

Signs, Wonders, and Miracles: The Outpouring of God's Spirit by Johnny Felker

Intro: I appreciate the opportunity to share the fruits of my study with you on this important topic and to learn from you in our discussions and in your further suggestions about this material. Brother Deason suggested the following description of my lecture:

"This lecture should deal with the miraculous manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. The baptism of the Holy Spirit — to whom it was promised, what it was, and who received it — should be considered. Additionally, (and probably the main focus of) this lecture should discuss miraculous spiritual gifts — who received them, how did they receive them, what were they, why were they given, how were they regulated, and how long were they to last? Refuting modern claims to miraculous spiritual gifts would be helpful."

This is an immense assignment for such a short lecture; but I will do my best to clarify and discuss some of the key issues. In this outline I am presenting a survey of the miraculous work of the Spirit from its prophecy in the book of Joel to its NT fulfillment and then to its cessation in the early centuries of the church. I hope I will have given an adequate and Scriptural answer to the questions raised in my assignment in the course of my discussion. Even with this lengthy outline, I can see that there are several issues that deserve more thorough exploration and discussion than I have given. Since this material is prepared for a conference, I am expressing some ideas tentatively for evaluation and discussion.

I. Signs, wonders, and miracles: The prophecy of the Spirit's outpouring (Joel 2:28-29)

A. The NT teaching concerning signs, wonders, and miracles of the apostolic age is grounded in Joel's prophecy of the outpouring of the Spirit.

1. 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. And even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. And I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, blood, fire, and columns of smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. 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)

B. There are several explicit references to Joel's prophecy in the NT, either writers quoting it or using the same vocabulary to describe NT events.

1. Peter quotes the text in Ac. 2:16ff.
2. Luke alludes to it in Ac. 10:44-45.

3. Paul alludes to it in Tit. 3:4-7.
4. Paul may also allude to it in Gal. 3:28.
5. All these texts refer to the outpouring of the Spirit. In addition one might think also of the apocalyptic language that is used in several NT texts in common with the language of Joel (eg. Mt. 24:29).

C. As we read the prophets we need to think "Jewishly," that is, place ourselves in the mindset of an Israelite schooled under the Law of Moses and who was familiar with the covenants of God. Through their writings the classical prophets forge a prophetic eschatological vision that is couched in terms of their present experience. It has these elements:

1. A righteous Davidic king
2. Restoration of Israel to the land
3. Union of all Israel into one kingdom
4. Victory over all their enemies
5. An all-encompassing peace (shalom)
6. (Note: I am indebted to my Hebrew teacher Dr. John Fortner for this analysis which I believe to be insightful. This material comes from unpublished notes on the classical prophets.)

D. Joel's prophecy highlights at least three of these elements.

1. The restoration of the prosperity of the land--Joel 2:21-27
2. A time of judgment for the disobedient (a Day of the Lord that brings His victory over all enemies)--2:30-31; 3:1ff.
3. An outpouring of God's Spirit, resulting in salvation to all those who call upon the name of the Lord (the all-encompassing peace or shalom--2:28-32)

E. What is the meaning of the expression, "I will pour out My Spirit?"

1. The expression "My Spirit" should be understood in the context of previous OT revelation which describes the work of God's Spirit, and the inherent power connected with that work.
 - a) The Spirit of God had effected the miracle of creation: *And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. (Genesis 1:2)*
 - b) The Spirit of God had come upon certain ones to endow them for special works and often with the accompanying manifestation of prophecy.

(1) Bezalel

(a) *"And He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding and in knowledge and in all craftsmanship;" (Exodus 35:31)*

(b) This is the first text in the OT to refer to someone being "filled with the Spirit."

(2) The seventy of Numbers 11

(a) *"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.” (Numbers 11:25)

- (3) The judges of Israel
 - (a) A characteristic phrase is “the Spirit of the Lord came upon him.” (cf. Judg.3:10 on Othniel; 6:34 on Gideon: 11:29 on Jephthah; Judges 13:24 et.al on Samson)
 - (b) The Spirit's coming endowed these leaders with strength or insight to deliver Israel.
- (4) Saul
 - (a) *“Then it happened when he turned his back to leave Samuel, God changed his heart; and all those signs came about on that day. When they came to the hill there, behold, a group of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him mightily, so that he prophesied among them.” (1 Samuel 10:9–10)*
 - (b) Note how prophecy is the manifestation of the Spirit's coming.
 - (c) In a curious later episode the Spirit of the Lord came upon both Saul and his messengers to prevent their evil intentions in their pursuit of David (1 Sam. 19).
- (5) David
 - (a) *“Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. And Samuel arose and went to Ramah.” (1 Samuel 16:13)*
 - (b) In the cases of Saul and David we also see the close connection between anointing with oil (the outward symbolic action) and the bestowal of the Spirit (the inward unseen action). The merging of the two concepts is found in the later expression "anointed with the Spirit."
- (6) Amasai
 - (a) *“Then the Spirit came upon Amasai, who was the chief of the thirty, and he said, “We are yours, O David, And with you, O son of Jesse! Peace, peace to you, And peace to him who helps you; Indeed, your God helps you!” Then David received them and made them captains of the band.” (1 Chronicles 12:18)*

(b) The poetic language would seem to suggest that this was a prophecy that came as a result of the Spirit coming upon Amasai.

(7) Prophets

(a) Balaam

(i) *“And Balaam lifted up his eyes and saw Israel camping tribe by tribe; and the Spirit of God came upon him. And he took up his discourse and said, “The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor, And the oracle of the man whose eye is opened; The oracle of him who hears the words of God, Who sees the vision of the Almighty, Falling down, yet having his eyes uncovered, How fair are your tents, O Jacob, Your dwellings, O Israel!” (Numbers 24:2–5)*

(ii) Note how the coming of the Spirit upon Balaam enables him to "hear the words of God" and to speak "what the Lord speaks." (v. 13)

(b) David

(i) *The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue. (2 Samuel 23:2)*

(ii) *David prays, "Teach me to do Thy will, For Thou art my God; Let Thy good Spirit lead me on level ground." (Psalm 143:10)*

(iii) In his great sin with Bathsheba he pleads that God would not take *"his holy spirit away"* from him (Ps. 51:12) It would appear that the reference here is to the Spirit that had come upon him at his anointing.

(c) Elijah

(i) Obadiah informs Elijah, *"And it will come about when I leave you that the Spirit of the LORD will carry you where I do not know; so when I come and tell Ahab and he cannot find you, he will kill me, although I your servant have feared the LORD from my youth." (1 Kings 18:12)*

- (ii) Apparently the meaning is that the Spirit would provide the direction and location where Elijah would hide.
- (d) Elishah
 - (i) The prophet asks that a double portion of Elijah's spirit be placed upon him.
- (e) Micah
 - (i) *“On the other hand I am filled with power— With the Spirit of the LORD— And with justice and courage To make known to Jacob his rebellious act, Even to Israel his sin.” (Micah 3:8)*
- (f) Azariah
 - (i) *“NOW the Spirit of God came on Azariah the son of Oded, and he went out to meet Asa and said to him, “Listen to me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: the LORD is with you when you are with Him. And if you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.” (2 Chronicles 15:1–2)*
- (g) Ezekiel
 - (i) *“Then the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me, and He said to me, “Say, ‘Thus says the LORD, “So you think, house of Israel, for I know your thoughts.” (Ezekiel 11:5)*
 - (ii) Note also here the first biblical mention of the concept of the Spirit falling on someone.
- (h) Jahaziel
 - (i) *“Then in the midst of the assembly the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, the Levite of the sons of Asaph;” (2 Chronicles 20:14)*
- (i) Zechariah
 - (i) *“Then the Spirit of God came on Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest; and he stood above the people and said to them, “Thus God has said, ‘Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD and do not prosper? Because you have forsaken the*

LORD, He has also forsaken you.’” (2 Chronicles 24:20)

(j) Of course, some of these incidents occurred after Joel's prophecy was given (if we take an early date for the book.) My point here is to simply sample the OT teaching on the work of the Spirit of the Lord.

(8) The coming Messiah

(a) *“And the Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.” (Isaiah 11:2)*

(b) *“”BEHOLD, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations.” (Isaiah 42:1)*

(c) Isaiah's portrait of the coming Davidic king includes his endowment by the Holy Spirit for rulership in the tradition of Israel's past kings (Is. 11:2).

c) These examples provide the context and definition needed understand Joel's prophecy.

2. More specifically, the concept of the outpouring of God's (or another's) Spirit occurs in several other OT texts.

a) *“But Hannah answered and said, “No, my lord, I am a woman oppressed in spirit; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have poured out my soul before the LORD.” (1 Samuel 1:15, NASB)*

(1) Hannah explains her unusual behavior. She is praying to God with great intensity due to her barrenness.

(2) By "pouring out her soul," Hannah is revealing her longings to the Lord.

(3) Others are likewise said to "pour out" their thoughts to God (cf. Ps. 142:2).

b) *“Turn to my reproof, Behold, I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you. (Proverbs 1:23)*

(1) Wisdom personified pleads with her children to listen to her instruction.

(2) Note the characteristic parallelism of the Hebrew poetry of this text as the writer expresses his ideas in couplets. For wisdom to pour out her spirit is to make her words known to the naive.

c) *Because the palace has been abandoned, the populated city forsaken. Hill and watch-tower have become caves forever, A*

delight for wild donkeys, a pasture for flocks; Until the Spirit is poured out upon us from on high, And the wilderness becomes a fertile field And the fertile field is considered as a forest. Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, And righteousness will abide in the fertile field. (Isaiah 32:14–16)

(1) The prophet has declared the end of the monarchy in fulfillment of the covenantal curses of Deuteronomy 27-28; but he anticipates a future time of restoration.

That restoration is two-fold: 1) the restoration of material prosperity to the land; 2) the restoration of spiritual prosperity to the people.

(2) In terms of the covenantal blessings, Israel must repent for these blessings to be restored (Deut. 30:1-3); and that repentance is effected by the outpouring of God's Spirit upon His people resulting in righteous living.

d) For I will pour out water on the thirsty land And streams on the dry ground; I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring, And My blessing on your descendants; And they will spring up among the grass Like poplars by streams of water.' "This one will say, 'I am the LORD'S'; And that one will call on the name of Jacob; And another will write on his hand, 'Belonging to the LORD,' And will name Israel's name with honor. (Isaiah 44:3–5)

(1) Note the poetic parallelism to "pour out my Spirit" is for the Lord to bestow, in His words, "My blessing" upon the people.

(2) That "blessing" is manifested by Israel's renewed desire to be one of the Yahweh's people and to no longer be ashamed to be an Israelite or descendant of Jacob.

e) When I bring them back from the peoples and gather them from the lands of their enemies, then I shall be sanctified through them in the sight of the many nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD their God because I made them go into exile among the nations, and then gathered them again to their own land; and I will leave none of them there any longer. And I will not hide My face from them any longer, for I shall have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel," declares the Lord GOD." (Ezekiel 39:27–29)

(1) In keeping with our earlier suggestion, the sin of Israel would result in national exile.

(2) However God promises Israel's restoration to the land. All of this will be because He will have "poured out His Spirit" upon the house of David instead of "hiding His face." The pouring out of God's Spirit

provides the impetus for Israel to repent of the sin that had caused God's withdrawal from them and His no longer hearing their prayers (cf. Is. 59:1-2) or communicating with them.

f) And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born.” (Zechariah 12:10)

(1) This could be a variation of the outpouring of the Spirit with more specification about the results of the outpouring.

(2) Israel would experience God's grace; and He would receive their supplications.

3. These examples of the "outpouring of God's Spirit" stand in strong contrast to one other thing said to be "poured out" from God, viz., His wrath.

a) Many texts describe this outpouring of God's wrath upon the disobedient.

(1) “Because they have forsaken Me and have burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke Me to anger with all the works of their hands, therefore My wrath will be poured out on this place, and it shall not be quenched.” (2 Chronicles 34:25)

(2) Many other texts use this conception: Ps. 69:24; Jer. 7:20; 10:25; 14:16; 42:18; 44:6; Lam. 2:4; 4:11; Eze. 7:8; 9:8; 20:8, 13, 21, 33-34; 22:22, 31; Dan. 9:11; Hos. 5:10; Nah. 1:6)

b) And at least one text suggests that, when God refrains from pouring out His wrath, this is tantamount to granting deliverance to His people.

(1) “And when the LORD saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah, saying, “They have humbled themselves so I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some measure of deliverance, and My wrath shall not be poured out on Jerusalem by means of Shishak.” (2 Chronicles 12:7)

(2) Clearly where God's wrath is poured out there is destruction; but where His Spirit is poured out, there is the hope of deliverance.

4. In addition to these verbal parallels, we can see in OT prophecy a more general statement of the bestowal of the Spirit in connection with Israel's restoration.

a) *And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.” (Ezekiel 36:27)*

b) *And as for Me, this is My covenant with them,” says the LORD: “My Spirit which is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your offspring, nor from the mouth of your offspring’s offspring,” says the LORD, “from now and forever.”” (Isaiah 59:21)*

c) Hailey suggests that these words are spoken to the Suffering Servant, the Redeemer of Israel. (Isaiah, p. 484-485). But again one can see that when God puts His Spirit upon someone it results in the possession of God's word in their mouth.

5. Therefore we might say on the basis of these OT texts that the pouring out of God's Spirit is the initiation of communication that brings a renewed revelation of Himself resulting in repentance and its consequent deliverance by God from a day of wrath.

F. In keeping with these OT conceptions, Joel prophesies of the renewed revelation of God that will bring about repentance in Israel and the restoration of the covenantal blessings to them.

1. Joel revealed that the Spirit's outpouring would be manifested by miraculous revelation through prophecy, dreams, and visions.

a) Jewish readers would not have been surprised at all by these things as the predicted result of the Spirit's outpouring. For these are the ways that God had promised to communicate His revelations in the past.

(1) He said, “Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, shall make Myself known to him in a vision. I shall speak with him in a dream. (Numbers 12:6)

(2) Numerous OT texts show God revealing His word through these means.

(a) Prophecy refers to oracles of the Lord given by the Spirit's guidance.

(b) Dreams refers to revelations given while one is sleeping.

(c) Visions refers to revelation made known through what is seen. One who reveals divinely given visions is a "seer."

2. What was unique about Joel's prophecy is the scope of the outpouring, the recipients.

a) The Lord would pour out His Spirit upon "all mankind" (NASB) or literally in the Hebrew text "all flesh."

(1) The Hebrew "basar" has a wide semantic range; but in this context we should choose among the possibilities of definition 9 in HALOT:

(2) 9. בָּסָר (Hulst OTS 12:28ff): a) all flesh, man and beast Gn 612.17 and oft.; b) mankind Nu 1622 2716 Is 405; c) animals Gn 619 721 817; d) any human being Dt 523 Sir 3711; e) every human being בָּסָרִים is grass Is 406; אֵלֵי הַיְיָ כָּל־בָּסָרִים Jr 3227; —Jb 1926 מִבְּשָׂרִי. (Koehler & Baumgartner, p. 164)

(3) The Hebrew reader might have thought of "all flesh" as all Israel; however the unfolding "mystery" of the gospel is God's inclusion also of Gentiles in His kingdom (Eph. 3: 5-6). Thus the expression "all flesh" could justifiably be translated "all mankind."

