are subject to prophets,” which means that in the exercise of any “gift of the Holy Spirit” (including teaching and speaking in an intelligible language so as to instruct others, as well as praying/singing in tongues or prophesying), the one who possesses that gift is totally in control of when to exercise it. Thus, if someone was to say, “I could not help myself, the Spirit made me speak out in tongues,” that person is totally unscriptural in their thinking and unbiblical in their practice as the above passage unequivocally states.

Conclusion of I Corinthians 14

In conclusion of our examination of I Corinthians 14, we see quite a different perspective in the above exegetical analysis than what was given at the “Strange Fire” Conference. Indeed, there was a very strong, thorough going, theological bias of cessationism at that conference from every speaker, and this has been seen quite clearly in MacArthur’s writings over the years. And again, I want to say that I thank God for the tremendous, beneficial work He has done in and through John MacArthur in many other areas, but as we are all mere, flawed men, in this area of the “Gifts of the Holy Spirit,” and particular “speaking in tongues,” John’s biased, flawed, and quite imperfect, exegetical scholarship is manifest. And as stated previously on page 91, from his book, *The Charismatics*, published in 1978, to *Strange Fire: The Danger of Offending the Holy Spirit with Counterfeit Worship*, published in 2013, his objective, scholarly approach toward a discussion about the present day ministry of the “Gifts of the Holy Spirit” leaves a great deal to be desired, and that is being very complimentary. Please remember that “Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday and today, *yes* and forever” (Hebrews 13:8), and God bless you.