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The Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts and Speaking in Tongues.

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Learn the Bible at Home

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

The Holy Spirit in Acts

And

Speaking in Tongues.

Topics.

- Baptized in Holy Spirit.
- God will pour his Spirit out on all flesh.
- The promise of the Holy Spirit.
- You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- All were filled with the Holy Spirit.
- They laid hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.
- Can water baptism be denied to those who have received the Holy Spirit?
- The Holy Spirit witnesses in every city.
- Being full of the Holy Spirit.

INTRODUCTION: in older Bibles the translators used the title Holy Ghost this is simply the ancient term for the title Holy Spirit and refers to the same thing which is God's Spirit. There are many aspects to the Holy Spirit like a diamond has multitudes of colours the Holy Spirit has a variety of functions and ministries. To limit the Holy Spirit to one aspect or one function or one ministry is like limiting a diamond to one colour and limiting the nature and Spirit of God to one task.

1

BAPTIZED IN HOLY SPIRIT

- **Acts 1:4-5:** while staying with the disciples he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father which, he said, "you heard from me; ⁵for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

In this context the Holy Spirit is the promise of God the disciples had to wait for until Jesus had ascended. The promise of God could not come until after the death and resurrection of Jesus. The expression baptized with the Holy Spirit in this context means baptized in the truth, as opposed to the hypocrisy of the teachings of the chief priests and the Pharisees. The promised Holy Spirit gave them the ability to praise God and speak about his mighty works (Acts 2:11) in languages and dialects they had not learned, but others who spoke that language clearly understood.

THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES POWER TO WITNESS

- **Acts 1:8:** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

This verse immediately takes our mind back to the following and final words of Jesus to the apostles recorded at the end of Luke's first letter just before Jesus ascension, "Behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). This refers to the baptism in the Holy Spirit

(Acts 1:5). After Jesus resurrection he was with his disciples for forty-days speaking about the kingdom of God (v3). Prior to Christ's death and resurrection no-one understood what Jesus meant when he said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised" (Luke 9:22) so it is certain he spent these forty-days explaining to them the following two glorious and eternal aspects of the Kingdom of God:

1. All things concerning his return as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth. Notice even though God has set a fixed time for Christ's return (Acts 1:7) it is given to no-one to know the exact dates or time when this glorious event will be.
2. Salvation is now available to Jews and Gentiles through God's grace and through faith in his name and that righteousness is granted as a free gift to all who believe in Christ and faithfully follow him contrasted to striving to attain to it by self-effort and the strict adherence to ceremonial rites, holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions.

Jesus told his disciples that the Gospel they are to proclaim is:

- The death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Godly repentance in Christ's name is the entry into God's Kingdom.
- God's forgiveness through Christ is always available and always granted to those who in honest heartfelt repentance humble themselves before God and accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour (Luke 24:44).

The Holy Spirit in this context is the power given to the apostles to witness the Good News concerning Jesus in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth (v8). How appropriate that the power they received from the Father was the ability to praise God and speak of His mighty works (Acts 2:11) in foreign languages they had never learned and that those who spoke that language and heard them clearly understood (Acts 2:1-10).

2

THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES THE ABILITY TO SPEAK FOREIGN LANGUAGES

- **Acts 2:4:** they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

This is the Day of Pentecost when one hundred and twenty men and woman were in the upper room waiting for the promise of the Father. At the end of the book of Luke just before Jesus ascended to heaven, he told the eleven and those with them, "To wait in the city of Jerusalem until they are clothed with power from on high when he sends upon them the promise of his Father" (Luke 24:49-52).

Since Jesus ascension the apostles and those with them had been praying in an upper room in Jerusalem for this day to arrive.

Tongues: means a language different from their own native language or previously unknown to the speaker. It was a common expression during the earlier ages for the introduction to many older Bibles to begin by saying:

Translated out of the Original Tongues and with the former
Translations diligently compared and revised by
His Majesty's special command A.D 1611

Both the Greek and the English words tongue and language can refer either to the organ of speech in our mouths or the language that is spoken this is the reason languages is often referred to as tongues, (i.e., the tongue is the organ that forms speech and speaks the language). The following two verses show that the Bible uses the word tongues and languages interchangeably showing that the word tongues simply means language, Luke writes:

- Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in *his own language* (Acts 2:6 KJV).

Then in verse eight Luke states:

- We hear every man in our *own tongue* wherein we were born?