(4) Of course any such universal statement suggests what is not only possible, but also what is conditional as the prophecy makes clear: *"Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."*

b) The ensuing phrases define "all flesh" more specifically or exegetically.

(1) Joel speaks of "sons and daughters, "old men and young men," and "male and female servants." These could be considered merisms that span the various social classes of ancient Israel; and thus would be another way of filling out the meaning of "all flesh."

(2) In the past, the Spirit of the Lord had come upon a limited number of people who were used by God at different periods in history. They were mostly men. But this promise includes people without regard to age, sex, social distinction and possibly even national distinction (though this idea might not have been readily apparent to Jews at the time).

(3) Stuart refers to this as the "democratization of the Holy Spirit." (*Joel* in *Word Biblical Commentary*, p. 229-230)

3. This prophecy of the outpouring of the Spirit was an integral feature of Joel's prophetic eschatological vision.

a) Through the pouring out of His Spirit, God would reveal Himself by means of prophecy, dreams, and visions before that great and terrible day of the Lord.

b) That day would be portended by signs in the heavens and earth indicating the impending doom of all the wicked.

c) However, the messages revealed by the Holy Spirit would stir people to repent and call upon the name of the Lord.

- d) God assures His people that all those who called upon Him would be delivered in the Day of the Lord's eschatological judgment upon His enemies.
- 4. And so this promise of God, given 800 plus years before the coming of Christ, awaited its time of fulfillment. It served as the foundational prophecy of the miraculous work of the Spirit in revelation during the Messianic age. Such a great promise received attention from the dawn of the NT era.

II. Sign, wonders, and miracles: Confirmation by John the Baptist and Jesus that the fulfillment of the promised outpouring of God's Spirit was drawing near.

A. John testified that Jesus would be the one who "baptizes with the Spirit and with fire."

1. *"As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. And His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."* (Matthew 3:11-12; See also Mk. 1:8; Lk. 3:16; Jn. 1:33; Ac. 1:5; 11:16)

2. Endowment with the Spirit was an essential characteristic of the Messiah (God's anointed one) as the prophets had made known (see previous notes). However John affirmed that the Spirit would not only rest upon Jesus; He (Jesus) would bestow the Spirit upon others also.

3. But immediately we are confronted with several interpretive challenges.

- a) What does it mean to be *baptized* with the Holy Spirit and fire?
- b) What does it mean to be baptized with the *Holy Spirit*?
- c) What does mean to be baptized with *fire*?
- d) Is this one baptism for the same group of people or two separate baptisms for two differing groups of people?
- e) Expositors answer these questions quite differently.

4. John's primary message is to establish the superiority of Jesus as the Messiah to himself as the forerunner of the Messiah.

a) Here we should think of baptism with its ancient meaning of "immersion." Jesus' immersion stands in contrast with John's immersion of his subjects in water for the remission of sins. As a prophet of God, John had been sent to prepare the way for the Lord by proclaiming a message of repentance and by immersing the penitent ones in water as they confessed their sins (Ac. 19:4). This work was intended to make them ready for the Lord's coming.

b) However John made known the surpassing greatness of Jesus in that He would do something far greater: *"He will*

baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire." As Hagner points out, the use of "autos" in addition to the 3rd future indicative verb accentuates the contrasting power of Jesus as opposed to John. Thus one might translate "He *Himself* will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire." (Cf. NASB translation)

5. This much is clear; but what does it mean to be immersed in the Spirit?

a) In Pentecostal teaching baptism in the Spirit is the reception of miraculous power indicated by the initial experience of speaking in tongues.

(1) In the Holiness movement, the baptism of the Holy Spirit was seen as a second work of grace following justification that resulted in the sanctification of all believers.

(2) Pentecostalism, which emerged from this movement, sought to restore the miraculous manifestations that presumably came with the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

b) Many evangelical commentators see it as a metaphor of salvation itself without any implication of miraculous gifts. In other words, every saved person is "immersed" in the Spirit.

(1) His mission is to baptize Israel "with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (v. 11), that is, to purify the nation of sin and to prepare it to meet the holy God. (Elwell, *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible* on Mt. 3:1).

(2) In this understanding the phrase, "Spirit and fire," is understood as a hendiadys, a figure of speech in which one idea is expressed by two words. This seems to be indicated also by OT texts that associate the eschatological outpouring of the Spirit with both cleansing water (Isa 32:15; 44:3; Ezek 36:25–27; Joel 2:28–29; cf. 1QS 4:20–22) and refining fire (Isa 1:25; 4:4; 30:27–30; Zech 13:9; Mal 3:1–3; 4:1; cf. Acts 2:3; 4 Ezra 13:8–11). So it is best to conclude that the one eschatological outpouring of the Spirit through Jesus will purify and judge. (Cornerstone Biblical Commentary on Matthew, p. 59)

(3) But if one wishes to be faithful to biblical usage, one will reserve the expression "baptism in the Spirit" for the indwelling of God through his Holy Spirit at the moment of a believer's salvation. (Craig Blomberg in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, s.v. "baptism in the Spirit") In the same work Blomberg points out: "No particular style of the Spirit's arrival is paradigmatic; he may come quietly and almost imperceptibly or dramatically and tangibly."

(4) Some brethren also now are teaching that the baptism of the Spirit is essentially the experience of salvation. Consider for example these words from Tom Hamilton's commentary on Joel:

(5) The outpouring of God's Spirit is simply a figure, albeit a touching and beautiful one, that portrays God's presence lavished upon His people, imparting life and power to them. Under the new covenant, it is now obvious that the ultimate fulfillment of the outpouring of God's Spirit was accomplished in Christ, who brought an end to the real suffering — sin, and replaced it with salvation, the true life and true security that comes by the presence of God with His people through Jesus Christ. To speak of being immersed in God's Spirit is to describe the same life that is lived enveloped within Christ (Gal. 3:27) or the Father (1 John 2:24-28; 4:12-16). (Tom Hamilton in Joel, *The Minor Prophets*, Truth Commentary, Excursus on Joel 2).

c) Restorationist commentators have seen "Holy Spirit baptism" as a metaphor for the greatest "measure" of the Spirit bestowed on humans.

(1) Not a few Restoration expositors developed a concept of "measures" of the Spirit based on the statement of John 3:34: "*For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God; for He gives the Spirit without measure.*" (John 3:34, NASB)

(2) Concluding that the "He" of the second phrase is God, they affirmed that the Father gave the Spirit fully or totally to Jesus. Various translations have accommodated this interpretation by adding the words "unto him" (i.e. Jesus) for clarity.

(3) From that understanding, they developed the implied concept of Jesus who received the Spirit "without measure" giving the Spirit to others "in measure." Cf. Eze. 4:11, 16 for this kind of use of the phrase "in measure."

(a) Consider for example this quote from H. Leo Boles: "God gave the Holy Spirit in his fullness without measure to Christ as the Messiah; he gave the Spirit by 'measure' to apostles, prophets, and others; that is they had the Holy Spirit in modified degrees." (*The Holy Spirit: His personality, Nature, and Works*," p. 126.)

(b) Ferrel Jenkins in his excellent work "Finger of God" raises the question as to whether this

construct is valid. He briefly explores the significant textual issues involved in this text, but then leaves the question open for his readers to decide (*Finger of God*).

(4) Thus they affirmed the direct outpouring of the Spirit upon the apostles and the household of Cornelius could alone be correctly called "the baptism of the Holy Spirit" based on the direct use of the term in referring texts such as Ac. 1:4-5 and Ac. 11:16-17.

(a) Boles defined baptism in the Holy Spirit this way:

(b) "The baptism of John in water involved as its chief idea an overwhelming, a sudden and complete overpowering of the person submerged by water, and the entering into new conditions and relations, so the baptism of the Holy Spirit was to imply an equally entire subjugation and overmastery of the soul by the Spirit. It is in these obvious analogies that the appositeness of the figure may be seen, and its proper application understood." (*Holy Spirit: His Personality, Nature, Works*, p. 150)

(5) However they also affirmed that there were other "gifts of the Spirit," both "miraculous" and "ordinary" that should be distinguished from "baptism in the Holy Spirit."

(a) "There is to be made a distinction between the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit." (Ibid.)

(6) In this traditional interpretation "baptism of the Spirit" refers exclusively to the direct miraculous outpouring of the Spirit upon certain individuals (the apostles, the household of Cornelius, and presumably the apostle Paul); but the term should not be used to describe the lesser "measures" of the Spirit.

d) Some tentative thoughts about the two positions

(1) It is difficult for me at this point to agree with those who make "baptism in the Holy Spirit" a metaphor for salvation itself.

(a) It does appear that the expression "baptism in the Holy Spirit" suggests some kind of overwhelming power that enables the subject to do miraculous things.

(i) After promising the apostles that they would be "baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Ac. 1:5), he affirmed that they

would "receive power" when the Holy Spirit came upon them (Ac. 1:8).

(ii) In Luke's account Jesus says, "*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 24:49, NASB)

(iii) Interestingly this text with its description of being "clothed with power" utilizes one of the common metaphors of the OT for being endowed with prophetic capability (2 Chron. 24:20, Judg. 6:34, 1 Chron. 12:18)

(iv) The Hebrew term לָבֵשׁ (labesh) is used metaphorically in these text for being clothed with the Spirit of the Lord.

(b) There are clear linguistic connections between Joel's prophecy of the outpouring of the Spirit and baptism in the Spirit.

(i) The correlation is established by Jesus' prophecy of Ac. 1:4 and the Peter's description of that event in Ac. 2:16ff. Jesus had said that the apostles would be "baptized in the Holy Spirit" not many days in the future. Yet when the apostles experienced this baptism in the Holy Spirit, Peter identified it as that outpouring of God's Spirit prophesied by Joel.

(ii) Since Joel's "outpouring of the Spirit" results in miraculous revelation, and the the apostles' "baptism in the Holy Spirit" resulted in miraculous revelation through tongues and prophetic speech, it would suggest that "baptism in the Spirit" and the "outpouring of the Spirit" are interchangeable expressions which describe the revelation of God's word.

(c) The image of people being immersed in the Spirit would be a logical correlative to the concept of God's outpouring.

(i) As the Spirit is "poured out," people could be said to be "immersed in the Spirit."

(ii) And if we were to think of the subjects as vessels immersed in the Spirit, it would be natural to speak of them being "filled with the Spirit" that had been poured out.

(2) However I have some reservations in saying that the baptism of the Spirit was an exclusive event that applied only to the apostles and the household of Cornelius. (I realize that the phrase is only used in connection with these two events; but is it possible that the term could reasonably apply to other miraculous manifestations of the Spirit?)

(a) Both the apostles and the household of Cornelius were apparently said to be "baptized in the Holy Spirit;" yet it would not appear that both groups possessed the same "measure" of the Spirit as it is commonly expressed. (Some would say that only the apostles were "baptized" in the Spirit and that the household of Cornelius received gifts comparable to those received by other believers upon whom the apostles laid their hands (cf. Ac. 8). Thus, Peter's statement of Ac. 11:15ff is only an association of the event at Caesarea with the baptism of the apostles at Pentecost, but not an equating of the two.) There is certainly a qualitative difference between the power bestowed upon the apostles and the apparent power bestowed upon Cornelius and his household. If the term "baptism" refers to highest power bestowed by the Spirit, then Luke would have erred in using the term in both cases. At least I would assume that no one believes that Cornelius and his household possessed the same power as the apostles.

(b) It would appear that those experiencing spiritual gifts through the laying on of the apostles' hands, at least in the initial reception, are experiencing an overwhelming power that is comparable to those episodes we read about in the OT where the Spirit of the Lord came upon someone. Likewise just as those episodes were called being "clothed in the Spirit," so also Jesus would use a similar term to describe what would happen to the apostles in their baptism in the Holy Spirit (Lk. 24:49) and what appears to

have happened to the household of Cornelius before their conversion.

(c) Some have defined baptism in the Spirit even more narrowly as that event in which Jesus sends the Spirit upon one directly. In that sense, baptism in the Spirit is sometimes distinguished from the impartation of spiritual gifts to believers through the apostle's hand by the fact that one comes directly from heaven (from Jesus) and that the other comes indirectly through human agency, viz. the apostles). However this may be overreaching with the language of Acts 8; for there is a sense in which the reception of miraculous gifts through the laying on the apostles hands could be regarded as a direct outpouring from heaven as well. The apostles were "praying" to the Lord for the gift to be given to the newly baptized believers (Ac. 8:15). By laying hands on the subjects, they were exercising their apostolic authority to reveal who should be given the Spirit just as they had the authority to reveal whose sins should be forgiven. But the actual forgiveness and endowment of the Spirit was the work of Jesus.

(3) So is it possible that all the miraculous endowments of the Spirit in the NT could appropriately be called baptisms in the Holy Spirit administered by Jesus Himself?

(a) Of course this contradicts a standard debate argument against Pentecostalism taken from Ephesians 4:4.

(b) One response would be to affirm that the "one baptism" of Ephesian 4 is water baptism; and that the baptism of the Spirit is subsumed in the affirmation that there is "one Spirit." And there may be other reasonable solutions to this perceived problem.

e) Thus in answer to the question: The "Baptism of the Holy Spirit"--What is it? To whom was it promised? Who received it? we might give this response.

(1) Precisely speaking, the expression "the baptism of the Holy Spirit," though brethren have often used it, does not occur in the Scripture. The Scriptures only speak of baptism *in* the Spirit. The distinction may be important because "baptism of the Holy Spirit" as a

genitive may be understood to refer to a baptism which the Holy Spirit administers; and there is a denominational doctrine to that effect.

(a) Many denominational expositors affirm that 1 Cor. 12:13 is in fact a statement that the Holy Spirit metaphorically "baptizes" believers into the body of Christ.

(b) Some even contend that this is the meaning in many passages that we consider to refer to water baptism such as Romans 6:3.

(2) Baptism in the Holy Spirit then could be defined then as the metaphorical immersion of a person by Jesus in the Holy Spirit such that the subject is overwhelmed or filled with the Spirit's power in order to perform signs, miracles, or wonders. It was God's initiation of revelation in order that men might, in keeping with Joel's prophecy, be taught and motivated to call upon the name of the Lord and to be delivered from the great and terrible Day of the Lord yet to come.

6. But what does it mean to be baptized in fire? Again expositors differ greatly.

a) Some affirm that baptism in fire is to be associated with the fire phenomenon that appeared on Pentecost.

(1) A few commentators have associated the "fire" with the "tongues as of fire" that are associated with the Spirit's coming on Pentecost (cf. Ac 2:3).

(2) However such could not however be properly called an "immersion in fire."

b) Some affirm that baptism in fire is the complement to baptism in the Spirit and refers to the purification or cleansing of the believer.

(1) Israel's Messiah, upon whom the Spirit of God would rest, would effect the eschatological separation prophesied by OT prophets like Malachi. Coming "like refiner's fire" and "as fuller's soap," he would cleanse the nation of its dross and uncleanness, restoring God's true Israel to a spiritual purity that would enable them to be citizens in the Messianic kingdom (Mal. 3:2). However for the impenitent there could only be destruction (Mal. 3:5).

(2) John the Baptist conveys Malachi's images of eschatological separation through the figure of a winnower who separates the wheat from the chaff (Mt. 3:12).

c) Some affirm that baptism in fire is the destruction of the wicked.

