

Understanding **TONGUES**

by David C. Pack

Herbert W. Armstrong led the Worldwide Church of God (formerly The Radio Church of God until 1968) until his death in 1986. Hundreds of millions heard his voice and read his literature. God called him in the fall of 1926 and he was converted in the spring of 1927. Over the course of Mr. Armstrong's ministry, God revealed through him a great many true biblical doctrines, which had been lost to the Church through the centuries. After his death, his successors ceased to believe and teach these doctrines. Although copyright law prohibits The Restored Church of God from reproducing and distributing literature produced while he led the Worldwide Church of God, we are committed to the preservation and teaching of all of these truths!

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What about the TONGUES QUESTION? Do all who receive the Holy Spirit “speak in tongues”? Is this evidence of God’s power—and of “baptism with the Holy Spirit”? Are “tarry meetings” biblical? What does the Bible *really* say about the gift of tongues? Here are the answers!

Every true Christian has the Holy Spirit. Must all the newly converted speak in tongues to evidence this? Is this gift PROOF that one has received the Holy Spirit? Should *you* seek to be “slain of the spirit”?

What about “tarry meetings”? What does the Bible teach about them? Does God intend that you wait for “the Holy Spirit to fall on you” in a meeting filled with loud, emotional people, shouting repetitive phrases—“speaking in tongues”? Is *this* “baptism with the Holy Spirit”?

There are many types of “Pentecostal” people—so-called because they supposedly follow and practice the Pentecost account in Acts 2. But do they? What does this account really demonstrate—and *teach*?

In Acts 1:8, just before Christ ascended to heaven, He promised His disciples, “...you shall receive power.” He was referring to receiving the Holy Spirit. Receiving it does bring power: “For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of *power*, and of love, and of a sound mind” (II Tim. 1:7).

Make no mistake. To become a Christian you must receive the Holy Spirit. Paul wrote, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, *they* are the sons of God” (Rom. 8:14).

This is crystal clear. Yet verse 9 makes it *even* clearer: “But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God *dwell in you*. Now if any man *have not* the Spirit of Christ, HE IS NONE OF HIS.” Verse 11 adds, “But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead *dwell in you*, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also *quicken* your mortal bodies *by His Spirit* that dwells in you.”

Let's make this absolutely plain. Without the Holy Spirit, you cannot be a Christian—and you cannot be resurrected (“quickened”) at Christ's Return.

Then how does one receive the all-important gift of the Holy Spirit? Without the proper answer to this question, your Christianity could be in vain (I Cor. 15:12-19)!

This booklet will answer all these and many other questions from the Bible's plain teaching about receiving God's Spirit and speaking in tongues. But first an example.

A “Tongues” Encounter

The following account illustrates the ignorance of most people regarding tongues. You will see that this also includes those who feel they already have this gift.

A friend (Mary) was approached by an elderly Pentecostal woman. She related that the woman proceeded to express “fear” that Mary was not “saved.” This occurred in a public place, and she had never previously met this woman.

The woman broke into tears, worrying that Mary was not “saved,” and was going to “hell.” She said all Mary had to do was “accept Jesus into her heart.” The woman suddenly babbled incoherently, then stopped and asked, “Do you know what I just said?” Shocked by the display, Mary replied, “No.” The woman then declared, “I don't either...but my preacher could tell you.”

At least she honestly admitted that she had no idea what she was doing. Such dangerous ignorance!

Tongues Is a Gift

The Bible states that speaking in tongues is a spiritual gift. Paul wrote, “Now concerning *spiritual gifts*, brethren, I would not have you *ignorant*” (I Cor. 12:1). It is not God's intent that people be unable to understand, or be ignorant of, “spiritual gifts.”

Yet most *are* ignorant of the gifts of God's Spirit. Most have no idea what they are or how they work. In fact, most have never even heard of them. Have *you*? How much do you know about these gifts—or that tongues is even one of them? Do you know where they are found in the Bible?

I Corinthians chapter 12, often called “the gifts chapter,” lists the gifts of God's Spirit. Notice: “But the manifestation [making obvious] of the Spirit is given to *every man to profit* withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of WISDOM; to another the word of KNOWLEDGE by the same Spirit; To another FAITH by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of HEALING by the same Spirit; To another the working of MIRACLES; to another PROPHECY; to another DISCERNING OF SPIRITS; to another diverse kinds of TONGUES; to another the INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES: But all these work that one and the selfsame Spirit...” (vs. 7-11).

Notice that there are *nine* separate gifts listed. When God grants any of them, they are intended for the “profit” of “every man.”

Here is why: “For by *one Spirit* are we all baptized into *one body*, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into *one Spirit*” (I Cor. 12:13). Whatever happens in the Church (“the body” Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23) affects the whole Church. All can profit or all can be harmed, depending upon what is done and how.

The matter of speaking in tongues is critical to understand. When understood correctly, the Church benefits. Where there has been misunderstanding, great harm and confusion resulted!

Do All Speak in Tongues?

A basic question arises. Do all converted people speak in tongues? Notice that Paul emphasizes that each gift might be given to “one man” or “another” or “another,” etc. Not *every* man receives *every* gift. Rather, the giving of any particular gift to a person is to “profit every man.”

Later in I Corinthians 12, Paul addresses this question more specifically. He leaves no doubt about whether everyone receives every gift—or even whether everyone speaks in tongues. The context preceding what he says is about the different offices of the ministry. Notice: “Are all APOSTLES? are all PROPHETS? are all TEACHERS? are all workers of MIRACLES? Have all the gifts of HEALING? do all speak with TONGUES? do all INTERPRET?” (vs. 29-30). These are rhetorical questions. The answer to each is obvious.

Is everyone in the Church an apostle? Of course not!

Is everyone in the Church a prophet? Of course not!

Does everyone perform miracles or does everyone perform healings? No!

Why do so many think that ALL must speak in tongues, when Paul plainly states otherwise? Remove from your thinking the notion that every Christian must speak in tongues to prove that they have received God’s Spirit.

There is not a single place in God’s Word that states you must speak with tongues as evidence you have received “the baptism of the Holy Spirit.” Nowhere does it say, “by their *tongues* you shall know them,” but rather, “by their FRUITS you shall know them” (Matt. 7:20).

We will see that there are only *two occasions* in the New Testament when speaking in tongues accompanied conversion and receiving God’s Spirit.

We could ask: How are Christians identified? Did Christ say that His disciples would be known by speaking in tongues? Notice: “By *this* shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have LOVE one to another” (John 13:35). Nothing mentioned of tongues here either!