NOTICE: they weren't confounded because they couldn't understand what the people were saying, but because they heard them in their own language which those speaking had never learned and yet those listening understood what they were saying. Those that had this gift were not proclaiming revelations or prophecy but telling the people all the mighty miracles and wonders they had seen Christ do with their own eyes while he was with them on earth. The miracle here is not that they were given revelations or prophecy, but that they could proclaim in a different language to their own native language all the glory and wonder they had seen while with Christ (Acts 2:11).

SIXTEEN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES

This stunning and mighty miracle of being able to tell the crowd about the mighty works of God and the Lord Jesus Christ that they had seen while with him was a sign to the Jews and Gentiles alike that God was now pouring His Spirit out on both the Jews and Gentiles. It is estimated that there would have been approximately sixteen different languages and dialects amongst the crowd. There were Jewish pilgrims from the Babylonian dispersion (Acts 2:9-11) who would have understood Aramaic and Greek the two languages (tongues) spoken in Palestine, but even amongst these two languages there were many different dialects. Added to these were foreign proselytes among crowds and Jews and Gentiles from Africa, Egypt Rome and many other places. Today (2011) it is estimated Jews are coming out of one-hundred and twenty nations with one-hundred and eighty-three different languages and dialects.

WAS THE MIRACLE OF TONGUES IN THE SPEAKING OR THE HEARING?

Some religious teachers argue that the miracle that occurred was not in the speaking but in the hearing of the listeners, but this theory is flawed since it was only the people in the upper room that the power of the Holy Spirit fell upon. Added to this those listening said, "We hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God" (Acts 2:11) this clearly shows that the miracle is in the speaking not the listening, added to this Jesus told those in the upper room to wait for the promise of the Father not the crowds. The Holy Spirit in the context of these verses refers to the gift of speaking in a language that had not been learned, but others who heard it understood what the speaker was saying.

GOD WILL POUR HIS SPIRIT OUT ON ALL FLESH

- **Acts 2:14-18:** Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. ¹⁵For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. ¹⁶But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: ¹⁷" 'And in the last

days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy and your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams; ¹⁸even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit and they shall prophesy.

This is cited from the following verse of Joel's prophecy:

- It shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh (Joel 2:28).

God poured out the promised gift of the Holy Spirit which manifested in speaking in a foreign languages and dialects that the people have not learned, but those listening understood as a sign that God is now pouring out His Spirit on all flesh meaning He now accepting into His Kingdom people from all nations and not just Israel. In this same prophecy of Joel's God says, "It shall come to pass that whoever (Jew or Gentile) calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved (Acts 2:21). Speaking in a foreign language or dialect was a sign to the Jewish nation that God was now accepting the Gentiles. From these verses we learn that the pouring out of the Holy Spirit not only manifested in the ability to speak in a foreign language that the people had not learned, but others understood, but was also manifested in men and woman prophesying and having spiritual dreams and visions. It is certain that these visions and dreams would have brought understanding concerning the message of the cross, the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, the New Covenant of grace and the return of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory all of which we have today recorded in the Scriptures of the Bible. The primary purpose of these gifts that were imparted to various men and woman who believed was to evidence to the Jews and the Gentiles that God was accepting into His Kingdom people from all nations. Though the pouring out of the Holy Spirit was manifested in many different ways the primary gift of the Holy Spirit refers to the free gift of righteousness and salvation to eternal life for Jews and Gentiles alike who humble themselves before God in honest heartfelt repentance and accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

NOTE: prior to the New Testament the nation of Israel was God's chosen and unique nation and His special people. The LORD has always dealt with Israel differently to any other nation. He declared His word, statutes and His rules to Israel (the LORD has not done this with any other nation). They are children of Abraham the father of faith and because they are Abraham's offspring they were entrusted with the oracles of God. To them belonged the adoption, the glory and the covenants. Added to these God said that he gave birth to Israel and carried them from the womb even to their old age (Isaiah 46:3-4) and that He loved them when they were a child, and refers to them as his son who he called out of Egypt (Hosea 11:1).

They were given the law, the worship and the promises, to them belong the patriarchs and from their race, came the Christ who is Lord over all that God created (Rom. 3:2) (Rom. 9:4-5, 7). Even more than this the LORD called Israel His treasured possession and the apple of the LORD'S eye, his allotted heritage and a people holy to Him (Exod. 19:5) (Deut. 7:6) (Deut. 14:2) (Deut. 26:18) (Deut. 32:9). But here in Acts chapter two God is pouring out his Spirit upon all flesh meaning upon all nations (Jews and Gentiles alike). This was outwardly manifested by the gift of speaking in other languages and dialects that the speaker had never learned, but that those who spoke it understood. Through this gift God was showing the Jews that He has now made salvation available to Jew and Gentiles alike. The fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, "God will pour out His Spirit on all flesh (Joel 2:28) was manifested when Jews and Gentiles spoke in foreign languages and dialects, they had never learned praising God and speaking of His mighty works outwardly evidencing that God was now accepting the Gentiles. Jews at the time of Christ believed they were the chosen and holy race with God and that the Gentiles were an unclean race without God. The gift was primarily a sign to evidence to unbelieving Jews who did not believe the God they worshipped would accept into His Kingdom people from nations other than Israel was now doing exactly that.