(1) Many commentators justifiably have found support for this idea in the context of Matthew 3. For immediately after affirming Jesus' power to baptize in Spirit and fire, His role as judge is set forth under the figure of a winnower of wheat. The good grain (the righteous) are preserved for His use; but the chaff is burned with unquenchable fire!

(2) Contextually, this appears to be the most satisfactory interpretation and sets forth Jesus' dual role as Savior and Judge.

d) However some affirm that there is, grammatically speaking, one baptism that involves two elements instead of two baptisms.

(1) Blomberg notes, "But the grammatical construction in Greek (the use of one preposition to govern two objects) is most naturally taken as referring to only one baptism that involves both blessing and judgment (cf. esp. Isa. 4:4). (*Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, s.v. baptism in the Holy Spirit).

(2) I suppose the idea here is that the more general baptism in the Spirit brings about two outcomes--either salvation or judgment. Both are part of one process.

B. Jesus took up John's statement indicating that He would be the one who would bestow the Spirit after His glorification.

1. Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.'" But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. (John 7:37-39)

a) According to the Rabbis, a special ceremony of water libation was celebrated at the end of the first day of Sukkot (but not on the Sabbath) at the Temple in Jerusalem (Suk. 51a-b). (Eisenburg, 228)

b) By carrying water from the pool of Siloam and pouring it out on the temple mount, the Jews recalled during the Feast of Tabernacles that water which God had provided from the rock in the wilderness (cf. Ex. 17:6; Deut. 8:15).

c) Jesus' claim at this feast to be the source of living water could have been occasioned by this ritual procession. In a sense it was as if He were saying, "I am that rock from which flows the water that springs up to eternal life; come to me and drink." (Cf. Jn. 4:14). Interestingly, in Paul's typology in 1 Cor. 10:4 he suggests that the spiritual rock from which Israel drank, was the Christ.

d) Moreover Hodges believes that this ritual was derived from Ezekiel's temple vision of the river flowing from the throne of God. (Eze. 47:1ff) Inasmuch as the throne of God is among His people who have been endowed by the Spirit, they become His spiritual temple from which flows the life-giving water of eternal life. (See the bibliography for the journal article information).

1) It should be noted that there is some ambiguity about whether the phrase "his innermost being" refers to Christ or the believer. If the latter, then one could say that church is the eschatological temple of Ezekiel; and that it was in fact to be a source living water to the whole world through the outpouring of the Spirit upon them. John explain that the Spirit would be bestowed after Jesus' glorification; thus referring to Pentecost and afterward.

2) In that sense, the church, as the new temple in which God is enthroned, drinks of the one Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13) whereby they receive the life-giving water of truth to share with the whole world.

2. As the time of his death drew near, Jesus gave many specific statements about the Spirit's coming to His apostles (Jn. 14:16-17; 26; 15:26-27; 16:13-15), And after his resurrection, he identified that the time of the Spirit's coming was very near.

a) *"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 24:49)

b) *He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; 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 1:7-8)

3. In anticipation of the Spirit's coming upon the apostles, Jesus symbolically communicated the idea of their reception by breathing upon them:

a) *"And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and *said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."* (John 20:22)

b) The symbolism of the text is derived from the Hebrew association of the spirit with the breath. The Hebrew word translated Spirit, "ruach," may also be translated "wind" or "breath."

4. But in addition, Jesus also promised that the miracles indicative of the Spirit's outpouring would have a manifestation among the disciples the apostles made:

a) *“And these signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; 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)*

(1) BAGD suggests this definition for sign, the Greek σημεῖον: "a sign consisting of a wonder or miracle, an event that is contrary to the usual course of nature. a. miracle of divine origin, performed by God himself, by Christ, or by men of God.

(2) In some contexts, it would appear that "semeion" has the additional nuance of a miracles which points to a spiritual truth. Cf. for example the "signs" of the Gospel of John with the related truth claims that Jesus made for himself.

b) Some question whether this text originally belonged to the Gospel of Mark; but its inclusion is surely defensible and its message quite significant for our understanding of the early church's experience.

III. Signs, miracles, and Wonders--The NT Fulfillment of Joel's prophecy in the early church.

A. The outpouring of the Spirit began on Pentecost with the apostles of Jesus.

1. The apostles had waited with anticipation for the fulfillment of the Father's promise of the Holy Spirit. They were gathered in Jerusalem on the first day of the week, perhaps to worship, when the Holy Spirit first came.

2. They received revelations from God in the form of languages they had not previously spoken. These were manifest miraculous revelations to those hearing them.

a) *And they were amazed and marveled, saying, “Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? “And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born? (Acts 2:7-8)*

b) *Cretans and Arabs—we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God.” (Acts 2:11)*

3. Peter explains this was a fulfillment of Joel's prophecy

a) *but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: (Acts 2:16)*

b) *“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. (Acts 2:33)*

- c) Jesus, having received the promise of resurrection to sit on David's throne is now showing that he is alive by pouring out the Spirit.
- d) Thus, the words of John the Baptist and Jesus Himself are being fulfilled. We need not think of John's prophecy of Jesus' baptism of disciples in the Holy Spirit as signifying anything different from the outpouring of the Spirit Joel had prophesied. In fact, the experience of the apostles is cast both in terms of John's prophecy in Mt. 3 and Joel's prophecy in Joel 2.
4. However, this was not the entire fulfillment; but the beginning of an outpouring that would continue for many years. Thus Peter promises his obedient hearers a share in the promise of Joel.
- a) *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. 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." (Acts 2:38-39)*
- b) I'm aware of the view that makes this a non-miraculous indwelling of the Spirit or a gift the Spirit gives such as eternal life; but I believe it is more defensible in this context as well as in the remainder of the NT to see it as an application of the prophecy of Joel who said *"I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh" (your sons, daughters, old, young, male, female)*. See the lecture by Brother Deason on this point.

B. Further fulfillment of Joel's prophecy came through the laying on of the apostles's hands with prayer to the Lord.

1. In keeping with Jesus' prophecy (Mk. 16:17ff) and Peter's statement in Ac. 2:38, we can see evidence of the outpouring of the Spirit in Jerusalem among the converts of the apostles with its miraculous manifestations. The Spirit came upon:
- a) Stephen: *And Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people. (Acts 6:8)*
- BADG gives this lexical entry for the term wonders: τέρας, ατος, τό (Hom.+; LXX, Philo, Joseph.) prodigy, portent, omen, wonder in our lit. only pl. and combined w. σημεῖα; s. σημεῖον 2a, b, c, where all the passages containing τέρατα are given (Appian, Bell. Civ. 1, 83 §377 τέρατα πολλά ἐγίνοντο, i.e., terrifying portents caused by a divinity [τὸ δαιμόνιον, ὁ θεός] that foretell the destructive results of Sulla's campaign in Italy).- PStein, ΤΕΡΑΣ, Diss. Marburg '09. M-M.*
- b) Phillip: *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. 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)

c) Later we read about Phillip's four daughters who were able to prophesy: *Now this man had four virgin daughters who were prophetesses. (Acts 21:9)* Presumably they would have received this power through the apostles while living in Jerusalem with their father.

d) A general statement of the Spirit's outpouring on the believers in Jerusalem: *"And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him."* (Acts 5:32) Just as the Holy Spirit bore witness through the apostles by the miracles that they performed; so He also bore witness through "those who obeyed Him."

e) In Samaria the new disciples received the outpouring of the Spirit through the laying of the apostles' hands: *Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. (Acts 8:17)* The apostles' eagerness to go to Samaria and pray for the Samaritans' reception of the Spirit would strongly argue that they imparted the same to the new converts in Jerusalem.

f) Cornelius and his household received the gift of the Holy Spirit: *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. (Acts 10:45)* In this case, because the Gentiles were the recipients, it was necessary for Jesus to pour out the Spirit upon Cornelius and His household directly rather than receive the outpouring through the laying on of the apostles' hands. This direct outpouring prompted in Peter the memory of the Lord's promise that they would be baptized in the Spirit.

g) The disciples in Galatia: *This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Does He then, who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? (Galatians 3:2,5)* Notice how Christ's provision of the Spirit is associated with the performance of miracles through the spiritual gifts. As Paul baptized these disciples he also appears to have laid his hands upon them resulting in their reception of miraculous spiritual gifts. We see his eagerness to do this demonstrated in the examples that follow.

h) Timothy: It would not be unreasonable to expect that just as Paul had laid his hands upon the Galatians, he also laid his hands upon Timothy who was himself a convert of the region

in order to equip him for the work he would be doing with Paul (cf. 1 Tim. 4:14).

i) The Corinthians: *But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (1 Corinthians 12:7)*

j) The Ephesians: *And 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)*

2. Indeed the Spirit was being poured out upon "all flesh" just as Joel had said and with the Spirit's presence came revelations from God and miracles to confirm those revelations. The evidence suggests that the outpouring of the Spirit was the normative experience for those who had contact with the apostles of Christ.

a) It was as if what Moses had at one time only dreamed of was actually occurring.

b) *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!" (Numbers 11:29)*

3. These texts describe in various terms the miraculous endowments given by the Holy Spirit. It may be helpful here to explore the terminology used in the various texts.

a) The spiritual gifts are variously described in terms of category:

(1) 1 Peter 4:10–11 (Peter contemplates gifts in terms of the broad categories of teaching and service)

(2) Eph. 4:7–13 (The gifts are portrayed in terms of the men in their respective offices who are given to perfect the saints)

(3) Rom. 12:3–8 (Paul speaks of gifts in terms of their various functions)

(4) 1 Cor. 12:8–10 (Here we find the most specific delineation of the gifts in the NT)

b) The spiritual gifts are referenced with differing terms which suggest various things about them.

(1) *Dorea, doma*

(a) These are the ordinary words for gifts that are bestowed. It is the language of giving and receiving that we commonly see in many NT texts.

(b) See eg. Ac. 10:45

(2) *Charisma or the plural charismata*

(a) This word, a cognate, of charis (grace) may suggest the favor of God in their giving.

(b) See Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:4, 9, 28, 30–31; 1 Peter 4:10

(3) *Pneumatikos or the plural pneumatika*

- (a) This is a substantized form of the Greek word for spiritual, i.e. spiritual things. It is usually translated "spiritual gifts" and calls attention to the Spirit as their source.
- (b) See 1 Cor. 12:1; 14:1, 37

IV. What was the purpose of the outpouring of the Spirit?

A. The purpose of the outpouring upon the apostles

1. Jesus indicated a number of things the Spirit would do for the apostles when they received the outpouring of the Spirit. The Spirit would be their "helper" (paracletos) by:
 - a) Teaching them all things and reminding them of what Jesus had taught
 - (1) *"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. (John 14:26)*
 - b) Bearing witness of Jesus
 - (1) *"When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me, and you will bear witness also, because you have been with Me from the beginning. (John 15:26-27)*
 - c) Convincing the world
 - (1) *"And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; 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. (John 16:8-11)*
 - d) Guiding them into all truth, revealing Jesus' word and convincing the unbelieving that Jesus was the Christ
 - (1) *"But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. (John 16:13)*
2. In Acts we see the Spirit doing these things through the apostles leading to the salvation of the world
 - a) *And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. And everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. (Acts 2:42-43)*

b) *And with great power the apostles were giving witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. (Acts 4:33)*

c) *“For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials: that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication; if you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well. Farewell.” (Acts 15:28-29)*

3. Thus the Hebrew writer offers this summary of the apostolic ministry:

a) *After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will. (Hebrews 2:3-4)*

(1) This text introduces a third term for works deriving from the Spirit's endowment, viz. miracles.

(2) BAGD defines this Greek term *δύναμις* as: 4. of the outward expressions of power: *deed of power, miracle, wonder* (Ael. Aristid. 40, 12 K.=5 p. 59 D.: *δυνάμεις ἐμφανεῖς*; 42, 4 K.=6 p. 64 D. al.; Eutecnius 4 p. 41, 13; POxy. 1381, 42; 90f τ. *δυνάμεις ἀπαγγέλλειν*; FSteinleitner, D. Beicht '13, nos. 3; 8 al.; Ps 117:15) w. *σημεῖα* 2 Th 2:9; also in pl. Ac 2:22; 2 Cor 12:12; Hb 2:4; in this sense *δ.* stands mostly in pl. *δυνάμεις* Mt 7:22; 11:20f, 23; 13:54, 58; Lk 10:13; 19:37; 1 Cor 12:10, 28f; Gal 3:5 (on the two last pass. s. 1 above); Hb 6:5. Sg. Mk 6:5.

b) Among the proofs of the apostolic testimony were the “gifts of the Holy Spirit” that were given through the laying on of the apostles' hands.

B. The purpose of the outpouring upon the disciples the apostles made

1. Mk. 16:17 shows that “believers” who heard the apostolic message would perform signs, but the most complete listing of these gifts is found in Paul's letter to the Corinthians. The Holy Spirit worked through the people in each local church to assist them in their teaching and work.

a) Paul shows that the reception of the Spirit was a unifying factor for the Corinthian church—“*we have all been made to drink of one Spirit*”. Here again we see allusions to Joel's prophecy of the outpouring and Jesus' promise of “living water” (Jn. 7:37).

b) *For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts*

of healing by the one Spirit, 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. (1 Corinthians 12:8-10)

c) When the church met, the Holy Spirit provided by spiritual gifts the needs of the church. Any categorization of the gifts would be a human construct put upon the list; but it may be helpful to do that to get a sense of how the gifts functioned.

(1) Some gifts were revelatory (assisted the knowledge of truth)

- (a) Prophecy
- (b) Distinguishing of spirits
- (c) Word of knowledge
- (d) Word of wisdom

(2) Some gifts were confirmatory (assisted the belief of truth)

- (a) Tongues
- (b) Interpretation of tongues
- (c) Gifts of healing
- (d) Effecting of miracles
- (e) Faith

2. 1 Corinthians 14 gives us a glimpse into the function of these gifts:

a) They served to instruct the assembly when the church came together

(1) 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. (1 Corinthians 14:26)

b) They served to convince unbelievers when the church came together

(1) So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe, but to unbelievers; but prophecy is for a sign, not to unbelievers, but to those who believe. (1 Corinthians 14:22)

3. See the later section in the outline for more notes on the meaning of the gifts and the regulations of them in 1 Cor. 12-14.

V. Signs, wonders, and miracles: What blessings resulted from the Spirit's outpouring?

A. The Blessings of the Spirit's outpouring upon the alien sinner (For a fuller discussion see John Gipson's lecture on the work of the Holy Spirit in conviction, conversion, and sanctification).

1. The Spirit bore witness to Jesus as the resurrected Lord leading sinners to believe in Him.

a) *“When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me, and you will bear witness also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.*

(John 15:26-27)

b) The Spirit’s testimony came in the form of the miraculous deeds that the apostle’s performed by the Holy Spirit leading to faith in Jesus Christ.

(1) Peter appealed to the outpouring of the Spirit as testimony that Jesus was alive!

(a) “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.

(Acts 2:33)

(2) Paul often referred to the power of signs performed by the Holy Spirit’s help to lead his hearers to faith in the gospel.