How Important Is Tongues?

Another question arises: What *is* the most important gift that a Christian can receive? Is it performing miracles, healing, faith, prophecy, teaching or speaking in tongues? Does the Bible answer?

Immediately after Paul listed the above questions, he concluded with this admonition: “But *covet* earnestly the *best gifts*: and yet show I unto you a *more excellent way*” (I Cor. 12:31). What are the best gifts?

Here is Paul’s answer: “Though I speak with the *tongues of men and of angels*, and have not charity [LOVE], I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal [noise]. And though I have the *gift of prophecy*, and *understand all mysteries*, and all knowledge; and though I have all *faith*, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity [LOVE], I am *nothing*. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity [LOVE], it profits me *nothing*” (13:1-3).

What follows throughout the rest of the chapter is a detailed description of *how* the love of God is reflected in a converted mind. Love is the single greatest gift one can have, followed by faith and hope. So says your Bible (vs. 13)!

Since so many professing Christians speak about the importance of “having love,” why do Pentecostals seemingly never reference the verses we have just read about the “best gifts”? Why do they “covet” tongues instead (vs. 1)?

Try the Spirits

One gift of the Spirit is “discerning of spirits.” Of course, not every spirit is of God. Some are dangerous—very dangerous—to you and the Church! It is critical to understand who and what these spirits are—to “discern” and recognize them.

In fact, the apostle John warns, “Beloved, *believe not* every spirit, but *try the spirits* whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (I John 4:1).

The world’s churches have ministers. They *all* claim to serve God. They *all* claim to represent Christ. Yet they compete with one another and cannot agree on even the most basic teachings of the Bible.

Why?

Paul answers in II Corinthians 11:13-15: “For such are *false* apostles, *deceitful* workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for *Satan* himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if *his ministers* also be transformed *as* the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”

Never *assume* that what a minister teaches you is the truth—or even that he is of God. *Always* “try the spirits, whether they are of God.”

Many profess to teach the truth about speaking in tongues. Have you sought to *prove* whether or not they are ministers of truth? Do you care to know whether they could be one of “his [Satan’s]...ministers”? While some men may *appear* to be “angels of light,” they are not. You must learn to “try” them.

The devil has substituted the true biblical gift of tongues with a counterfeit. The allure of receiving special *power* has deluded many into blindly accepting this *counterfeit*—this SUBSTITUTE—as evidence of God’s Spirit.

Millions of sermons have been preached about the need for “the baptism of the Holy Spirit.” Invariably, these sermons speak of “signs following”—“manifestations”—“tongues”—“miracles,” with little or nothing said about HOW the Bible states one actually receives the Holy Spirit. In their excitement over the “manifestations” of the Acts 2 account, preachers ignore what Peter TAUGHT in his sermon on that very day about *how* God’s Spirit comes!

Jesus taught, “the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). This includes how to receive God’s Spirit and freedom from false “Pentecostal” ideas.

Revelation 12:9 declares that Satan “deceives the *whole world*.” This is an incredible but true statement. In fact, the devil has been so successful in this deception that Paul calls him “the god of this world” (II Cor. 4:4). Since Satan *is* a spirit (Eph. 2:2), of course, he seeks to deceive people about how they receive God’s Spirit.

The most dangerous assumption that you could ever make is that Satan cannot deceive *you*—on tongues or any other matter. Be careful that you are not tempted to seek the kind of “deeper spiritual insight” or “experience” that is superficially attractive. It is only *appearance*. Read Jeremiah 17:9 to gain a healthy respect for your mind’s ability to deceive you on matters where you may think yourself immune!

Beware of “leaning to your *own* understanding” (Prov. 3:5). Recognize that “He that trusts in his own heart is a fool” (28:26), because “There is a way which *seems right* unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of *death*” (14:12; 16:25).

Trusting feelings can lead to death!

Satan’s ministers are “*transformed as the ministers of righteousness*.” Believing the devil’s deceit, they mislead and deceive millions through “visions” and “dreams.” I have heard them shout about “leadings of the spirit” and that “the Lord has told me” to do this, or that, or the other.

Understand. The devil does not come wearing a red suit, with horns and a pitchfork. He comes as an “angel of light,” and the whole world, as a result, unwittingly worships him in place of the true God. Only through wearing the *armor of God* (Eph. 6:10-18) will you be able to “resist” (Jms. 4:7) the “wiles” (Eph. 6:11) of Satan, who is described as a “roaring lion” (I Pet. 5:8-9) and a “wicked *spirit*” (Eph. 6:12).

Even most Pentecostals, and those who seek “baptism with the Holy Spirit,” admit that tongues can be counterfeited by the devil. Yet they fall right into the trap of seeking what God nowhere in His Word tells people to seek.

As the master counterfeiter, Satan *can* counterfeit the true biblical gift of tongues with the gibberish so familiar to Pentecostal services and “tarry meetings.” Unknown (unintelligible to humans) tongues are, in fact, languages spoken by demons—*fallen* angels.

That is serious! When God gives the gift of tongues, it is a *known* foreign language, explained by an interpreter, not an *unknown* (unintelligible) language (gibberish). Notice that the word “unknown” is found in italics through-

out I Corinthians 14. This is because translators added it—incorrectly. It is not in the original Greek text.

The prophet Isaiah warned ancient Israel of slipping into the dangerous practice of following wrong spirit sources, while thinking that what they did was innocent—a search for “deeper spiritual understanding”: “And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have *familiar spirits*, and unto *wizards* that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? For the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to THIS WORD, it is because there is *no light in them*” (8:19-20). Israel continually ignored the instructions of God’s Word of truth (John 17:17).

It will become clear that the way “Pentecostals” believe the Holy Spirit is given ignores the Bible completely. They follow a dangerous delusion born of sensual thrill-seeking. This practice is nothing of God!

Our First Glimpse of the Church

Acts 2:1 records an extraordinary moment in history: The New Testament Church is about to come into existence. Luke writes of those present, “they were all with one accord in one place” on the annual Holy Day of Pentecost. Peter gives a powerful sermon. Miracles are recorded. The Holy Spirit is given. After repentance is explained, thousands request baptism. About 3,000 are “called” (vs. 39) and “gladly receive his [Peter’s] word” (vs. 41). Probably the largest single group baptism in history occurs. The *New Testament Church* is born!

What did this signify—what did it *mean*? Of course, the Church of God was established (Matt. 16:18), but what else? Did this account also establish the exact pattern by which the Holy Spirit is always given?