- **Acts 2:32-33:** This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. ³³Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.

This is a continuation of the previous verse (Acts 2:4) the thing they were seeing were Jews and Gentiles praising and exalting the Lord together and the thing they were hearing was of course those who had received the promise of the Father praising God and speaking of His mighty works (Act 2:11) in languages they had not heard, but those listening clearly understood. Salvation to eternal life has come to the Gentiles and is no longer restricted to the Jews. Jesus received the promise of the Holy Spirit when he was resurrected and seated at the right hand of God. The promise of the Holy Spirit Jesus received was eternal life. Though Jesus received the gifts of the Holy Spirit without limitations at his water baptism he did not receive God's gift of eternal life until his resurrection and exaltation to the right hand side of his heavenly Father.

- The promise of the Holy Spirit is the same as saying the promise of God.
- The gifts of the Holy Spirit, is the same as saying the gifts of God.
- God is pouring out the Holy Spirit is the same as saying God is pouring out His Spirit (it is called holy because God is holy).
- The promise of the Holy Spirit is the same as the promise of God.

It should be mentioned here that the promise of the Holy Spirit is different to the gifts of the Holy Spirit the promise of the Holy Spirit refers to God's promise of righteousness by faith and eternal life whereas the gifts refer to prophecies, visions, spiritual dreams, miracles etc. The promise of the Holy Spirit was that God would pour His Spirit out on the Gentiles signifying that Gentiles are accepted into God's Kingdom.

- Peter said: "This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses, being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing" (Acts 2:32-33).

Peter is telling the crowds that Jesus has received eternal life and has given the gift of praising God and speaking of His mighty works in languages and dialects they had not learned, but those who spoke it understood to evidence to both Jews and Gentiles that God is granting eternal life to both Jews and Gentiles alike. After hearing Peter's message concerning the cross and Jesus resurrection the crowds ask him, "What must they do?" Peter tells the people to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ and they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit because the promise is to them and to their children and as many as God calls. The promise Peter is referring to is forgiveness of sin, righteousness by faith entry into the Kingdom of God and eternal life which are all summed up in the word, salvation (Acts 2:37-39). The apostles and a few Gentiles received certain gifts of the Holy Spirit. It was God's Spirit inspiring and enabling them to prophecy and speak in foreign languages and dialects that they had not learned and that the people clearly understood. This gift of speaking in foreign languages was not the gift of salvation, but a sign to the Jews and the Gentiles that God was now accepting into his Kingdom whoever will come to him. God does not pour salvation out upon a person; everyone must humble themselves before God in honest heartfelt repentance and accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour and be baptised into his name.

- **Acts 2:38-41:** Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." ⁴⁰And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." ⁴¹So those who received his word were baptized and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit primarily refer to spiritual gifts, wonders and signs while the promise of the Holy Spirit refers to forgiveness of sins and eternal life. A few verses further on in this chapter we are told that after the three-thousand were baptised and added to God's Kingdom awe came upon the people because many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles (v43) and that the Lord continue to add to their number day by day those who were being saved (v47). The gifts of the Holy Spirit were to evidence to the Jews and the Gentiles that God was with the apostles so that they would repent and be baptised and receive the promise of the Holy Spirit (righteousness that leads to eternal life) and be saved.

PETER FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT PROCLAIMS THE GOSPEL

- **Acts 4:8-10:** Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel. ¹⁰if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, ¹⁰let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well.

Prior to this verse Peter has just healed a crippled man at the gate of the temple (in the previous chapter) and now full of the Holy Spirit tells the religious rulers and the crowds that the lame man was made well not by any goodness or power within him, but by his faith in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom they crucified and who God raised from the dead (Acts 4:9-10). The Holy Spirit in this context refers to the following two things:

1. The message of the cross and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ that Jesus taught them during his time with them. This is because one aspect of being full of the Holy Spirit is being full of the words of Christ.
2. Being full of spiritual strength, power and boldness to testify of the Lord Jesus Christ in the face of great danger and at great risk to one's own live.