(a) And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God. (1

Corinthians 2:3-5)

(b) For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed, in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

(Romans 15:18-19)

(3) See also 1 Thes. 1:5; Heb. 2:4

2. The Spirit convicted sinners of sin leading them to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins

a) *“And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you no longer behold Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged. (John 16:8-11)*

b) The Spirit’s message and miracles through the apostles led those who crucified Christ to be “pricked in the heart” resulting in “repentance and baptism”.

(1) 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?" (Acts 2:37)

(2) This repentance is described as "a renewing by the Holy Spirit": 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, (Titus 3:5)

3. The Spirit brought about a "new birth" in sinners resulting in entrance into God's family.

a) Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (John 3:5)

b) In view of the previous two points, it is not difficult to see how the Spirit in connection with water produces the "new birth". Just as the Spirit leads to faith by the testimony and miracles of the apostles and produces conviction of sin and repentance by the same, so He produces the resulting "new birth" that results in one's entrance into the family of God.

c) This "new birth" takes place by the Spirit when one is baptized.

(1) 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. (1 Corinthians 12:13)

(2) For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. (Galatians 3:26-27)

4. The Spirit wrote the law of God into the hearts of new covenant members leading them to serve Him in a new way, not as slaves obeying a master but as sons obeying a Father.

a) The Hebrew writer shows that law of God is written in the heart of the new covenant member as the result of a proper understanding of God before his entrance into the covenant.

(1) "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their minds, and I will write them upon their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. (Hebrews 8:10)

b) Paul further explains that this service issuing from the law in the heart has been brought about by the Holy Spirit.

(1) But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God. (Romans 2:29)

(2) But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter. (Romans 7:6)

c) But Paul makes it abundantly clear that this spiritual impression of the law in the believer's heart takes place through hearing the apostolic message!

(1) You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men; being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts. (2 Corinthians 3:2-3)

d) Paul spends the rest of the chapter explaining how the apostles as servants of the new covenant were being used by the Holy Spirit to bring about life and liberty to those who obey the gospel!

5. The Spirit liberated the sinner from the bondage of Law and brought Him into the freedom of grace!

a) Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. (2 Corinthians 3:17)

b) There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. (Romans 8:1-2)

6. A careful study of these passages makes abundantly clear that the Holy Spirit was the effective cause of conversion in the alien sinner, bringing him to faith, repentance and baptism for the remission of sins, giving him the knowledge of God that results in a spiritual renewal, writing God's law "in the heart", and liberating sinful men from bondage to the law of sin. Yet, none of this depended upon a "second channel" of work for the Spirit or a "direct operation" of the Spirit in addition to the work the Spirit was doing through the apostles in teaching and performing miracles.

7. The church's unique doctrine of salvation stands in vivid contrast to denominational soteriology that affirms, due to Calvinistic presuppositions, additional influences of the Spirit on the soul separate and apart from the gospel. The Bible does not teach such; but it does clearly teach that, if we are disciples of Jesus Christ, then the Holy Spirit has made that spiritual transformation possible. Without Him it could not and does not exist!

B. The Blessings of the outpouring of the Spirit on the believer

1. The importance of cultural context in understanding statements about the Spirit's work in the believer.

a) As we interpret Scripture we must remember that there are two horizons--near and far. The first rule of exegesis is, "What did the statements of Scripture mean to those who first heard

them?” Understanding the background experience of the churches with the Spirit will help us also understand more accurately the statements made to them about the Holy Spirit in the epistles directed to them!

b) So then let’s consider what blessings this reception of the Spirit provided for those who received the outpouring of the Spirit.

2. The Spirit bore witness that they were God’s children.

a) How would God make known to the unbelieving world that this new group of disciples following Jesus Christ belonged to Him? How would He demonstrate beyond doubt that the church of Christ was the fulfillment of the OT prophecies concerning the coming king and His people? I believe that God did that through the miraculous outpouring of the Spirit upon these new disciples. Let’s consider the evidence:

b) Paul’s statements to the Ephesians

(1) 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, 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. (Ephesians 1:13-14)

(2) I submit that Paul’s statement to the Ephesians should be understood in light of the Ephesians’ experience. In Ac. 19 we are told that when Paul came to Ephesus he found some disciples and he asked them a most interesting question. “Have you received the Spirit since you believed?” This question indicates Paul’s desire as an apostle to impart the Holy Spirit to new disciples through the laying on of his hands. However, in this case, these disciples had not heard of the Holy Spirit. By this Paul knew that they had not heard the gospel, since the promise of the reception of the Spirit after baptism was a part of the gospel message. Thus, after confirming this he taught them the gospel of Jesus Christ, baptized them in Jesus’ name, and then laid his hands upon them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.

(3) And 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).

(4) Paul’s words in his epistle should be understood in light of the Ephesians’ experience. After hearing the gospel of salvation they were “sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise”.

(a) The expression “Holy Spirit of promise” points back to the prophecy of Joel that the outpouring of the Spirit would come upon all flesh.

(b) The word “seal” is of special importance here. The word “seal” conveys the idea of putting a mark or stamp on something to establish its authenticity or to identify it as belonging to someone. Paul is here affirming that God put His seal upon these new believers as belonging to Him, marking them as His authentic children, through the outpouring of the Spirit. Who could deny that these disciples were truly God’s children when the manifest miraculous work of the Spirit was taking place through them?

(5) Later in the same epistle Paul would affirm that the Spirit’s presence indicated that these disciples were the true temple of God!

(a) So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:19-22)

(6) In chapter four he urges them not to grieve the Spirit by which they were sealed for the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30).

(a) To grieve the Spirit is to make the Spirit sorrowful by failing to let the Spirit’s revelations have their effect in the disciples’ lives!

(b) And so I would suggest that we should read and understand these Holy Spirit statements in light of the Ephesians’ experience described by Luke in the book of Acts.

c) Paul’s statement to the Corinthians

(1) Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge. (2 Corinthians 1:21-22)

(2) What is the background information for understanding these statements?

(a) We know that both Paul & Timothy had received the outpouring the Spirit.

(b) We know that the Corinthians had received the outpouring of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13ff).

(c) We know that the concept of “anointing” was associated with the coming of the Holy Spirit on someone and miraculous power it brought.

(d) “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. (Acts 10:38)

(3) The Corinthians, like the Ephesians, along with Paul and Timothy had been “sealed” with the Spirit.

(a) The idea is that by the reception of the outpouring of the Spirit God clearly marked them as authentic disciples, His children.

(b) The spiritual gifts working among them gave clear evidence to them and to the unbelieving world that they belonged to God.

d) This may also help us understand the statement of Paul in Romans 8 about the Spirit’s testimony of sonship.

(1) For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, (Romans 8:15-16)

(2) The reception of the Spirit by the Romans enabled them to know that they were children of God. Thus, the Spirit was “bearing witness” by charismatic gifts that they were God’s children (Cf. Rom. 12:6).

e) Paul makes a similar argument to the Galatians.

(1) He shows that they were sons of God through faith in Christ in being baptized. But furthermore he shows that the reception of the Spirit is the evidence that they were the sons of God!

(a) And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” (Galatians 4:6)

(b) Compare this statement with the earlier ones where Paul mentions the reception of the Spirit and the miracles that came through it (Gal. 2:1ff).

3. If then the Spirit's presence in them was proof that they were God's children, then it is also proof that the inheritance God has promised will be forthcoming in due time.

a) The Holy Spirit assured them that the inheritance God had promised to them would be given to them!

(1) And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (Ephesians 4:30)

(2) 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, 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. (Ephesians 1:13-14)

(3) Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge. (2 Corinthians 1:21-22)

(a) The word “pledge” translates “arrabon,” a Greek word conveying the idea of a prepayment, down payment, or earnest.

(b) BAGD gives this entry: ἀρραβών, ὄνομα, ὄ (Semit. loanw.; Hebr. אַרְבָּוֹן Gen 38:17-20=ἀρραβών LXX; Lat. arra or arrabo [Thesaur. Linguae Lat. II 633]. For the spelling ἀραβών cf. Bl-D. §40; Thackeray 119; M-M.) legal and commercial t.t. (since Isaeus 8, 23 and Aristot., freq. inscr., pap., ostraca [Nägeli 55; Preisigke, Fachw.]) *first instalment, deposit, down payment, pledge*, that pays a part of the purchase price in advance, and so secures a legal claim to the article in question, or makes a contract valid (UPZ 67, 13 [153 BC]; PLond. 143, 13; PFay. 91, 14; POxy. 299, 2f; BGU 446, 5); in any case, ἀ. is a payment which obligates the contracting party to make further payments. It is also used fig. (Aristot., Pol. 1, 11; Stob. IV 418, 13 H. ἔχειν ἀρραβῶνα τ. τέχνην τοῦ ζῆν) δούς τὸν ἀ. τοῦ πνεύματος ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν *has deposited the first instalment of the Spirit in our hearts* 2 Cor 1:22 (on association w. baptism: EDinkler, OCullmann-Festschr. '62, 188f); cf. 5:5. The Spirit is the *first instalment* τῆς κληρονομίας Eph 1:14. Jesus Christ is ἀ. τῆς δικαιοσύνης ἡμῶν *pledge of our*

righteousness Pol 8:1.—S. BAhern, CBQ 9, '47, 179-89. M-M and suppl. B. 799.*

(4) The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him. (Romans 8:16-17)

4. The outpouring of the Spirit guided the church in worship.
 - a) What happened when the disciples came together for worship? We might be quite surprised at the service. The Holy Spirit guided the worship by providing the content of songs and prayers.
 - (1) 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. (1 Corinthians 14:15)*
 - (2) But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith; praying in the Holy Spirit; (Jude 20)*
 - (3) And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; (Ephesians 5:18-19)*
 - b) What a blessing it would have been to these new churches to be guided in their worship by the Holy Spirit! Even if they did know what to pray or what to sing, the Spirit would provide just what was needed for the time.
5. The outpouring of the Spirit gave the church instruction in the absence of a full revelation of God's will.
 - a) Just as the outpouring of the Spirit identified those who had been baptized as belonging to the Lord, it also provided guidance for the same.
 - (1) For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. (Romans 8:14)*
 - (2) But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. (Galatians 5:18)*
 - b) By such statements Paul is affirming that one of the blessings of having received the Spirit is the guidance or instruction that the Spirit gave them.
 - c) This guidance did not take the form of a personal inner gyro that directed every step of every believer, but an external source of instruction to the whole church that came through the charismatic gifts.
6. The Spirit was active in the teaching assemblies of the church to provide the needed knowledge and wisdom to instruct the church!

- a) But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. (1 Corinthians 14:3)
- b) The Spirit's instruction came through the gifts of revelation and not through some subjective inner leading moment by moment!
- c) Having the power to receive revelations and work miracles did not guarantee a faithful life, unless the disciples listened to and applied the Spirit's message. Thus the church was urged to let the Spirit's revelations guide them!

(1) But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. (Galatians 5:16)

(2) When the Galatians listened to and applied the Spirit's teaching they would no longer live in sin, producing the works of the flesh, but would live in the righteousness of faith, practicing the fruit of the Spirit.

(3) However if they continued in a life of sin, the Holy Spirit would be grieved!

(a) And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (Ephesians 4:30)

(4) The presence of the Spirit within them was used as an incentive to live a holy and moral life.

(a) Amazing as it might seem to us, some of those who spoke in tongues and prophesied on Sunday appeared at the temple of Aphrodite later in the week to have sex with the cult prostitutes there and offered the rationale that it was no wrong but merely a fulfillment of a need of the body. Paul rebuked them for such shallow thinking and reminded them that their "one flesh" relationship with the harlots also brought the Spirit of God which was dwelling in them into that relationship!

(b) Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

(c) Earlier in the epistle Paul pointed to the fact that they should treat one another with love and respect because the whole body was a temple of God.

(d) Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will

destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are. (1 Corinthians 3:16-17)

(5) Though the church was receiving revelations in part there was still a need for apostolic guidance as well until the full revelation of God came.

(a) Paul, quite aware of the gifts of the Spirit among the Corinthian church, felt the need to further instruct and encourage them as an apostle of Christ to be faithful to the Lord's will.

(b) On one occasion, he even felt compelled to remind them that he "too" had the Spirit of God and that what he wrote was from the Lord and should not be set aside by those who may have used having a gift of the Spirit as a reason not to listen to his teaching!

(i) But in my opinion she is happier if she remains as she is; and I think that I also have the Spirit of God. (1 Corinthians 7:40)

(ii) If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. (1 Corinthians 14:37)

7. The outpouring of the Spirit gave assurance of the truth to the NT congregations.

a) It is interesting that the apostles appealed to the Spirit's presence among the congregations as proof that Jesus was indeed God's Son and an assurance that groups that denied this were apostate or not of God.

(1) But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know. I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth. Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. (1 John 2:20-22)

(2) And the one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And we know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us. (1 John 3:24)

b) On another occasion Paul appealed to a particular message that came by the Holy Spirit. The message was that of God's love for mankind which he said was... "*poured out in our*

hearts through the Spirit who has been given to us” (Rom. 5:5).

8. The outpouring of the Spirit assisted the church in reaching unbelievers.
 - a) The gifts of prophecy and tongues would have benefit for those who came into the church’s assemblies.
 - b) Tongues had evidential value to the visitor; since it revealed by miracle God’s presence among the disciples.
 - c) *So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe, but to unbelievers; but prophecy is for a sign, not to unbelievers, but to those who believe. (1 Corinthians 14:22)*
 - d) However useful this sign might be, it had to be used with caution lest the visitor seeing a whole church full of tongue speakers and decide that they were crazy! Thus, the gift of prophecy also had benefit to the unbeliever:

(1) 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? But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he 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. (1 Corinthians 14:23-25)
9. And so the early church had a very real sense of their belonging to God that was tied to the miraculous manifestations that came to them through the outpouring of the Spirit. In addition the presence of the Spirit speaking through them in their Spirit-guided prayers and prophecies and in the performance of miracles assured them that the inheritance God had promised them would at last be given to them.

VI. Sign, wonders, and miracles: How were the miraculous gifts of the Spirit regulated?

A. Since the reception of the Spirit was a manifestation of the unity of the church in Christ, Paul in 1 Corinthians 12 sets forth principles that should govern how they should be regarded to preserve that unity.

1. Paul first reminds the Corinthians that they had once been led astray.
 - a) *You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to the dumb idols, however you were led. (1 Cor. 12:2)*
 - b) As Gentiles (Gr. “ethne”) the Corinthians had been worshippers of idols. Paul calls them “dumb” idols. That not a reference to their intelligence (as we often use the word “dumb”), but to their inability to speak or communicate.
 - c) However the Corinthians had been led to worship idols, they had been led “astray.” They had lived in ignorance.

2. Now Paul wants them to not be ignorant concerning their faith, but rather fully informed.

a) *Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware. (1 Cor. 12:1)*

b) Paul wanted them to know the truth about their faith. And in keeping with that idea:

c) *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. (1 Cor. 12:3)*

d) But what does Paul mean by this puzzling contrast? What truth is Paul making known?

(1) Paul wants them to know that in contrast to the "dumb" idols, when the Spirit speaks He speaks in unity.

(a) No one will be able by the Spirit of God to curse Christ.

(b) Likewise no one can say "Jesus is Lord" (the contrasting idea) except by the Spirit.

(c) Together these two statements say in effect, "When God speaks through the Spirit He speaks in unity."

(2) And now it is this theme that Paul builds upon by describing the gifts of the Spirit.