What did this new Church look like? Even in its infancy there were clues. The Bible answers immediately: “...and they continued steadfastly in the APOSTLES’ DOCTRINE and fellowship” (Acts 2:42).

We must understand what occurred on this day, and what the apostles taught (their “doctrine”) about receiving God’s Spirit.

The Pentecost Account Made Plain

Many think the account in Acts 2 is Bible authorization for “tarry meetings” and that “baptism of the Holy Spirit” is only evidenced by “speaking in tongues.”

Remember, assume nothing and “prove all things” (I Thes. 5:21) to find the truth of God’s Word.

Let’s carefully examine the Pentecost account.

Verse 1: “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with *one accord* in one place.” This is a picture of unity and agreement—something completely foreign to the arguing, disagreeing, competing Pentecostal denominations of today.

Verse 2: “And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.” This speaks of a “sound from heaven,” not a “sound from people.” Notice also that the sound “filled the whole house.” This certainly never happens today. There is absolutely no indication that *the people* made any noise prior to this sound. Also, it occurred “suddenly.” It was not slowly, gradually worked up by noisy *people*! Finally, recognize that this occurred on a Holy Day—Pentecost—which only occurs once a year. This was never intended to be an “every Sunday” or twice-a-week event.

As a college student, I once attended a Pentecostal meeting. I witnessed thousands literally jumping, twisting, dancing, singing, muttering and screeching—and falling down foaming at the mouth. It was *nothing* like the scene in Acts 2.

Verse 3: “And there appeared unto them *cloven tongues like as of fire*, and it sat upon each of them.” When has this ever happened since—even one single time? This was an absolutely unique miracle never seen before or since.

Verse 4: “And they were *all filled with the Holy Spirit*, and began to speak with *other* tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” There has certainly never been a “Pentecostal” meeting where “all” received the Holy Spirit at the exact same moment. Yet this very verse contains the phrase so many seize to support today’s common practices: “...and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

Note that it says all began to speak in “other” languages, not “unknown” languages. You will also see that *this* type of tongues required no interpreter.

Verses 5-6: “And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.” One can only imagine how news of such an event would spread. Just the noise, if it were similar to a hurricane or tornado, would be sufficient for all Jerusalem to hear what happened. Like any loud explosion, many would have come running and—notice carefully—“every man *heard* them speak in his *own* language.” Let’s skip to verses 9-11 to better understand how many languages were spoken in Jerusalem. We will then read verses 7-8.

Verses 9-11: “Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do *hear* them speak in *our tongues* the wonderful works of God.”

Verses 7-8: “And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how *hear* we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?” Did you catch this? Verses 6, 8 and 11 all say that those observing were able to “HEAR”—“HEARD”—in their own language.

Once in All History

What occurred in Acts 2 has never happened again. Peter was speaking in *his own* language, with people of possibly *eighteen* different language groups hearing him as though he was speaking only *their* language.

I have never heard a single report of anything similar. Have you? Let me repeat. The entire account was unique in history. Remember, it included a miracle in both the hearing *and* the speaking.

Other than Acts 2, the tongues that the Bible speaks of is not in the hearing. Rather, it concerns those who could *speak* in other (foreign) languages that the one *speaking* does not understand. So, this type cannot be in the *hearing*.

Verses 12-13: “And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What means this? Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.” Obviously, this was a miracle that those who had not witnessed could only explain through sarcasm, disbelief or accusations of drunkenness.

Remember, Acts 2 describes the birth of the Church that Jesus Christ promised to establish when He said, “I will build My Church” (Matt. 16:18). The manner in which God gave His Spirit was extraordinary because it was intended to reflect the fulfillment of an event unique in all human history!

Promise of the Holy Spirit

On the night of His crucifixion, Jesus had taught, “And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another COMFORTER, that he [it] may abide with you forever; Even the *Spirit of truth*; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees him [it] not, neither knows him [it]: but you know him [it]; for he [it] dwells WITH you, and shall be IN you” (John 14:16-17).

In the Greek language (as with Romance languages like French, Italian and Spanish), nouns have gender. As a grammatical tool, they are designated as masculine, feminine or neuter. For example, *el libro*, in Spanish, means book and carries the masculine article *el*. Of course, books are neither male nor female. You see the point. John chapters 14 to 16 use “Comforter” and the personal pronouns “he” and “him” in reference to the Greek word *parakletos*. Where reference is made to the Holy Spirit, it is incorrectly translated “he,” instead of “it.” (For more information explaining the error of the “trinity” doctrine, read our book *The Trinity – Is God Three-In-One?*)

Take careful note how Christ explained that the Holy Spirit was only dwelling “with” the disciples and was not yet “in” them (John 4:24; 6:44). This is something He said “shall” (future tense) happen.

Christ stated this prior to Pentecost. God’s Spirit was still working “with” the disciples, and was not yet “in” them. Christ had previously explained about the Holy Spirit: “Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believes on Me, as the scripture has said, out of his

belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spoke He of *the Spirit*, which they that believe on Him should receive: *for the Holy Spirit was not yet given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)” (John 7:37-39).

Christ is simply explaining that the Spirit of God had not yet been given. This was because He had not ascended to heaven in glory. He also taught them, “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, *I will send it* unto you. And *when* it is come...” (John 16:7-8). Christ knew what He had to first endure for this to happen. After His Resurrection, He would send God’s Spirit from heaven to His Church.

Moments before, on this same occasion, He had explained what God’s Spirit would do: “But *when* the Comforter is *come*, [which] I will send unto you from the Father, even the *Spirit of truth*, which proceeds from the Father, it shall testify of Me” (John 15:26).

After His Resurrection, Christ appeared again to the disciples and illustrated to them how they would receive God’s Spirit: “And when He had said this, He *breathed* on them, and said unto them, Receive you the Holy Spirit” (John 20:22).

The disciples would have felt Christ’s breath on their faces. This was to prepare them for the mighty wind that was to appear on Pentecost.

Some have terribly misunderstood Christ’s “breath analogy.” They assert that He was saying that He gave them His Spirit *at that moment*. This has caused these same people to conclude that, in a separate experience, those who have God’s Spirit must also later receive “the baptism of the Spirit.” John 20:22 is coupled with Acts 2 to teach this. But, Jesus did not say, “You *have now* received the Holy Spirit,” but rather spoke as though it *would* occur. He merely breathed *air* on them—and surely no one believes that the Holy Spirit is simply AIR!

Be careful that you accept the Scriptures for exactly what they say, without reading prior prejudices into them.

Prophecy Fulfilled

Christ spoke of and explained about receiving the Holy Spirit, because God, long before Christ’s ministry, had promised it would be given. It had always been God’s Plan to give His Spirit first to the New Testament Church before offering it to the entire world.

The prophet Joel foretold the giving of God’s Spirit on a large scale: “And it *shall come to pass* afterward, that I will *pour out My Spirit upon all flesh*; and your sons and your daughters *shall* prophesy, your old men *shall* dream dreams, your young men *shall* see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids *in those days will I pour out My Spirit*” (Joel 2:28-29). When given, this was a prophecy of what “*shall come to pass*.” It had *not* yet happened.

Peter spoke of this exact prophecy in his sermon. Notice Acts 2:16-18: “But this is that which was spoken by the prophet *Joel*; And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on My servants and on My hand-maidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy.” An early type of Joel’s prophecy had begun to occur for a small group called by God.

When God’s Spirit was given to His Church for the first time, it was a forerunner of this amazing prophecy. People were now freely given access to God’s divine character and essence.

Peter continued to quote Joel: “And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, *that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be SAVED*” (Acts 2:19-21).

This last phrase shows that Christ’s sacrifice would one day be made available, along with God’s Spirit, so that *all* people could be “saved.”

Can you begin to see why Acts 2 was a one-time event, designed to signify an enormously special occasion? It was never intended to be a pattern that all should follow ever after!

Only Two Occasions

I mentioned that on only two occasions in the New Testament did any speak with tongues upon receiving God’s Spirit. Let’s examine them.

Acts 10 records the story of God’s Spirit being given to the Gentiles for the first time, when the Italian, Cornelius, with his household, received it. Here is the conclusion of that account: “While Peter yet spoke these words, *the Holy Spirit fell on all them* which heard the word...which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?” (Acts 10:44, 47).

Paul explained to the Galatians how the Holy Spirit was also to be given to Gentiles. Notice: “That the blessing of Abraham might come *on the Gentiles* through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the *promise of the Spirit* through faith” (Gal. 3:14). This promise comes “through faith.” There is nothing here about the “promise of the Spirit” being fulfilled by attending a “tarry meeting.” Also, the blessing referred to has nothing to do with the “blessing” Pentecostals seek at these meetings. It means that converted Gentiles become children of all the blessings and promises made to Abraham, because they are actually Abraham’s children (vs. 7, 16).

Later, in Acts 11, Peter reported to the apostles and certain naysayers what had happened with Cornelius: “And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, *as on us* at the beginning...but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit...God gave them *the like gift* as He did unto us” (vs. 15-17).

Peter says nothing of God's Spirit coming with a sudden great sound from heaven that resembled a roaring wind. There is simply no parallel between this and Acts 2. However, the occasion was very important because, as Peter concluded in verse 18, "Then has God also to the Gentiles *granted* [given] REPENTANCE unto life."

As with Acts 2, this was, in its own way, another special event in the development of God's Church. For the first time, God was converting Gentiles.

Also note the reference to "granted repentance," which introduces this overlooked, but all-important, element. We will study this later, in more detail.

The second occasion is found in Acts 19:1-7. Let's read the entire account and then discuss key points. Notice: "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding *certain disciples*, He said unto them, *Have you received the Holy Spirit* since you believed? And they said unto him, *We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit*. And he said unto them, Unto what then were you baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, *they were baptized* in the name of the Lord Jesus. And *when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them*; and they spoke with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve."

Note several things:

- (1) These men *did* speak with tongues.
- (2) It occurred *after* they were baptized and...
- (3) ...*after* Paul laid hands on them.
- (4) They understood the doctrine of repentance from John the Baptist.
- (5) There is no evidence they "tarried" or "waited" to receive God's Spirit.
- (6) This was a very small group.

Almost nothing in this account was similar to the Pentecost occurrence. Though modern Pentecostals may be sincere, they have *no hope* of repeating what happened in Acts 2. That event had never occurred before and will surely never happen again in the same way!

Thinking in Reverse

Think for a minute! So many today are completely backwards from what God intends. They gather in "tarry meetings" to *plead* with God, over and over again, to send His Holy Spirit—to "send another Pentecost," as in AD 31. Their repeated beseeching of God for His Spirit suggests that He is reluctant to give it. They beg, "seek" and generally agonize, believing that only by doing this, will God finally, ever so reluctantly, grant the power of His Spirit.

Is this a correct picture?

Sadly, it reflects the *opposite* of the way God thinks. He is more than eager to give His Holy Spirit to all who ask Him. Notice: “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much *MORE* shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that *ask* Him?” (Luke 11:13).

None need beg, plead or cajole God to give what He already wants to give. If you are sincere—and REPENTANT—God is eager to bestow His Spirit (also see Rev. 3:19-20). You just need to ask Him.

Here is where many go further astray. From Christ’s ascension, the disciples *waited* ten days for Pentecost. Sadly, many read this and think they must plead and cry, over a long period (represented by the ten days), until God relents and finally gives His Spirit.

Such terrible misunderstanding!

“Repent and Believe”

Return to Acts 2 and see what the apostles *did* teach about receiving the Spirit. Peter’s sermon included a direct statement to those who showed genuine remorse and sorrow for how their sins had crucified Christ (vs. 37).

Prepare to be surprised. If you are of Pentecostal background, it is not what you would expect. What you are about to read is the official “apostles’ doctrine” on the matter. Let’s read carefully—“REPENT, and BE BAPTIZED every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and *you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*” (vs. 38).

The two—and only two—pre-conditions for receiving God’s Spirit are: (1) repent, and (2) believe. In Acts 20:21, Paul reminded the assembled elders at Ephesus that he had everywhere taught “REPENTANCE toward God, and FAITH toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” This describes the two conditions: repentance and belief (faith).

Acts 2:38 shows that God gives His Spirit at baptism, which takes place after repentance. But how is repentance achieved? Does one just declare, by simple assertion, “I have repented”? Is this all there is to it?

The answer is an emphatic NO! It is *not* that simple.

Repentance is a *gift* from God just as much as one’s initial calling. Recall that we read, in Acts 11:18, that “Then has God also to the Gentiles *granted repentance* unto life.” II Timothy 2:25 speaks of circumstances where “God... will *give...repentance* to the acknowledging of the truth.” Finally, Romans 2:4 explains that it is “God’s goodness” that leads to repentance.

People do not “work up” repentance, to *require* God to give them His Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). They *must* seek God and *ask* for the GIFT of repentance. This does involve a certain amount of genuine, heartfelt and fervent prayer—sometimes more than a little. It is not automatic and should never be treated as such. But neither must one unnecessarily agonize over it for a

long time. God grants repentance to all who seek it with their whole heart, as David did: “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me” (Psa. 51:10).