3. Paul wants them to understand that though there are diverse gifts, they originate from one and the same Spirit for one purpose.

a) *Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 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. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills. (1 Cor. 12:4-11)*

b) First I should say a word about the expression in v. 1— "spiritual gifts." The Greek word here is a plural form of "pneumatikos." The word lays stress to the spiritual nature of the Corinthians' worship activities. However Paul makes an interesting move when starts talking about the gifts. He changes and uses a form of the word "charisma." This word suggests something graciously given (Cf. the Greek word for

grace, “charis”). And that idea is very important since Paul wanted to stress the idea that these things come from God and are manifestations of His grace.

c) There are diverse gifts of the Spirit; or as Paul put it “varieties of gifts.” There are various “manifestations” of His presence in the believers. As Paul as an apostle laid his hands upon the Corinthians, they received the Spirit and with that, a particular gift. There were various possibilities, all of which depend upon the miraculous work of the Spirit.

(1) First Paul describes them by nature:

- (a) Gifts (stresses that come from God’s favor)
- (b) Ministries (stresses that they are to be used to serve God’s people)
- (c) Effects (stresses that they are intended to accomplish God’s purposes)

(2) Second Paul enumerates them by name:

- (a) The word of wisdom—Miraculous insight into the application of truth
- (b) The word of knowledge—Miraculous insight into the facts of truth
- (c) Faith—Miraculous demonstration of faith (Cf. 1 Cor. 13:2)
- (d) Gifts of healing—Miraculous healing of the sick
- (e) Effecting of miracles—Other miraculous signs to confirm the word (Cf. Mk. 16:17-18)
- (f) Prophecy—Miraculous revelation or teaching
- (g) Distinguishing of spirits—Ability to judge the truth of a prophecy
- (h) Various kinds of tongues—Ability to speak in foreign languages as a sign to unbelievers
- (i) Interpretation of tongues—Ability to interpret foreign languages as a sign to unbelievers

d) Yet all these diverse gifts or powers come from one and the same Spirit.

(1) Notice how Paul repeatedly stresses the concept of “one Spirit” and “the same Spirit.” Paul urged them to realize that there was only one Spirit who was acting to glorify one Lord and to serve the purpose of one God. The Spirit’s goal was unity!

(2) He distributed these gifts according to His will, not on the basis of some quality in the receiver which might suggest superiority.

(3) I like the way Hayes describes this section: “Verses 4-11 particularly stress the sovereign initiative of God in allocating and empowering all spiritual gifts in the community.” (1 Corinthians, p. 208.)

- e) All these gifts or power are given for one purpose:
- (1) *But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (1 Cor. 12:7)*
 - (2) They were not given for the promotion of the receiver.
 - (3) They were given for the “good of the body.”
 - (4) (This verse, by the way, ought to cause us to re-evaluate the common assumption that spiritual gifts were given in the first century only to a few in the early church. More than once Paul makes it clear that every Corinthian believer had received the Spirit and a gift from Him.)

4. The church is one body.

a) *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. 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. (1 Cor. 12:12-13)*

b) First Paul wanted the divided Corinthian church to see that they were one body in Christ. In v. 13 he explains how this happened.

- (1) “By one Spirit” refers to the Holy Spirit who is the source of the gospel message. Cf. 2 Cor. 3:2-3.
- (2) “We were all baptized” refers to their obedience to the gospel in water baptism. Cf. Ac. 18:8
- (3) “Into one body” refers to the relationship with have with Christ as a member of His church. Eph. 1:22-23
- (4)“and have all been made to drink of one Spirit” refers to the common source of life that we have through the Spirit’s teaching. Jesus spoke of the coming Spirit in just such terms in Jn. 7:37-39.

5. Yet the body is not one but many members.

a) *For the body is not one member, but many. (1 Cor. 12:14)*

b) The church is one, yet is made of a diverse membership. We are like the organs of a body. That principle establishes the relationship that we have to one another. Paul stresses three important truths from this analogy.

- (1) It keeps people from saying, “I’m not needed.”
 - (a) *If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body,” it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. 16*

And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? (1 Cor. 12:15-17)

(b) Paul reasons to the Corinthians that, because a person does not have the gift of another, that doesn't make him unneeded. Sometimes Christians suffer under the delusion that because they cannot do what someone else does, their role is unimportant. In fact Paul goes further and says that the diversity is the work of God.

(c) But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. (1 Cor. 12:18)

(2) It keeps people from saying, "You're not needed."

(a) And if they were all one member, where would the body be? But now there are many members, but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." (1 Cor. 12:19-21)

(3) It stresses the need to honor and care for one another.

(a) On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; and those members of the body, which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our unseemly members come to have more abundant seemliness, whereas our seemly members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, that there should be no division in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. (1 Cor. 12:22-26)

(b) All should be respected and honored. Parts of the body that may not be as naturally attractive God has compensated for by making them more honorable. Have you ever seen a human liver? Pretty isn't it? How would you like to live without it?

(c) All should be cared for. The body immediately responds when something bad happens to one part of my body. Cf. hitting your finger with a hammer. Look at how the rest of the body responds.

(4) So having stressed both the unity and diversity of the church as a body, Paul sums up: *Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it. (1 Cor. 12:27)*

c) Significance of this section for the Corinthian Church

(1) Paul's body analogy is perfectly suited to the divided and competitive state of the Corinthian church. The applications to the Corinthian's abuse of their spiritual gifts is clear.

(a) The gifts should enhance not destroy their existence as one body.

(b) Those without a particular gift should not think they are not needed because of this; but instead they should see their gift as sovereignly bestowed for the good of the whole church.

(c) Likewise those who had the more impressive gifts (like tongues?) should not use this as justification for not appreciating and valuing all other members of the church.

(d) The Corinthians should honor and love one another.

6. Some gifts are greater than others.

a) Paul now approaches the topic, not from the standpoint of the Spirit as the giver, nor from the standpoint of the church as a body, but from the standpoint of the gifts' relationship to each other.

b) *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. (1 Corinthians 12:28)*

(1) *Gifts of instruction have the greatest priority.*

(a) Apostles are the witnesses of the resurrection to whom God appointed the task of building upon the foundation of Christ. They are the origin the essential truths of Christianity.

(b) Prophets are men and women who receive the spirit by the laying on of the apostle's hand and by the Spirit give additional needed revelations for the benefit of the church.

(c) Teachers are those who give instruction based upon the revelations God has given,

giving additional insights into the truth revealed.

(d) What all these gifts have in common is that they serve as the means of instructing the people of God.

(2) Gifts of confirmation have a lesser priority.

(a) By Paul's continued description it seems we are compelled to regard the confirmatory gifts such as miracles as being inferior to what they were designed to confirm, i.e. the revealed truth of God.

(b) Then other gifts however considered, whether in hierarchy or as equal within a group are of least importance.

(3) This is not the way that people would naturally think of the gifts.

(a) Miracles, healings, gift of tongues would naturally seem to suggest greater power and spirituality. It would be apparent that in a culture where power was impressive, being able simply to present the truth of God's word in an understandable way might not be valued the same as being able to speak in a foreign language one did not know.

(b) But all of this approaches the gifts from a carnal rather than spiritual perspective.

7. No one has all the gifts.

a) *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? All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they? (1 Corinthians 12:29-30)*

b) Paul uses a Greek construction that expects a negative answer to his questions; but what is the point? Why is it necessary to remind the Corinthians of what they surely know?

c) It would imply that no one has all the gifts and therefore there is interdependence among Christians. They need each other.

8. All should earnestly desire the greater gifts.

a) Which do you think would be more impressive—to speak in a foreign language (tongue) or teach a truth from God in simple words? Perhaps the Corinthians concluded the former.

b) This exhortation seems to encourage the Corinthians to act in a way unnatural to their past. Instead of being drawn to the gifts that display great power and that impresses others, they should pursue the ones that bring about edification through the

clear proclamation of truth. The priority is to be put on teaching.

c) Later Paul stressed it this way: 14:18-19. Paul said he would rather say, "Christ died for our sins" and everyone understand than to talk for hours in a foreign language, no matter how impressive, that no one could understand.

d) Significance of this section for the Corinthian problem.

(1) The Corinthians apparently approached the gifts with a misplaced emphasis on the gifts of confirmation and power. They pursued these diligently and thought little of those who did not have such powers.

(2) They had essentially reversed the attitude they should have. To God the more important thing is the edification of His people through clearly understood instruction. It is not as impressive; but it fulfills God's purpose.

(3) But even this is not adequate to fully address the problem. What is fundamental to this whole problem is the wrong attitude the Corinthians had toward one another. He ended chapter 12 by promising to show them "a more excellent way." But this is more than a generic chapter about love; it is a chapter about the relationship of love to spiritual gifts.

B. Exercising spiritual gifts with love is "the more excellent way."

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 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. 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. (1 Cor. 13:1-3)

2. Spiritual gifts exercised without love is vain..

a) In striking fashion Paul imagines the greatest expressions of service to God.

(1) Suppose I could speak with the languages not only of men but even of angels? Without love I am nothing more than a noisy gong or cymbal!

(2) Suppose I knew all there was to know of God's revealed truth? Without love nothing!

(3) Suppose I made the ultimate sacrifice, my own body in martyrdom for the sake of the Lord? Without love, nothing!

(4) And the corollary truth is apparent, namely, that doing God's work acting out of true love is of preeminent value to the church.

b) Our identity as a church of Christ is Scripturally tied to love. Not only is a church identified as belonging to Christ by its doctrine and practice; it is also identified by our relationship with each other.

(1) A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35)

(2) When we understand this, we understand how necessary love is. But what are the features of this love brethren should have toward one another?

3. The nature of love

a) Paul's description gets to the heart of what love is all about. It was not designed to be read at weddings or written on Hallmark cards. It is an objective look that is designed not to make everybody feel good, but to help us all do better! Love is a composite of many virtues; therefore Paul give the Corinthians the features or characteristics of love (13:4-7).

b) Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (1 Cor. 13:4-7)

(1) *Patient*--KJ (suffereth long) Paul starts with love in its passive aspect. This word refers to the quality of refraining from responding in anger to those who treat us wrongly. Where the deed or occasion may call for resentment, bitter words, or deeds we keep calm, endure the pain without recourse to carnal means. To say this is to realize how easy it is to return in kind to those who wrong us. But this love, remains passive in enduring it. In contrast there is the active side; love is:

(2) *Kind*--Here meaning "benign"; showing its possessor to be useful, friendly. Lenski's quote:

(3) *Not jealous*--Not seething, that is feeling the anger that results from seeing others prosper. If another is more prosperous, or highly gifted, or more spiritual, love is pleased with it and glad of it. One who truly loves will be satisfied with their own portion in life and be glad in another's greater portion!

(4) *Does not brag*--Vaunts not itself, means doesn't brag or boast, give verbal expression to pride or feelings of superiority over others.

(5) *Is not arrogant*--If bragging is the effect, then here is the cause. Having undue sense of self-importance. Too high a view of ourselves makes it more difficult to serve others.

(6) *Does not act unbecomingly*--Which is the negative expression of the idea of acting in keeping with what is proper decorum or manners. This means love is never tactless, or rude to others who approach us.

(7) *Does not seeks its own*--This explain the reason for the former. The true focus of love is not self. It looks out for the true interests of others. It does not seek to advance one's own desires at the expense of others.

(8) *Is not provoked*--Ironically, the person who acts unselfishly in serving the Lord and others may often be the target of the opposite. Hence, Paul says, love is not provoked. That is, not embittered or enraged by abuse, wrong, insult, or injury.

(9) *Does not take into account a wrong*--The idea is holding a grudge. The quality is hard to hide. How easy it is to see one's reluctance to praise or uphold another; and how easy it is to criticize. All too often this is the manifestation of one holding a grudge, just waiting for the opportunity to "get even".

(10) *Does not rejoice in unrighteousness*--And thus, when one is wronged there is no glee over the fact that they have acted contrary to the will of God; but rather great sorrow. It grieves the heart of a loving person that those who have wronged him could be lost for their sins. He does not delight in this. But rather,

(11) *Rejoices with the truth*--He finds satisfaction and joy in the doing of right.

At this point Paul turns his words in a positive vein. If love is none of the above, it is all of these things below. It:

(12) *Bears all things*--coming from a word meaning to "fend off". That is it endures whatever comes for the sake of truth.

(13) *Believes all things*--Refuses to yield to suspicions of doubt. It is determined to have confidence in others rather than impugn their motives.

(14) *Hopes all things*--It lives with optimism that love itself will conquer the evil of others.

(15) *Endures all things*--Here the word conveys the idea of bearing under trial as opposed to resisting the tendencies to anger, etc.

- c) Can we read this and say, "Now that's a description of me!" Better yet, could someone else say, "Now that's a description of you!" If not, we have changes to make. We put the "team" at risk.
4. Love will endure though spiritual gifts will pass away.
- a) *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. (1 Cor. 13:8)*
- b) Paul affirms that love will continue, but spiritual gifts will come to an end.
- (1) Paul explains this fact by contrasting what was true during the time of his writing to the Corinthians and a time yet to come.
- (2) In the present
- (a) *We know in part*
- (b) *We prophecy in part*
- (3) In the future
- (a) *When the perfect comes, the partial will be done away.*
- (b) But what is the perfect?
- (i) The Greek word means what is "complete, mature." It suggests what has reached the end of its process.
- (ii) In this context, the perfect is the opposite of the part or partial, the knowledge and prophecies.
- c) When God has completely revealed His truth, then the gifts of revelation and confirmation will no longer be needed. The perfect is the complete revelation of God.
- (1) Paul shows that this is like the process that takes place in growing from childhood to adulthood. (An illustration of the concept)
- (a) *When I was a child*
- (i) *I used to speak as a child*
- (ii) *I used to think as a child*
- (b) *But when I became a man*
- (i) *I put away childish things.*
- (c) But what is the point?
- (i) What is being illustrated is the idea of a "putting away" at the end of a process.
- (ii) As the revelation of God is completed, it will be put away like the features of a child are put away when one reaches manhood.

(2) He shows them the results of this transition from partial to perfect.

- (a) During the days of partial revelation
 - (i) *We see in a mirror dimly* (lack of clarity of partial revelation)
 - (ii) *I know in part*
- (b) During the days of completed revelation
 - (i) *Then face to face* (clarity of full revelation)
 - (ii) *Then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known*
 - (iii) The reference is not to the second coming of Christ, but rather to the time of completed revelation. It shows the results of the transition from partial to perfect.

(3) Paul summarizes his point on love by showing that it is one of three things that will abide after spiritual gifts have been done away.

- (a) Things that will abide (faith, hope, love, these three)
- (b) Things that will have been done away (prophecy, tongues, knowledge)

5. After spiritual gifts have served their purpose, love will still remain. This is the more excellent way.

6. Its significance for the Corinthians

- a) If the Corinthians applied Paul message about love and its relationship to spiritual gifts, it would bring an end to all competition and desire for superiority.
- b) The church at Corinth would be a unified body of members who valued and took care of one another.