But what should you repent of?

The Bible says, “all have sinned” (Rom. 3:23). What *is* sin? I John 3:4 states, “Sin is the transgression of the law.” This refers to the law of God, and the normal, fleshly or carnal mind is hostile to it (Rom. 8:7). People do not naturally obey God. Human nature *disobeys—breaks—*God’s law. Christians keep God’s law. Notice: “For *not* the *hearers* of the law are just before God, but the *doers* of the law shall be *justified*” (Rom. 2:13).

Therefore, God will only give His Spirit to one that He has conquered—to one who is willing to obey His Law (Acts 5:32). The world depicts God’s Law as harsh and burdensome.

But John wrote, “For this is the *love of God*, that we *keep His commandments*: and His commandments are not grievous” (I John 5:3; Rom. 13:10). God’s Law is holy, just, good and spiritual (Rom. 7:12, 14) and, through His Spirit, one can obey Him and thereby practice real godly love. Romans 5:5 says, “...the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.”

Grasp this. The spirit-led mind reflects God’s Spirit by the manifestation of *love* that is “shed abroad” in us—not by the manifestation of *tongues*!

The repentant mind has turned from the selfish, “get” way of life, to the “give” way of life. The entire way a Christian thinks becomes transformed—completely changed—to a whole new way of looking at life.

Such a mind has turned from its own way. It wants to follow God. It is yielded to Him—and to His government, His authority in its life. Such a mind strives to copy Jesus Christ and produce the “*fruits of the Spirit*” (love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance [self-control]) found in Galatians 5:22-23. In John 15, Christ talked about “bearing *much fruit*,” not “bearing *many gifts*.” He later inspired Paul to describe the “*fruits of the Spirit*.”

The Christian lives by faith (Heb. 10:38; Hab. 2:4), but it is the faith of *Christ* (Rev. 14:12), not human faith, that makes it possible for a person to obey God. Yet, the person must demonstrate faith that Christ has forgiven him at baptism (Acts 2:38). It is at this moment that a Christian’s prior slate of conduct has been wiped completely clean. It has become as white as snow—hidden by the blood of Jesus (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14).

The initial human faith (Rom. 1:16) is then replaced by the faith of *Christ*. Since faith is one of the fruits of God’s Spirit, a small amount enters the Christian’s mind at begettal—conversion and baptism. (Read our booklet *What Is True Conversion?* to much better understand.)

Do not misunderstand. God does not *owe* you His Spirit because you have repented and exercised faith. The Holy Spirit is a gift (Acts 2:38), as is repentance. Like salvation, God’s Spirit is not something that you can earn by your works (Eph. 2:8-9). Even faith to believe is a gift (same verse).

Does the Bible Teach “Tarry Meetings”?

The first verses of Acts 1 describe Christ’s last instruction to His disciples before ascending to heaven. He promised that they would soon receive God’s Spirit and told them to wait.

Notice: “And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should *not depart* from Jerusalem, but WAIT for the promise of the Father, which, says He, you have heard of Me. For John truly baptized with water; but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit *not many days hence*” (Acts 1:4-5). Pentecost was just ten days later.

Pentecostals commonly cite this verse as proof for holding “tarry meetings.” Before discussing whether it and other Scriptures authorize such gatherings, we must describe them.

First, keep in mind that different Pentecostal groups describe them in slightly different ways. However, here is the general pattern that most meetings follow. One, usually referred to as a “seeker,” is told to join other “seekers” at a meeting that includes people who have supposedly already received “baptism of the Holy Spirit.” Repetitious chanting and shouting of phrases like “praise Jesus!,” “hallelujah!,” and “glory!” are offered up.

Some groups tell their followers to hold their hands up. When they become too tired to continue, others assist. They are also instructed to speak faster and faster—more and more frantically—and deep into the evening or early morning hours, wailing and pleading with God for “the baptism.” As the evening wears on, some begin to “speak in tongues (unintelligible gibberish),” while others continue to ask God for the so-called “blessing” of power.

Is this what the Bible teaches? Did Jesus command His disciples to conduct such meetings?

Followers of this practice always cite Luke 24:49 as authority for what they do: “And, behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but TARRY you in the city of Jerusalem, *until you be endued with power from on high.*”

Is this the Bible’s command to hold these meetings? Read it again. What did Christ actually say? Did He tell them to hold a meeting for ten days? Of course not! He told them to wait (tarry) “in the city of Jerusalem” until God’s Spirit would be sent “from on high.” There is nothing here about a meeting, only an instruction about WHERE to remain—to tarry or wait—until Pentecost, which was ten days later. That is all!

Notice the phrase stating that God’s Spirit will come “from on high.” This is merely a reference to the Joel 2 prophecy that it would be “poured out” *from heaven*. That has happened for a few. God’s Spirit *was* given from heaven. Acts 2 recorded it.

Why did Christ tell the disciples to remain in Jerusalem? Because He did not want them dispersing before Pentecost. He wanted them to be “with one accord *in one place*” to receive the Spirit. Jerusalem was that place.

What does *tarry* mean anyway? Certainly not “pray, beg, plead, wail, cry, shout” or anything similar. It means “to put off going or coming: linger. To remain in the same place; abide; stay. To await; to delay; sojourn, stay.”

Technically, the most correct rendering of this verse, from the original Greek is: “Remain you in the city of Jerusalem.” It seems astonishing that any could derive authority for “tarry meetings” from such a simple statement by Christ. Yet they do.

When confronted with this obvious truth, many “tongues” believers cite Acts 1:13-14, which states, “And when they were come in, *they went up into an upper room*, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all *continued with one accord in prayer and supplication*, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren.”

It is asserted that this describes a “tarry meeting.” If so, it would have been a ten-day meeting. Of course, the verse says no such thing.

Can you imagine such a large group of people staying in one room for this long? What about bathing, sleeping and eating? Such an extended meeting would be completely unnatural. And note that absolutely nothing is said about shouting, begging, pleading, wailing or anything of the sort—just as there is no reference to such when Pentecost arrived and God’s Spirit was poured out “from on high.”

But there is another reason the disciples would not have been shouting, crying, praying and begging.

What Does “Pentecost” Mean?

The disciples knew *what* Pentecost meant—and exactly *when* it would come.

Leviticus 23 describes the seven annual festivals that ancient Israel was to observe each year. This chapter begins by describing Passover and follows with a description of the two festivals on the first and last days of the seven-day period known as the Days of Unleavened Bread. These latter two days are annual Sabbaths—Holy Days—which picture obedience to God and putting away sin from our lives.