C. Spiritual gifts must be exercised with a sense of priority, decency, and orderliness when the church assembles.

1. When the church assembled, the spiritual gifts were exercised for the edification of the church. In order for the worship service to be conducted in a decent and orderly way, Paul enumerates practical regulations for their use in the assembly (1 Cor. 14). From the text we can see that the church was not only viewing them competitively and considering them the basis of superiority over one another; they also were apparently displaying them indiscriminately in the assembly such that there was confusion and disorder in the worship. Since tongues were an especially impressive display of power, it appears that tongue-speakers even spoke their unknown languages without even an interpretation to indicate what had been said. Thus, it became necessary for Paul to return again to the issue of the priority of the gifts and their proper use. He has several important concerns:

2. Concern #1--the misplaced emphasis upon tongues and the neglect of prophecy

a) Verse one ties together the threads of Paul's previous instruction.

b) *Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. (1 Cor. 14:1)*

c) In keeping the message of chapter 13 Paul urges them to pursue the love he has just described as the more excellent way. In keeping with what he said at the end of chapter 12, he urges them to continue their desire for spiritual gifts; but what is perhaps most important to this text is Paul's insistence that:

d) Prophecy is the preferred gift to be seeking.

(1) 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. But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church. 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. (1 Cor. 14:2-5)

(2) There is a qualitative difference between speaking in an unknown language tongue without interpretation and speaking a word of prophecy in a language everybody knows!

(3) Speaking in tongues apparently took the form of "prayers" that were spoken to God. Prophecies were words of God spoken to men.

(4) The tongue-speaker might not even know what the Spirit was leading him to say in praise or thanks to God, i.e. in his spirit he would be speaking mysteries, things which he did not even understand.

(5) However the prophet speaks to men and his words can provide three important things: 1) edification; 2) exhortation; 3) consolation.

(6) Presumably the tongue speaker might be edified or edify himself by the experience of speaking by the Spirit's power to God; but the one who prophesies can edify the whole congregation by his words.

(7) Paul does not discourage the Corinthians to speak in tongues; but urges them to recognize that it is preferable that they prophecy. Prophecy is superior to tongues, unless the tongue speaker can also give the interpretation of what he has spoken in the spirit.

(8) Paul stresses the importance of clear words of understanding:

(9) 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? (1 Cor. 14:6)

(10) In other words, how can the words of a tongue benefit anyone unless they contain some intelligible message from God--revelation, knowledge, prophecy, teaching? He follows by three illustrations that drive this point home:

(a) Instruments of music cannot be recognized unless they produce a distinctly perceived sound:

(b) 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?

(c) Soldiers cannot respond to the bugle call unless they can discern that it is a bugle that is calling and not some other sound.

(d) For if the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle?

(11) And thus in the same way the words of a tongue must be perceptible for the hearer to derive any benefit.

(a) 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. (1 Cor. 14:7-9)

(b) If someone speaks in a tongue and it is not understandable, then no real communication takes place.

(c) There are, perhaps, a great many kinds of languages in the world, and no kind is without meaning. 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 (1 Corinthians 14:10-12)*

d) But those who speak in tongues should also pray that they may interpret the tongue.

(1) Therefore let one who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. (1 Cor. 14:13).

(2) Paul explains why this is necessary:

(a) First because the one praying or singing in the tongue is using his spirit, but not his mind. He is not deriving the benefit of understanding what he is saying to God.

(i) For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful.

(ii) 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.

(b) Second, the person who does not have the gift of tongues cannot benefit because he does not understand the message.

(i) 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? For you are giving thanks well enough, but the other man is not edified. (1 Cor. 14:16-17)

(3) Paul adds his own determination to always edify, even though he can speak in tongues more than anyone!

(a) I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all; 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. (1 Corinthians 14:18-19)

(b) In a sense Paul has gone "one up" on the Corinthians. If they are thinking that they are superior by their ability to speak in tongues, then Paul will say, "I can speak in more tongues than even you can!" Yet Paul would rather communicate simply God's message and be understood than speak ten thousand words in a tongue that no one could understand.

e) The significance of this section for the Corinthians

(1) What Paul hopes the Corinthians will learn is that it is not so important that people be impressed with their perceived superior spirituality nor with the impressive display of power that tongues might convey to those hearing.

(2) Instead they should focus always on the edification of the church. This is the most important thing.

(3) The best way to provide real edification is to through an understandable message like prophecy.

3. Concern #2--The impact that this display will have upon unbelievers who may enter the assembly.

a) *Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be babes, but in your thinking be mature. 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. So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe, but to unbelievers; but prophecy is for a sign, not to unbelievers, but to those who believe. 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? But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he 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. (1 Corinthians 14:20-25)*

b) As we read this, it is clear that Paul is concerned about the impact of this display will have upon unbelievers who may enter the assembly. However, the way Paul gets to his conclusion has baffled interpreters of this text. So let's try to think through Paul's logic and see where it leads us.

c) First Paul urges the Corinthians to grow up in their attitudes.

(1) *Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be babes, but in your thinking be mature. (1 Cor. 14:20)*

(2) When the Corinthians were competing over spiritual gifts, they were like children fighting over their toys.

(3) If they were to be child-like, let it be the innocence of not participating in evil, not the immaturity of children who lack discernment.

(4) Their selfish attitudes were keeping them from discerning the impact their gifts might have on unbelievers who came to the assembly.

d) Second he affirms that tongues are sign of judgment for the unbelieving.

(1) He begins by appealing to an OT text that baffles many interpreters.

(2) *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.*

(3) Paul makes use of a text by Isaiah in which the prophet reveals to Israel that since they had rejected the word of the Lord they would hear the words of the Assyrians. Yet even this word would not be enough to

convince them to repent. Consequently they would go into captivity for their sins.

(4) Paul's application is that these foreign tongues then function similarly for the unbelievers in his age. They are a sign of judgment to the unbelieving.

(5) The tongue itself without interpretation communicates no saving message to the unbeliever that would cause him to repent.

(6) *So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe, but to unbelievers,* However in contrast, Paul says, *"but prophecy is for a sign, not to unbelievers, but to those who believe."* In other words, the clear words of prophecy can serve as a sign to the believer that would motivate him to repent.

e) Now building upon this distinction Paul suggests what might happen if unbelievers came into the Corinthian assembly:

(1) 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? (1 Cor. 14:21-23)

(2) If no clear message is communicated, will not the unbelievers think that this is just another of the cults that use unintelligible speech?

(3) But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he 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. (1 Cor. 14:24-25)

(4) So as the prophecies speak God's will, even the unbeliever who comes in may hear a message that reveals his own sin and his need for repentance. He will see that this is truly an assembly of the true God and worship Him.

f) Significance of this section for the Corinthians

(1) Of course Paul's message would be especially needed as the Christians turned the assembly into a confused and disorganized display. The church would leave the impressions that it was nothing more than one of many other mystery religions that thrived on ecstatic utterances.

(2) In addition, such an assembly would defeat the purposes for the church's gathering—to teach and edify one another.

- (3) It would prevent the possible conversion of the unbeliever.
4. Concern #3--The manifest disorder and confusion that is occurring in the assembly.
- a) First he urges them to do everything for the purpose of edification.
- (1) *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.*
- (2) This text offers some interesting insight into the teaching assembly at Corinth.
- (a) Instead of having one speaker, there were several people who spoke to the assembly. Paul's regulations suggest four to six speakers.
- (b) Their teaching gifts involved different modes of instruction:
- (i) A psalm--a song taught by the Spirit
- (ii) A revelation--an word direct from God by way of prophecy
- (iii) A tongue--a foreign language in the form of a prayer or song
- (iv) An interpretation--the interpretation of a tongue-speakers' song or prayer
- (3) Yet all these diverse activities share one common purpose--"let all be done unto edification."
- (a) Edification is the process of building up others spiritually, increasing their knowledge and faith.
- (i) For Paul, edification was the result of a clearly spoken and properly understood message from God.
- b) Second he limits the number of tongue-speakers and sets the conditions for their addressing the assembly.
- (1) *If anyone speaks in a tongue, it should be by two or at the most three, and each in turn, and let one interpret; but if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God.*
- (2) Paul regulates the number of tongue-speakers.
- (a) Though tongues were apparently cherished by the Corinthians, Paul gives them no more priority than any other gift.
- (b) He limits them to 2 or 3 speakers.
- (3) Paul insists that they speak one at a time and not simultaneously.

- (a) One gets the impression that a part of the disorder at Corinth was that many tongue-speakers perhaps spoke all at once or maybe even competed for the attention of the remainder of the group.
- (b) Paul instead urges them to speak one at a time, so all may hear them.
- (4) Paul insists that the tongue-speaker not speak (i.e. exercise their gift) if there is no interpreter.
 - (a) Some in the church might have had the gift of "interpretation" (Cf. 1 Cor. 12:10).
 - (b) Earlier Paul suggested that the tongue-speaker might pray that he could interpret the tongue he had spoken without understanding (1 Cor. 14:13).
 - (c) If these conditions could not be met, edification of the group could not take place.
 - (i) In that case, the tongue-speaker should only speak to himself and to God. He might derive some benefit by praying or singing with his spirit, but not his mind. But this need not come at the expense of the edification of the others.
- c) Third he limits the number of prophets and sets the conditions for their prophecies.
 - (1) And let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment. But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, let the first keep silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted; and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets;*
 - (2) These verses may imply that there were likewise numerous prophets in the church at Corinth. But Paul again regulates the number prophets who may speak to two or three.
 - (3) Paul urges the other prophets (or possibly the rest of the congregation) to "pass judgment." This could refer to another gift called "the distinguishing of spirits." (Cf. 1 Cor. 12:10) In other words, there may be false prophets; but there is a spiritual check and balance in place. The prophet's words are to be tested to ensure agreement with what the Spirit has said through them.
 - (4) It might be that the Holy Spirit would reveal something to another prophet that may be helpful in understanding God's truth. That person is freed to insert that into the discussion. The first speaker is required to

allow others to do this and not to monopolize the assembly.

(5) Again, it is important that everything be done in an orderly way, "one by one," so that there is no confusion or disorder.

(6) The result would be that all could learn and be exhorted. This is of course another way of defining what "edification" is.

(7) And lest some prophet insisted that he could not refrain from speaking what the Spirit had revealed to him, Paul counters, *"the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets."* In other words, a Spirit-guided person could control his speaking for the good of the congregation.

d) Finally Paul adds a reason for these regulations:

(1) for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

(2) Paul wanted the Corinthians to understand that their disorder and confusion reflected upon God. He is not a God of confusion, but peace.

(3) It is hard to tell if the final phrase goes with this verse or the next. But clearly Paul wants the Corinthians to understand that what he is commanding them is being practiced by the other congregations. Their God is not a God of confusion, but peace; so should the Corinthians' God be. And that should be reflected in their worship.

e) Significance of this section for the Corinthians

(1) Paul's regulations would limit the tendency to compete for preeminence by the exercise of the gifts. The assembly would not be a display of "superstars;" but a shared spiritual experience in which all could potentially participate.

(2) Paul regulations would ensure that edification would be accomplished because understandable messages were being proclaimed and augmented by those who were listening.

5. Concern #3--Some of the women are using the occasion to act outside their approved role in speaking in the assembly.

a) Let the women keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but let them subject themselves, just as the Law also says. And if they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church. Was it from you that the word of God first went forth? Or has it come to you only? (1 Cor. 14:34-36)

b) The varied approaches to this text

(1) Through the years the meaning of this text has been to most of us pretty “cut and dried;” yet in the so-called “scholarly community” there are numerous issues and concerns raised about this text..

(2) First some scholars noticed that this reading is found in different locations in some Greek manuscripts (in one after v. 33, and in several after verse 40). It led to the theory that this text was added in the margin by a later scribe to bring Paul’s teaching in harmony with 1 Tim. 2:11-12. Furthermore it is argued that it is contradictory to what had already said women could do in the assembly (1 Cor. 11:2-16). They believe that that text gave women permission to “pray or prophecy” in the assembly. So then, this verse does not represent the teaching of Paul and should be not considered authoritative.

(3) Another approach sees 1 Cor. 14 as the teaching of Paul and eliminates 1 Cor. 11:2-16 as an interpolation.

(4) Another debate centers around who the women are. Are they all women in the assembly? Or are they a more specific group? (wives of the prophets at Corinth? Or women who did not have prophetic gifts?)

(5) Another debate centers upon what it means not to “speak” in church. Does this mean women may never address the assembled church at all? Or even comment in a Bible class?

(6) Is this a command to regulate a specific problem in Corinth? Or is it a general exhortation Paul intended for all women for all time?

(7) So the passage may seem simple enough and maybe you already know the answer to all those questions; but I say this to suggest some of the issues that this text raises.

(8) Our goal is to try to simply let the text speak consistently with the rest of this chapter, the whole letter to the Corinthians, and finally to Paul’s teaching in his other epistles on this subject.

c) *As in all churches of the saints...*

(1) The original autographs did not include punctuation and sometimes there are places where a phrase may appropriately go with either the sentence that precedes or follows it. The Nestle-Aland Greek text places this phrase in connection with v. 34 as an assumed condition prior to Paul’s command.

(2) If it properly belongs here then it gives special weight to the idea that Paul's teaching concerning women here is not unique to Corinth; but is in fact the universal practice of the church. It is one of four times Paul makes this appeal in this letter. Here it is clear that whatever Paul teaches the church in Corinth about women (or less likely about the fact that God is not a God of confusion) is also what is practiced in other places. So nothing Paul says here should be in contradiction to what he taught the churches in other places.

(3) Note that "churches" here could be properly translated "assemblies" in the more specific sense of gatherings of saints for worship.

d) *Let the women be silent in the church*

(1) There is no word in the earliest Greek manuscripts for "your" as in the KJV.

(2) It is found in some late manuscripts. Since the KJV was made before many of the earlier manuscripts were discovered it preserves the "your." It may have been added by a scribe to suggest that Paul is speaking to the wives of prophets (or less likely the women of the Corinthian church).

(3) The word "women" translates "gunaikes" which may mean either women or wives. The context must guide us as to which is the appropriate sense.

(4) If Paul is speaking to the wives of prophets, then of course "wives" might be the better translation.

(5) If he is speaking to the women in general, then "women" is the better choice. The NASV chooses "women."

(6) "Keep silent" translates a Greek imperative meaning "to be silent".

(7) Since Paul has used this term already to the tongue-speakers and the prophets, then it makes sense to understand it in the same sense.

(8) *but if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God. (1 Cor. 14:28)*

(9) *But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, let the first keep silent. (1 Cor. 14:30)*

(10) Since Paul has used this phrase to urge the tongue-speakers and prophets to refrain from speaking in tongues and prophesying, it is reasonable to conclude that Paul is urging the women likewise to refrain in some similar sense. It would not necessarily indicate

that the women cannot otherwise speak in some way any more than it would say a tongue-speaker or prophet could not speak in any other way.

(a) Again the word “church” is likely used here in the sense of the assembly itself. Much like we say we are going to “church”.

e) *For they are not permitted to speak,*

(1) “For” is the common Greek word for explanation or elaboration.

(2) “they are not permitted” translates a passive verb meaning “to not be permitted or entrusted or turned to”.

(3) “To speak” translates the Greek infinitive meaning “to talk”. It refers to the common word for “speaking”. But here it is used to refer to a particular kind of speaking.

(4) Notice how that throughout the chapter Paul has used the word “speak” to describe the action of addressing the assembly for the purpose of instruction.

(a) At least 11 times Paul uses the word in this sense to describe the exercise the gifts of tongues and prophecy.

(b) 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. (1 Cor. 14:19)

(c) Paul’s previous usage of terms should condition our understanding of what kind of speaking he is forbidding here.

(i) Only one person may “speak” at a time (v. 27).

(ii) The speaker is standing up (v. 30).

(iii) The speaker has the total attention of the assembly.

(iv) The speaker is obligated to silence only if the Holy Spirit intervenes with revelation to others (v. 30).

(d) So when Paul says “they are not permitted to speak” it is natural to understand the language in the same way it has been previously used—i.e. to address the assembly by way of teaching or instruction.

(5) Again just as the expression “keep silent” does not imply being otherwise totally non-vocal, also notice that not all “speaking” is forbidden.

(a) speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making

melody with your heart to the Lord; (Ephesians 5:19)

(i) The same Greek word is used in Eph. 5 that is found in 1 Cor. 14. Unless we concluded that the women didn't sing the songs that were sung in the assembly, the inescapable conclusion is that the prohibition to speak in 1 Cor. 14 is restricted to the kind of speaking Paul has been discussing.

f) *But let them subject themselves, just as the Law also says.*

(1) This verse suggests what is the proper alternative course for the women or wives. They are to subject themselves.

(2) This means then that by refraining from speaking the women or wives are honoring a principle of authority taught by the Law and that continues to have force in the Corinthian church.

(3) This shows implicitly that the speaking involves the exercise of dominion over the assembly.

(4) They are to subject themselves as the Law also says.

(a) Paul's use of the Law in 1 Corinthians would suggest that "the Law" is the OT. The reference seems to be to Genesis 2-3 where the woman is placed under man's dominion or rule.

(b) All throughout Paul's epistles he appeals to the created order as the grounds for his instructions concerning the role of women and men in the home, and then by extension to the assembly (1 Tim. 2:13-14; 1 Cor. 11:2-16; Eph. 5:23-33).

(5) This statement suggests that there is a continuity of role between the OT and the NT.

(a) In the OT women were not the spiritual leaders of the people.

(b) In the exceptional cases where women were prophetess, they exercised their role in ways that gave honor to male leadership.

(c) However, they did have the opportunity to speak in Israel's assemblies concerning matters of importance to them (Num. 27:1-5).

(6) Paul's teaching here is compatible with what he has said elsewhere on this topic.

(a) Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a

woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. (1 Tim. 2:11-12)

(b) In 1 Tim. 2 Paul urges women not to teach or exercise dominion, but to be silent.

(c) In 1 Cor. 14 Paul urges women not to “speak,” but to be silent.

(d) In both texts Paul uses the same Greek word meaning non-vocal. The speaking of 1 Cor. 14 being forbidden is instructing the assembly.

(e) But now Paul addresses the woman not as an instructor, but as a one seeking to learn.

g) And if they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home.

(1) It may be that some of the Corinthian women felt that they were entitled to address the assembly with questions if not with instruction. But Paul seems to suggest that just as a woman might exercise dominion by “speaking,” she may also exercise dominion by asking questions in the assembly.

(2) Some scholars have inferred from this statement that this order was addressed particularly to the wives of prophets, who were interrupting their husbands, as they prophesied, by questions in the assembly. It may have been that by asking questions the wives could teach the assembly under the guise of learning.

(3) But even if their motivations were pure, it is clear that this questioning moved beyond the proper “quietness” that the Scripture enjoins upon women in learning.

(4) Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. (1 Tim. 2:11)

(5) Remember that this text does not call upon women to be non-vocal; but quiet. Submissiveness is indicated by disposition not silence.

(6) However, 1 Tim. 2 implies that it is possible for a women to demonstrate an unsubmissive disposition in learning.

(7) And in 1 Cor. 14 we see the manifestation of it in the women seeking to direct the assembly by questions—questions that they could have had answered by their husbands without disturbance to the assembly. The fact that they felt compelled to ask them in the assembly when they could have been answered otherwise reveals either a desire for attention or an inclination to control their husbands, both of which are inappropriate.

- h) *For it is improper for a woman to speak in church.*
- (1) “Improper” translates a word meaning “ugly, shameful, base”.
 - (2) It is a term of strong repulsion.
 - (3) Paul uses it again of women when he speaks of the “shame” of cutting off all their hair.
 - (4) Notice how again it is “speaking” of a certain kind that is shameful. It is speaking in which the woman seeks to exercise dominion over the assembly.

i) Significance for the Corinthians

- (1) Of course, Paul’s regulations here of women is a part of what he hopes will bring order and decency to the church service.
- (2) But let all things be done properly and in an orderly manner. (1 Corinthians 14:40)
- (3) By addressing the woman, he has urged things to be done in the “proper” way.
- (4) By addressing the tongue-speakers and prophets, he has urged things to be done in a “orderly manner.”

6. Now that Paul has addressed these concerns he ends the chapter in an emphatic and powerful way. Let’s hear his final words to the Corinthians on the subject of spiritual gifts.

a) Was it from you that the word of God first went forth? Or has it come to you only? If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord’s commandment. But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized. Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues. But let all things be done properly and in an orderly manner. (1 Cor. 14:36-40)

b) First Paul gives them a pointed question

- (1) *Was it from you that the word of God first went forth? Or has it come to you only?*
- (2) Paul question seems to have a biting sarcasm. Some of the Corinthians in their claims of superior spirituality apparently have even begun to defy the apostle who taught them the gospel (Cf. 1 Cor. 4:7). In a way they have become like unruly children who have forgotten who their “father” is (Cf. 1 Cor. 4:14).
- (3) Therefore it has become necessary for Paul to bring these high-minded disciples back down to earth. So Paul in effect asks them, “Are you the only ones to ever receive a revelation from God? Were you the first?”
- (4) And the answer is obvious. There would be no church at Corinth without the Spirit-guided work of Paul, Aquilla and Priscilla, Apollos, and perhaps Peter

who came to Corinth and taught them the truth. Without them the Corinthians would have been lost in idolatry and immorality. Have they forgotten from whom they first learned the truth? Can they now afford to exalt themselves over those who taught them and through whom they received the gifts they were now apparently gloating over?

- c) Second Paul gives them a personal testimony
- (1) Paul wants these people who are out of hand to remember the source of his teaching and writing:
 - (2) *If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment.*
 - (3) "If any one thinks..." Fee points out that Paul has used this line before.
 - (4) *If any man among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become foolish that he may become wise. (1 Cor. 3:18)*
 - (5) *If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know; (1 Cor. 8:2)*
 - (6) So now Paul urges those who think they are prophets or spiritual to recognize an important truth about him:
 - (7) The things I write to you are the Lord's commandment.
 - (8) Here Paul asserts his apostolic authority.
 - (9) He affirms that the "written word" or scripture has the authority of the Lord behind it.
 - (10) This is true because as Paul made clear earlier in the book he has received the Spirit of God.
 - (11) *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, 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. (1 Cor. 2:12-13)*
- d) Third Paul gives them a powerful judgment
- (1) *But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized.*
 - (2) Such a statement surely must have left taken all the air out of the inflated egos of the prideful Corinthians. If they continue this behavior, not only are they in defiance of the apostle's instruction, they have lost their status as those recognized as belonging to the Lord.
- e) Fourth Paul gives them a practical principle

(1) Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues. But let all things be done properly and in an orderly manner.

(2) In keeping with the theme of this chapter, Paul urges balance in applying what he has said. He has made it clear that prophecy is the superior gift because it involves the understandable proclamation of truth; however, such should not be taken to the extreme.

(3) Both in the use of the gifts, there must be order instead of confusion; and respect for proper conduct.

f) Significance to the Corinthians

(1) These final words of Paul to the divided Corinthians were intended to humble them and remind them that they owed their souls to the Lord and to the apostle who taught them the truth.

(2) Instead of ignoring God's word through the apostle, they should reign in their behavior to conform to the principles of order and decency. They should seek to edify one another. Otherwise their confusion and disorder reflects upon the character of their God.

VII. Signs, wonders, and miracles: Was this outpouring of the Spirit to last to the end of time?

A. *What insight could we gain from the prophecy of Joel?*

1. Let's go back to our original starting point, the prophecy of Joel.

a) Did Joel prophesy a period of continuous revelation?

b) Did Joel prophesy a time limit on the outpouring?

2. Joel prophesied that the outpouring of the Spirit would occur "after this" (from his prophetic perspective).

a) *"And it will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; (Joel 2:28)*

b) However, Peter in quoting the passage gives an interpretive translation saying:

c) *'And it shall be in the last days,' God says, 'that I will pour forth of My Spirit upon all mankind (Acts 2:17).*

d) This term was commonly used in the OT, in the form of "the end of the days", for the time when the OT prophecies would be fulfilled, i.e. God would set up the Messiah on the throne of David. This establishes the beginning point of the outpouring; but what about the ending point?

3. Joel prophesied that the outpouring of the Spirit would be coordinate with wonders God would display "before the great and notable day of the Lord".

a) *"And I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, blood, fire, and columns of smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and*

awesome day of the Lord comes. 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 2:30-32)

b) Notice that the outpouring of the Spirit is to prepare the way for the judgment of God upon the unbelieving, both among Israel and Israel's enemies. But what is this "day of the Lord"?

(1) Perhaps the first response would be the final judgment of God at the second coming of Christ. However, more careful study of the OT reveals that Joel's "day of the Lord" might better be seen as the time of judgment that came upon the enemies of God's kingdom, viz. the unfaithful in Israel as well as the Gentiles.

(2) Note the prophecy of Jesus in Lk. 21:21-28. This prophecy of Jesus, which borrows the terminology of Joel, speaks of a day of the Lord falling upon Jerusalem resulting in both the destruction of the unbelieving and the deliverance of the faithful.

(3) Peter saw that judgment already on the horizon. Thus he urged the unbelieving Jews on the day of Pentecost to avoid this day of judgment to come:

(4) And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!" (Acts 2:40)

4. Thus, the prophecy of Joel might suggest the possibility that the outpouring of the Spirit was to last from the appearance of the Messiah to the time when God would judge the enemies of the kingdom, beginning with Jerusalem and continuing with the defeat of the powers of this world as they were embodied in the great Roman Empire (Cf. Dan. 2). Thus, we might deduce that the "outpouring of the Spirit" would not reach beyond the fall of the Roman Empire. It might not even last that long! But it would suggest that we could not expect "the outpouring of the Spirit" to endure until the end of time.

B. *What insight could we gain from the method of impartation?*

1. We see that the outpouring of the Spirit came upon the early church through the laying on the apostle's hands (and apparently, through no others.)

2. Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit. 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 8:14-17)

3. This then was the customary way for the Holy Spirit to be given and received in the NT era. The only exception to this rule seems to be the household of Cornelius where the outpouring of the Spirit occurred among Gentiles for the first time similarly to how it had first been given among Jews, i.e. directly by Jesus Christ from heaven! (Cf. Ac. 11:15-18).

4. Unless one can prove another means of impartation, it would appear that the outpouring of the Spirit could not be given beyond the lifetime of the apostles themselves. This would set an outer limit of a generation from the end of the apostolic era (first century). This would suggest that there might have been some people upon whom the apostles laid their hands exercising gifts of the Spirit in the late first century and into the second century; but we would expect a diminishing of the phenomenon at the death of the apostles that would continue until no living person had spiritual gifts.

C. What insight could we gain from the duration statements of Paul's letter to the Corinthians?

1. We see that the apostle Paul predicted the cessation of spiritual gifts when the perfect comes.

2. *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. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. (1 Corinthians 13:8-10)*

3. Of course this text has been a battleground between cessationists and non-cessationists. Those believing in the continuation of spiritual gifts argue for "the perfect" being Jesus Christ; those who contend for cessation of spiritual gifts usually explain "the perfect" as the completed revelation of God.

a) "The perfect" in this context is the opposite of "the part".

b) The Greek word itself means what is "complete".

c) Paul contrasts the condition of partial knowledge with the condition of "full manhood" and "full knowledge" that comes through the completed revelation.

d) Thus, Paul envisioned an end to the spiritual gifts that came through the outpouring of the Spirit at some future time. This is undeniable.

4. But when?

a) The coming of the "perfect" would best coincide with the completion of the NT canon, since it was through the written scriptures that Christ would guide His church through the ages. When God had revealed all He wanted to say to the church, He ended the miraculous work of revelation and confirmation.

b) Paul simply wants the church to understand that spiritual gifts will not always endure, but faith, hope, and love would abide. Thus, it would be self-evident to them when that time

arrived. Prophets could no longer prophecy, tongue speakers could no longer speaking other languages, miracle workers would no longer possess miraculous power!

c) Some commentators suggest that all the NT books were completed by AD 70. Both Paul and Peter appear to have died before this event and there is some evidence to suggest that Revelation (which is often dated in the reign of Domitian) might have been written before AD 70 as well. But even if we extend the date for the completed canon to the late first century, we should also consider the need for some time for the Scriptures to be collected and shared so that they could serve as a guide for all the churches in the Roman empire. Though it is impossible to put an arbitrary date on this, it is clear that by the end of the second century the NT Scriptures had been collected and distributed over the Roman world.

D. What insight could we gain from historical statements about the outpouring?

1. The fathers of the late first century acknowledge the common presence of spiritual gifts in the first century congregations.

a) Clement of Rome wrote apparently in behalf of the Roman church a letter to the church at Corinth. This epistle was highly esteemed by the early church, was read in many congregations in the second century, and was even found appended to the great Alexandrinus Codex. It is an appeal to the Corinthians for unity after a sedition occurred in which some of the elders were rejected and removed from service. Clement in addressing the problem seeks to remind them of their past.

(1) Content with the provision which God had made for you, and carefully attending to His words, ye were inwardly filled with His doctrine, and His sufferings were before your eyes. Thus a profound and abundant peace was given to you all, and ye had an insatiable desire for doing good, while a full outpouring of the Holy Spirit was upon you all. (Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, chapter 2)

(2) Let our whole body, then, be preserved in Christ Jesus; and let every one be subject to his neighbor, according to the special gift bestowed upon him. (Clement, chapter 38)

b) Clearly Clement acknowledges what the Scriptures also teach in 1 Cor. 12—that the Corinthians had received a full outpouring of the Spirit with each one receiving a gift. But in addition he appeals to this fact as the basis for unity among them, urging them to be subject to one another “according to the special gift bestowed upon him.” So we have in this late

first century epistle confirmation of the NT teaching and showing the continuing use of the gifts in the late first century..

2. In the second century (100's) we see evidence that spiritual gifts continued to exist in Christians, these apparently having been imparted through the apostles.

a) Epistle of Barnabas (c. 130 AD) was a highly regarded work of early origin, read in the churches and appended to the great Sinaiticus Codex. But there is considerable doubt among scholars that it originated from Barnabas, the companion of Paul as the title might suggest. However, whoever the author it reflects the thinking of a disciple in the early second century.