The Days of Unleavened Bread are followed in the late spring by the festival of “Firstfruits”—Pentecost—the third annual Holy Day. This festival is described in Leviticus 23:9-22. Verse 16 explains the instruction to “number fifty days” until this festival. (Read our booklet *God’s Holy Days or Pagan Holidays?* to learn more about these and the other Holy Days, and how they are observed.)

Many New Testament verses explain that the Church, composed of those led by the Holy Spirit, are God’s *firstfruits* (Jms. 1:18; Rev. 14:4, etc.).

Christ knew exactly what He was going to do on the day of Pentecost. He made sure that the disciples understood what He meant by “...but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence” (Acts 1:5). No wonder the

previous verse says Jesus “commanded them that they should not *depart* from Jerusalem, but *wait* for the promise of the Father” (vs. 4).

Why is this so hard to understand? Why do so many think Christ was telling the disciples to “pray down Pentecost,” as so many still attempt today?

They understood that Pentecost means “count fifty.” This was no mystery to them. They knew that their last meeting with Christ, in Acts 1, had occurred forty days (vs. 3) into the fifty-day period preceding Pentecost. They could subtract forty from fifty and know that Pentecost would arrive in ten days! There would have been no doubt when it would “fully come,” so all could be “in one accord, in one place” (Acts 2:1)—or about what would *happen* when it did.

It would have been easy for the disciples to connect this simple math with the statement in Luke 24:49 to “wait in Jerusalem.”

Conversions After Pentecost

The book of Acts describes four occasions, after the Acts 2 Pentecost account, when people were converted. It is important to examine them and look for clues about what actually occurred—and what did *not*.

Acts 8 records Philip the deacon preaching to the city of Samaria. Many people were converted as a result. Here is a summary of the account: “But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were *baptized, both men and women*...Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit...*Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit*” (vs. 12, 14-15, 17).

There is no mention here of the gift of tongues being given to anyone. As with Paul in Acts 19, the apostles Peter and John “laid their hands on” the men and women who were baptized—“and they received the Holy Spirit.”

This is a straightforward account lacking a mention of any kind of “tarry meeting.” The people heard about the kingdom of God, understood the name of Jesus Christ, believed, and were baptized. In accord with Acts 2:38, they received the Holy Spirit.

Acts 9:1-22 describes Paul’s own conversion. Take time to read this story. Paul did not attend a “tarry meeting,” nor did he do any of the things practiced at them. The account describes him being blinded by Christ on the road to Damascus and his humble yielding to Christ’s calling.

In Acts 10, when Cornelius and his household were converted, there is also no reference to any kind of “tarry meeting.” Reading this chapter reveals that “the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word.” This occurred right as Peter instructed them. The account is simple and straightforward.

None of these conversions describe anything akin to crying, begging, pleading with or beseeching God (and certainly not over a long period of time, deep into the night) to give His Spirit!

Only one other account, Acts 19:1-7, describes those who were “baptized” and received the Holy Spirit. We have already reviewed it. The twelve who were baptized on this occasion did receive God’s Spirit, but only after acknowledging that they had never heard of it. As a matter of fact, Paul asked them, “Have you received the Holy Spirit *since* you believed?” before they acknowledged that they did not even know what it was.

Even though John the Baptist had already baptized them, Paul had to rebaptize them in the name of Jesus Christ. Then Paul had to lay hands on them before they could receive the Holy Spirit! When he did this, they received the Spirit *immediately*.

Once again, there is no reference to crying, pleading, begging—or “tarrying”—for this to happen.

These are the only four accounts in the book of Acts where baptism and receiving the Holy Spirit took place. There are no others. None of these contain a reference to waiting for the Spirit at a “tarry meeting,” so that the newly converted could “speak in tongues.”

Nowhere does the Bible authorize, instruct, suggest, or even hint that anyone should participate in these unscriptural meetings in order to receive, or be baptized by, the Holy Spirit. In fact, the term “tarry meeting,” or anything similar, is found nowhere in Scripture!

What Is “Spirit Baptism”?

The Bible contains only one verse explaining what some call “baptism of the Holy Spirit.” We have read it, but let’s review.

Paul wrote, “For by *one Spirit* are we all *baptized* into one body” (I Cor. 12:13). No other verse mentions this phrase. (Ephesians 1:22-23 and Colossians 1:18 define “body” as “the Church.”)

So this verse merely says that God’s Spirit baptizes people into *the Church!* Since the Greek word for baptize (*baptizo*) is “to immerse, plunge into,” it is easy to see that people are “immersed” or “plunged” into the Holy Spirit—and into the Church. (You may read our booklet *What Do You Mean “Water Baptism”?* to understand proper water baptism.)

Recall that Romans 8:9 stated that we must have God’s Spirit, or we are “none of” Christ’s.

Understand! The term that Pentecostals use, “baptism of the Holy Spirit,” is simply not found in the Bible! Like the term “tarry meeting,” it is a twisted version of a scriptural phrase done to alter what God intended.

The Great Assumption

Pentecostal people make a giant assumption in regard to what they call “baptism of the Holy Spirit.” Without the slightest proof, they assert that it is a kind of *second* receiving of the Holy Spirit, which takes place at a “tarry meeting.”

Now, they do not actually teach that the Holy Spirit is given a second time, but rather that this second occurrence is when one receives *power*, generally described as given to “witness for Jesus.” Millions seek what they call “the baptism.”

Supposedly, this is an additional necessary experience, above conversion, and when it does not happen for some, they become hopeless and give up completely on the idea of Christianity.

The following pattern is a general description of the “manifestations” the “seeker” would hope to demonstrate. First, the tongue begins to loosen up, almost as though one is becoming drunken. Second, physical sensations and thrills, usually bringing certain gyrations—and even jumping, leaping, dancing, swaying and shouting in a way that “evidences” receiving power *never before felt*. Third, a glibness and quickness or looseness (probably best described as flippancy) of speech is present, and all inhibition disappears.

“The Baptism” and “Receiving the Holy Spirit” Are the Same

Of course, none of the apostles are reported to have done ANY of these things—and God nowhere prescribes them in the Bible. That is the plain truth of the matter!

Acts 2:4 states that those present “...were all FILLED with the Holy Spirit.” Being “filled” with the Spirit is clearly the same as being baptized with it.

When thousands from around Jerusalem came running to the event and were baptized, it was only as a direct result of hearing Acts 2:38: “Repent, and be baptized...and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” *This* was the way they received the Holy Spirit. *This* event allowed them to be converted and “added to the Church” (vs. 47).