(1) Seeing that the divine fruits of righteousness abound among you, I rejoice exceedingly and above measure in your happy and honored spirits, because ye have with such effect received the engrafted spiritual gift. Wherefore also I inwardly rejoice the more, hoping to be saved, because I truly perceive in you the Spirit poured forth from the rich Lord of love. (Epistle of Barnabas, chapter one)

(2) But it shall be built, observe ye, in the name of the Lord, in order that the temple of the Lord may be built in glory. How? Learn [as follows]. Having received the forgiveness of sins, and placed our trust in the name of the Lord, we have become new creatures, formed again from the beginning. Wherefore in our habitation God truly dwells in us. How? His word of faith; His calling of promise; the wisdom of the statutes; the commands of the doctrine; He himself prophesying in us; He himself dwelling in us; opening to us who were enslaved by death the doors of the temple, that is, the mouth; and by giving us repentance introduced us into the incorruptible temple. He then, who wishes to be saved, looks not to man, but to Him who dwelleth in him, and speaketh in him, amazed at never having either heard him utter such words with his mouth, nor himself having ever desired to hear them. This is the spiritual temple built for the Lord. (Barnabas 16:9)

b) Ignatius (50-117?) was an early church father and "bishop" of the church at Antioch who suffered martyrdom in Rome. On his way to Rome he wrote a number of epistles to churches which have been preserved (7 of them are regarded as authentic, including this letter to the Philadelphians)..

(1) For, when I was among you, I cried, I spoke with a loud voice: Give heed to the bishop, and to the presbytery and deacons. Now, some suspected me of having spoken thus, as knowing beforehand the

division caused by some among you. But He is my witness, for whose sake I am in bonds, that I got no intelligence from any man. But the Spirit proclaimed these words: Do nothing without the bishop; keep your bodies as the temples of God; love unity; avoid divisions; be the followers of Jesus Christ, even as He is of His Father. (Ignatius, Epistle to the Philadelphians, chapter 7).

c) Second century apologist, Justin Martyr (100-165) recorded an interesting debate with a Jew named Trypho in which he argues that the Holy Spirit ceased His revelatory work among the Jews when Christ came and that the evidence of that was that the Jews no longer had prophets but that the prophetic gift had come to Christians.

(1) "For the prophetic gifts remain with us, even to the present time. And hence you ought to understand that [the gifts] formerly among your nation have been transferred to us. (Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho, chapter 72)

(2) Accordingly He rested, i.e., ceased, when He came, after whom, in the times of this dispensation wrought out by Him amongst men, it was requisite that such gifts should cease from you; and having received their rest in Him, should again, as had been predicted, become gifts which, from the grace of His Spirit's power, He imparts to those who believe in Him, according as He deems each man worthy thereof. I have already said, and do again say, that it had been prophesied that this would be done by Him after His ascension to heaven. It is accordingly said, 'He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, He gave gifts unto the sons of men.' And again, in another prophecy it is said: 'And it shall come to pass after this, I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh, and on My servants, and on My handmaids, and they shall prophesy. "Now, it is possible to see amongst us women and men who possess gifts of the Spirit of God; so that it was prophesied that the powers enumerated by Isaiah would come upon Him, not because He needed power, but because these would not continue after Him (Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho, Chapter 88, 150 AD).

3. By the early third century (200's) we see that spiritual gifts have now diminished and only traces of the gifts exist among Christians.

a) Origin in his work "Against Celsus" takes up numerous arguments by this false teacher in opposition to Christianity.

Among them is his response to Celsus' argument that he could find experiences comparable to the prophecies of Jews and Christians in the pagan world.

(1) Moreover, the Holy Spirit gave signs of His presence at the beginning of Christ's ministry, and after His ascension He gave still more; but since that time these signs have diminished, although there are still traces of His presence in a few who have had their souls purified by the Gospel, and their actions regulated by its influence. "For the holy Spirit of discipline will flee deceit, and remove from thoughts that are without understanding." (Origen, "Against Celsus", Book 7, chapter 8)

b) It may be difficult to imagine spiritual gifts in existence to the time of Origen who lived from about 190 to 250 AD. However, it is clear that Origen acknowledges that spiritual gifts had "diminished" from the time of the apostolic outpouring and that there existed only "traces of His presence in a few".

4. In the fourth century we see that spiritual gifts have apparently completely vanished among the disciples.

a) It is also interesting to see John Chrysostom's (c. 347-407) explanation of what occurred in the first century

(1) Whoever was baptized he straightway spake with tongues and not with tongues only, but many also prophesied, and some also performed many other wonderful works. For since on their coming over from idols, without any clear knowledge or training in the ancient Scriptures, they at once on their baptism received the Spirit, yet the Spirit they saw not, for It is invisible; therefore God's grace bestowed some sensible proof of that energy. And one straightway spake in the Persian, another in the Roman, another in the Indian, another in some other such tongue: and this made manifest to them that were without that it is the Spirit in the very person speaking. (Chrysostom, Homily 1 Cor., chapter 29)

b) But Chrysostom is very clear that the phenomenon of spiritual gifts no longer exists in his day:

(1) This whole place is very obscure: but the obscurity is produced by our ignorance of the facts referred to and by their cessation, being such as then used to occur but now no longer take place. And why do they not happen now? Why look now, the cause too of the obscurity hath produced us again another question: namely, why did they then happen, and now do so no

more? (John Chrysostom, Homily on 1 Cor. 12, chapter 29, of the Ante-Nicene Fathers)

(2) Keep in mind that he lived in Rome where spiritual gifts had existed and where Paul had hoped to impart spiritual gifts (Rom. 1:11.) He associated the gifts with an earlier phase in the church's establishment and recognized their cessation.

c) Augustine (354-430)

(1) In the earliest times, "the Holy Ghost fell upon them that believed, and they spake with tongues," which they had not learned, "as the Spirit gave them utterance." These were signs adapted to the time. For there behooved to be that betokening of the Holy Spirit in all tongues, to shew that the Gospel of God was to run through all tongues over the whole earth. That thing was done for a betokening, and it passed away.

(Augustine, Homily on 1 Jn. 3)

E. In sum, the historical evidence lines up quite well with the projected time-frame derived from the Scriptures themselves.

1. Using Joel 2:28 we predicted that spiritual gifts would cease before the fall of the Gentile nations hostile to God. Chrysostom confirms that this was the case over a hundred years before the fall of Rome.

2. Using the procedure of impartation, we suggested that spiritual gifts might linger into the second or early third century at the latest. The church fathers are clear in showing a diminishing of the gifts over this period of time with none by the early 300's.

3. Using the "the perfect" of 1 Cor. 13 we suggested that the outpouring might last until the Scripture could be gathered and effectively used by the churches of the empire. The Muratorian Canon is a list of books acknowledged by the second-century church to be of apostolic origin. FF Bruce writes:

a) Another early list, also of Roman provenance, dated about the end of the second century, is that commonly called the 'Muratorian Fragment', because it was first published in Italy in 1740 by the antiquarian Cardinal L. A. Muratori. It is unfortunately mutilated at the beginning, but it evidently mentioned Matthew and Mark, because it refers to Luke as the third Gospel; then it mentions John, Acts, Paul's nine letters to churches and four to individuals (Philemon, Titus, I and 2 Timothy), Jude, two Epistles of John, and the Apocalypse of John and that of Peter. The Shepherd of Hermas is mentioned as worthy to be read (i.e. in church) but not to be included in the number of prophetic or apostolic writings. (*The NT Books, Are they Reliable*, chapter 3)

b) Here then we see that all 27 books of our NT were already acknowledged to be authentic by the end of the second century.

And there is evidence to support the idea that congregations had access to these books.

4. Thus, all evidence seems to point us in the same direction. The outpouring of the Spirit was limited in duration for the purposes of revelation and confirmation of the word until the written Scriptures could be preserved.

VIII. Signs, wonders, and miracles: How do we apply the Message about the Outpouring of the Spirit Today?

A. In the modern world we see varied approaches to apply the text.

1. Pentecostalism says “Expect a miracle!”
 - a) Pentecostals contend that we must have apostles, prophets, and the various spiritual gifts just as did the first century church.
 - b) The problem with this view is the fact that one cannot verify the manifest miraculous elements of the first century charismatic experience with the so-called charismatic experience of the modern Pentecostal.
 - (1) Revelations are of dubious value and often contradict the NT.
 - (2) Signs are not authentic miracles (for example, substitute ecstatic utterances for tongues and pseudo-miracles for authentic miracles)
 - (3) Ignores the external historical evidence that spiritual gifts came to an end and re-interprets the statements about the cessation of spiritual gifts to extend them to the second coming.
2. Denominationalism says, “Let the Spirit guide you”.
 - a) Some claim that Jesus promise to guide the apostles into all truth has a modern personal application. It is argued that every believer has the Spirit guiding his understanding; thus, whatever conclusions he reaches about the Bible he concludes were given to Him by the Spirit. (That, by the way, is reason why it is so hard to convert many denominational people. If you think God has directly told you what to believe, you’re not going to be too impressed with the thinking and corrections of someone else!)
 - b) The problem is two-fold:
 - (1) There is no manifest miraculous confirmation of the truth and no way to determine who is being guided by the Spirit and who is not
 - (2) Even those who claim to be guided in understanding by the Spirit do not agree on the most fundamental questions about God and salvation! If the Spirit is guiding them into all truth then he is doing very poor job of it! People claiming to be guided by

the Spirit are teaching the Godhead has both one person and three! That baptism is essential to salvation and isn't. That instrumental music is fine, though there is not a shred of NT authority for it.

(3) The truth is the "charismatic movement" crosses over all denominational lines; yet brings no clarity to the religious confusion of denominationalism! Why is that?

3. Some re-interpret the NT teaching through modern experience, reducing the manifest and nearly universal miraculous experiences of the early church to a few and creating a non-miraculous category of "receiving the Spirit" for most others.

a) The attempt to give a modern application of NT statements about "receiving the Spirit" has resulted in the affirmation that every person who is baptized immediately "receives the Spirit" in a non-miraculous and non-detectable way.

(1) Some affirm this "indwelling" as a personal presence of the Holy Spirit in their body, though without any manifest evidence of His presence.

(2) Others affirm this "indwelling" as a representative presence of the Spirit in one through the indwelling word of God.

b) I see a number of problems with this approach:

(1) Granting this assumption leads to classification of Biblical texts into miraculous and non-miraculous, or charismatic vs. non-charismatic texts. This creates confusion, especially when the same terms are used to describe two supposedly different things and no way to tell the difference!

(2) It separates the statements about the Spirit's indwelling in the epistles from the miraculous background experience of those same churches and/or believers described in the book of Acts.

(3) Most gospel preachers among us that affirm a personal indwelling are emphatic in pointing out the Spirit works through the word. However, the idea of a personal indwelling may lend itself to concepts such as Holy Spirit enabling or inner guidance.

B. I would like to offer an alternative view that I believe does justice to the Biblical data and which is still in harmony with commonly held views about how the Spirit works today. In short, we simply acknowledge that the reception of the Spirit described in the NT was a miraculous experience that has ceased, but resulted in a written testimony that continues to bless people today. There are several things we should do in applying the NT teaching on the outpouring of the Spirit today.

1. First we must acknowledge the manifest miraculous nature of the outpouring of the Spirit in the first century.

a) In an earlier section we saw that the Scriptures refer to the miraculous work of the Spirit in new disciples with consistent terminology.

(1) From God's standpoint the Spirit is "given" or "a gift" from God. From God's standpoint the Spirit is "poured out".

(2) From man's standpoint the Spirit is "received" or "drunk".

b) In many of the texts where this language is used there are contextual indicators to show us that the writer is thinking of the miraculous gifts of the Spirit.

(1) This miraculous reception of the Spirit gave the early disciples of the apostles clear evidence that they had become God's children. Thus, the Spirit is said to be a "seal" and "earnest" and "a witness", a clear evidence that they belonged to God.

(2) Through the miraculous revelations the Spirit the church was led in worship and guided in life.

(3) Through the miraculous gifts of the Spirit the church could convict sinners and lead them to faith.

2. Second we must understand that this outpouring ceased making it impossible for disciples to identify with the experience and apply the teaching connected with it.

a) All of us who read 1 Cor 12-14 realize that Paul gives commands that regulate spiritual gifts. We realize that we cannot obey them as they exist because spiritual gifts no longer exist.

(1) Thus, we cannot obey the command to "earnestly desire to prophecy" (1 Cor. 14:1).

(2) We cannot let two or three tongue speakers speak in turn and then let one interpret" (1 Cor. 14:27).

(3) We cannot apply the teaching about veiled women prophesying in 1 Cor. 11:3ff.

b) All we can do with these commands and statements about the Holy Spirit is find principles of application while acknowledging that the experiences being described no longer exist. Thus we apply the principle but not the specific command.

(1) We seek to always communicate in a clear and understandable way.

(2) We may keep our services decent and orderly.

(3) We may encourage women to respect God's order of authority in teaching and leadership.

(4) But doesn't this sound like the Holy Spirit isn't doing anything today? Yes, we are acknowledging that the Holy Spirit simply isn't doing now what He did then! However...

3. Third, we must acknowledge that what the Spirit accomplished through NT revelation and confirmation can still have an affect in the present just as it had an effect among the ungifted in the first century. The record of what the Holy Spirit did and said through the spiritual gifts is available to us in our NT.

a) Spirit-powered miracles can now produce faith.

(1) Through Spirit-powered miracles unbelievers were made to believe in the validity of the gospel through the miracles performed (Ac. 5:12).

(2) Those Spirit-powered miracles can still lead unbelievers to faith. By reading in the NT about the healings and other gifts we can be assured that the gospel is of divine origin.

(3) Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name. (John 20:30-31)

b) Spirit-revealed sermons can now convict sinners & tell them how to be saved.

(1) When the apostles were filled with the Spirit they spoke messages that convinced the sinner that he needed to repent and to believe in Jesus Christ! (Ac. 2:37-38)

(2) Those Spirit-revealed sermons can still convict sinners to the extent that we can show the sinner that he is in the same condition as those who first heard the message and needs to obey the same message to be saved.

(3) We instinctively separate out of the cases of conversion the miraculous elements and look for those timeless principles (For example, we read the account of the Ethiopian and apply it by urging people to believe and be baptized, but we do not expect the Holy Spirit to tell the preacher what road to get on to find a prospect and to miraculously disappear after the baptism!)

c) Spirit-revealed truth can lead the 21st century disciples

(1) The early church received their guidance directly and by miracle through prophets and tongue-speakers. Their worship was guided by such experiences.

- (2) The Spirit-revealed truth was written by the apostles to guide the future church. Today the Spirit leads us through that message.
4. Fourth we must acknowledge that reading about the miraculous work of the Spirit in the NT is not a disadvantage to experiencing it personally nor is it an affirmation that the Spirit no longer works.
- a) As much as we might like to “see” a miracle first-hand, such was not nor now is a necessity to faith.
- (1) Testimony can establish truth
- (a) A message from a truthful messenger is just as beneficial as an eye-witness experience.
- (b) *Jesus *said to him, “Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.” (John 20:29)*
- (c) *and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, (1 Peter 1:8)*
- (2) The testimony of miracles can convince people with a right attitude; but even seeing miracles cannot convince people with a wrong attitude
- (a) *“But he said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.’” (Luke 16:31)*
- b) The Spirit’s word is as living and active now as it was in the first century to produce the blessings God purposed in unbelievers and believers even while no one is receiving the Spirit in the way described in the NT.
- (1) *For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)*

Conclusion: The wonderful blessings of the Spirit’s coming and work are available to us through the Spirit-revealed and Spirit-confirmed message. His presence and power is real; His word is living and His mighty works continue to build and confirm faith in all who honestly consider them.

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