Every converted person—those who have repented and been baptized—has been baptized by God’s Spirit. The Bible teaches no later follow-up requirement for the newly converted to receive “power.” At the point when one is led by the Holy Spirit, he has become a begotten child of God. However, he is not yet born, because “that which is born of the flesh IS flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit IS spirit” (John 3:6). The newly begotten is a babe in Christ, called to spend the rest of his life growing and overcoming (II Pet. 3:18).

The disciples had not received God’s Spirit prior to Acts 2. That account was not a description of a second, follow-up “baptism of the Holy Spirit.” It was a description of how they, and the 3,000 with them, received the Holy Spirit and power for the first and *only time* in their lives!

The Tongues Chapter

The Bible is God’s basic instruction book on all matters pertaining to the Christian’s life. Of course, it does teach that there is a correct, proper—and

scriptural—gift of tongues. God would not give the true gift of tongues without explaining *how* it was to be used.

Those in Acts 19, and Cornelius and his household, did, in fact, speak in tongues. Recall that I Corinthians 12 *does* list it as one of the nine gifts of the Spirit. What then does the Bible teach about the proper use of this gift?

The 14th chapter of I Corinthians has been called the “tongues chapter.” It is entirely about this gift. The Corinthians had become obsessed with receiving the gift of speaking in tongues. Many problems had ensued and the Church was in confusion. The brethren were acting like “children,” because Paul admonished, “Brethren, be not children in understanding” (vs. 20).

Paul was forced to address the whole Church about this matter. Since the chapter is 40 verses long, he obviously had much to say. We cannot review every word and phrase of such a long instruction, but we can consider the most critical points for understanding. It will become most obvious that none of the modern “Pentecostal” people or groups practice what God taught the Church through Paul. God wants His people to be of sound mind (II Tim. 1:7) on this matter.

Bear in mind that this chapter builds on chapter 12, which introduces both the gift of tongues and interpretation of tongues, and chapter 13, which explains why LOVE is the most important spiritual gift.

I will cite certain verses or phrases and follow each with a brief comment or explanation:

Verse 1: “Follow after charity [love], and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that you may prophesy.” Paul urges the Corinthians to seek two gifts, neither of which is tongues or interpreting.

Verses 4-5: “He that speaks in an unknown tongue *edifies himself*; but he that prophesies edifies the church. I would that you all spoke with tongues, but [more] rather that you prophesied: for *greater is he that prophesies than he that speaks with tongues*, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.” Obviously, Paul is not saying he is against tongues, but is explaining that prophesying edifies the Church. Tongues does *not*, unless there is an interpreter.

Typically, Pentecostal meetings are chaotic—confused—with little or no “interpreting” (and that not correctly) occurring.

Also notice that anyone who speaks in tongues only “edifies *himself*,” if there is no interpreter present. Herein lies the danger that many ignore. It is easy to focus on the *self*—*self*-thrills, feelings and pleasures, and blessings for *self*.

Verse 6: “...if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by *revelation*, or by *knowledge*, or by *prophesying*, or by *doctrine*?” Tongues is useless if it does not bring one of the four things that Paul lists. Speaking gibberish reflects none of these. Verse 7 uses the phrase “except they give a *distinction* in the sounds” when describing different musical instruments that must be played properly to

be appreciated. Verses 8-11 expand on the principle that sounds must have meaning to those who hear them. In verse 12, Paul compliments Corinth for being “zealous,” but admonishes that they should do it “to the edifying of the Church.”

Verse 13: “Wherefore let him that speaks in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret.” Once again, this statement is plain—and yet it is ignored by Pentecostal people. Verses 14-15 amplify the point and reflect verse 2, which explains that, without an interpreter, those who speak in tongues “speak not unto men, but unto God.” Having an interpreter is crucial.

Verse 16: “...how shall he that occupies the room of the unlearned say Amen at your giving of thanks, seeing he understands not what you say?” *Amen* means “so be it.” Since tongues is a form of prayer, and prayers end with *amen*, without an interpreter, no one can honestly say “so be it” to the message. In verses 17-18, Paul says that he spoke in tongues more than all the Corinthians. So he was obviously not against the gift, but rather against its *misuse*!

Verse 19: “Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.” This powerful verse speaks for itself.

Verse 22: “Wherefore tongues are for a *sign*, not to them that believe, but to them that *believe not*.” What Pentecostal group understands or believes this vital point? They teach that tongues is the second experiencing of power *to the believer*. But here, tongues is described as a sign to UNBELIEVERS—like the 3,000 in Jerusalem who were converted after witnessing this miracle.

Verse 23: “If...the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that you are mad [crazy]?” This is exactly what most would say upon walking into a modern “tarry meeting.” Upon seeing the confusion and disorder, reasonable people would say, “They are all crazy.” Verses 24-25 explain that if the unbeliever saw and heard prophesying (inspired preaching), he could be benefited—“convinced.” In verse 26, Paul indicts the brethren for all speaking at the same time. This sets up verse 27.

Verse 27: “If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by TWO, or *at the most* by THREE, and that *by course*; and let one interpret.” Two critical points emerge: (1) two or three is the *limit* for how many can speak in tongues and this must be done *one at a time* (“by course”), and (2) there must also be an interpreter present, even for this small number. Do “tarry meetings” come close to this? Of course not.

Verse 28: “But if there be no interpreter, *let him keep silence in the church*.” By now it is obvious that modern Pentecostals are in direct disobedience to this plain command. If the confusion practiced today, under the guise of “speaking in tongues,” were coming from the Holy Spirit, the people doing it would be obedient to God’s laws (Acts 5:32). Verses 29-31 amplify verse 28.

Verse 32: “And the spirits of the prophets are *subject* to the prophets.” This says that God’s servants are able to control themselves. Both Proverbs 16:32

and 25:28 repeat this principle. If one's actions are out of control, then he is not of God. So says the Bible.

Verse 33: "For God is not the author of CONFUSION, but of *peace*, as in all churches of the saints." This verse is all-important—and applies to everything Christian. Where confusion abounds, the true God is absent—but the god of this world, who *is* the author of confusion and deception, is present!

Verse 34: "Let your *women keep silence* in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience..." This is a strong and unmistakable command. Why is it then that Pentecostal services are almost always dominated by women, when women are not to speak in services or preach?

Verses 37-38: "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant." What could be plainer than this summary? While some will choose to remain ignorant, will you accept "the commandments of the Lord"? Will you "acknowledge" them? I pray that you will.

Verse 40: "Let all things be done decently and in order." This verse concludes the chapter and adds a capstone to the subject of "interpreting" and "speaking in tongues."

Only in the Body of Christ

There is another aspect of tongues that must be understood.

Tongues is mentioned in I Corinthians chapter 12 and is listed as a gift given *within* the Body of Christ. This booklet has not yet covered what is the Body of Christ, and yet the gift of tongues is *only* given within that one spiritual Body of believers. Actually, chapter 12 precedes the "tongues" chapter 14, thereby establishing the only foundation through which this gift can be properly understood.

Therefore, one must understand *WHAT*—and also *WHERE*—is the Body of Christ. The Body of Christ is the Church of God. Notice Ephesians 1:22-23 and Colossians 1:18. These scriptures reveal that the Church Jesus built is called His Body, and that Body is the Church, respectively. So the Body of Christ *is* the Church of God—it is a simple equation.

This raises the question: *Where* is the Church of God? Jesus said, "I will build My church" (Matt. 16:18). Notice that He said "Church"—singular—not "churches." Wherever you find Christ's one true Church today—and tongues in the New Testament *ONLY* occurred within *His* Church—you would find the *only* people who are candidates to receive this gift. In all other cases, the use of "tongues" would be a counterfeit of what occurred in Acts 2, given by "the god of this world" (II Cor. 4:4). Therefore, to really understand this gift, the reader must include in his studies the location of the true Church of God today.

The reader probably is or has been a member of a church. There are many groups and organizations that call themselves “churches.” However, the word “church” in the New Testament is translated from the Greek *ekklesia*. It means the “called out ones.” Members of God’s Church are called out of this world—and this includes called out of *all* of its churches!—into the true Church, the *ekklesia*, that Christ built. Once again, this is the biblical Body of Christ.

Those who are truly called of God are baptized into this only Body of Christ, where—upon baptism—God gives His Holy Spirit, thus placing the new convert into that Body (I Cor. 12:13). In certain churches of the world, tongues is considered a “sign” that one has received the Holy Spirit. But how many who accept this idea concern themselves with whether they are in Christ’s Body—the one organized, unified, structured Church built by Jesus Christ in 31 AD—which is the *only* place where the Spirit of God is given in the first place (I Cor. 12:13, 25; Eph. 4:4-6, 16)?

Since true Christians are those called into the true Church, it would behoove the reader to answer the question, “Am I being called?” If so, like any other previous wrong teaching, you may need to *unlearn* your approach to tongues. You may need to learn the truth about the tongues doctrine as surely as the truth about the Sabbath, salvation, heaven and hell, the real gospel or any other doctrine of God.

To summarize: One simply *cannot* receive the gift of tongues outside the true Body of Christ! (For more information, read our booklet *Where Is God’s Church?*, the book *Where Is the True Church? – and Its Incredible History!*, the booklet *Here Is The Restored Church of God* and our article “Are You Being Called?”)

The Truth of Tongues

Jesus taught, “Your [God’s] word is *truth*” (John 17:17). You have just read the TRUTH about tongues. It has been made unmistakably plain and understandable.

I have pastored many thousands of people. Sadly, some fell back into the alluring, pleasing sensations and thrills brought by the counterfeit tongues, inspired by Satan! It was a virtual drug that they could not “kick.” They neglected to continue “try[ing] the spirits, whether they are of God” (I John 4:1), and ignored Proverbs 14:12 and 16:25, trusting in *feelings* instead of the PLAIN WORD of God.

Putting on the “whole armor of God” (Eph. 6:10-18) was too hard—and the sensations and pleasures that they had given up were too tempting.

What You Must Understand

Herbert W. Armstrong concluded his booklet *The Tongues Question* with this remarkable summary:

“God’s way is the way of CRUCIFYING the flesh, the sensual—of *denying* the SELF—of LOVE toward God and toward fellowman. Satan’s counterfeit is SELF-SEEKING, lusting for fleshly thrills, and feelings, and ‘blessings’ that bring pleasure through the five senses.

“And the greater pity is that the very ones most deceived are the ones who RESENT having the Scriptures opened to them to CORRECT them, to REPROVE, and to set them right! If *you* feel resentment of these words, it is the surest BIBLE EVIDENCE that you are under the deceptive power of Satan the Devil, and you should flee the influence he has over you, and drop to your knees at once, and ask God to renew a RIGHT spirit within you.

“So many in this modern ‘tongues’ movement do not seem to understand the real purpose of receiving the Holy Spirit. They look upon spiritual gifts as ornaments to decorate and embellish the PERSON. But the gifts of the Spirit are the TOOLS placed in our hands to DO THE WORK OF GOD.

“After Jesus had received the FULLNESS of the Holy Spirit, He said: ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, BECAUSE he hath anointed me to *preach the gospel* to the poor; he hath sent me to *heal the brokenhearted*, to *preach deliverance* to the captives, and *recovering of sight to the blind...*’ (Luke 4:18).

“The object and purpose of the Holy Spirit is not to give *feelings and thrills that are of the senses of the flesh*, and therefore *sensual*—not to please the SELF—but to enable one to *crucify* the SELF—to endow with power to overcome sin, which is transgressing of God’s Commandments (I John 3:4)—to *cleanse* us of all unrighteousness—to impart to us GOD’S righteousness, so our light may shine and others may see Christ in us—to *understand* the Word of God, so we may know how to live by its every word—to give us the FAITH of Jesus, making possible His righteousness—to give us POWER to be kind, patient, gentle, and of service to others—to preach the Gospel—to heal the sick...

“Jesus did not say, ‘Ye shall fall helpless UNDER the power.’ He did not say the Holy Spirit would ROB us of power, render us powerless. He said, ‘YE SHALL RECEIVE POWER!’

“The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of POWER, and of LOVE, and of a SOUND MIND (II Tim. 1:7). The Spirit of UNDERSTANDING (John 16:13; I Cor. 2:10). And that kind of power comes from just two things: SURRENDER and FAITH, along with much earnest PRAYER.

“Let us YIELD to God, and His Word. Let us seek more of His Love, more of His FAITH, a better UNDERSTANDING, more POWER FOR SERVICE! And let us leave manifestations and feelings to Him!”

The following literature expands on topics discussed in this booklet:

- The Trinity – Is God Three-in-One?
- Where Is the True Church? – and Its Incredible History!
- God’s Holy Days or Pagan Holidays?
- Here Is The Restored Church of God
- What Do You *Mean* “Water Baptism”?
- What Is *True* Conversion?
- *Where* Is God’s Church?
- “Are You Being *Called*?”

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