ALL WERE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

- **Acts 4:31:** when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

The words, "The place was shaken and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" takes our minds back to the Day of Pentecost when this first happened and one hundred and twenty people praying in an upper room were filled with the Holy Spirit symbolised by divided tongues of fire and were all able to speak in a language they had not learned, but others who spoke it understood (Acts 2:1-4). After this experience both those from the upper room and those from Peter and John's prayer meeting immediately went out and boldly praised and glorified Christ and proclaimed the Good News of the Gospel. The words, "With great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 4:33) imply that though others supernaturally received the ability to speak in a language they had not learned only the twelve

apostles received the power to miraculously heal. The Holy Spirit in this context refers to the gift of speaking in a language that had not been learned, but others who heard it and spoke it clearly understood what the speaker was saying and to the gift of healing (at least for the apostles).

GOD GIVES THE HOLY SPIRIT TO THOSE WHO OBEY HIM

- **Acts 5:30-32:** The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. ³¹God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. ³²And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him."

God not only gave Jesus eternal life when He raised him from the dead to His right hand side, but also exalted him to be the Saviour of the world (i.e., Jews and Gentiles). The Holy Spirit witnesses to the truth that Jesus is the Saviour in the following four ways:

1. By the gifts of the Holy Spirit (i.e., prophesy, miracles, visions and gifts of healing etc.).
2. By the power of the Holy Spirit to transform the primary focus of the mind and the passion of the heart of those who are saved from the things of this world to the things of God
3. By the influence of the Holy Spirit upon the mind and heart of the faithful to produce in their inner most being the fruits of the Spirit (i.e., love, compassion, kindness, mercy, grace, forgiveness and such like things).
4. By the power of the Holy Spirit to affect a deep desire in the heart of those who are saved that longs for the ability to live a life that would honour God and bring a good testimony to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.
5. By the indwelling joy and excitement of Christ's return in glory abiding in the heart and mind which arises from the promise of the Holy Spirit of God who cannot lie (Titus 1:2).

MEN FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- **Acts 6:3-5:** Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom whom we will appoint to this duty. ⁴But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." ⁵And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch.

The Holy Spirit in this context refers to those who are devoted by faith and by love to the Lord Jesus Christ. To be full of the Holy Spirit carries the idea that the mind and heart are full of:

- Faith and wisdom concerning God, the Lord Jesus Christ and his words.
- Passion and fully focused toward the things of God and desiring to serve the Lord even unto death.
- The words of Christ and the fruits of the Spirit (honesty, integrity, love, compassion, mercy, grace and forgiveness etc.).
- Desiring to live a life that honours God and brings a good testimony to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian Faith.

Being full of the Holy Spirit could be summed up in the words, a life fully devoted to God in every way.

STEPHEN FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- **Acts 7:55-56:** But he (Stephen) full of the Holy Spirit gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

Being full of the Holy Spirit in this context means that God is the supreme focus of a person's mind, heart and life even unto death, this picture shines a spotlight on the truth that the love Stephen had for the Lord and for the lost far surpassed the passion he had for his own life. Notice Scripture almost always pictures Jesus seated at the right hand side of his heavenly father, but here Jesus is pictured standing up. This is an expression of the great love, admiration and honour Christ has toward those who make such enormous sacrifices to proclaim the Gospel and lay down their life for his name.

THEY LAID HANDS ON THEM AND THEY RECEIVED THE HOLY SPIRIT

- **Acts 8:14-17:** Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, ¹⁵who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit ¹⁶for he had not yet fallen on any of them but they had only been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

Peter and John are not laying hands on the Samaritans so that they will receive salvation we know this because salvation is not received by the laying on of hands, but by repentance and is available to all who come to Christ. Long before Peter and John came to these Samaritans, they had heard the Good News of the Gospel of Christ and the Kingdom of God, they believed, repented and were baptised into the name of Christ, so they had already received the gift of the Holy Spirit that leads to salvation and eternal life. Peter and John are laying hands on the Samaritans so they will receive the gift of tongues (speaking in a language they had not learned). The gift of the Holy Spirit in this context was the gift of being able to speak in a languages or dialect other than their native language that others who spoke that particular language clearly understood.

IMPARTING THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The only ones who were able to pass this gift of the Holy Spirit (speaking in tongues) onto others were the apostles and those they had passed the gift onto by laying their hands upon them, this is why Peter and John were sent from Jerusalem, they were able to anoint others with this gift. The Scriptures do not present other believers having the ability to pass this gift on to others by the laying on of hands, but others did receive the Holy Spirit gift from God even before they were water baptised as the following Scriptures in Acts chapter ten show:

- While Peter was speaking in Cornelius house the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word and the believers from among the circumcised (Jews) who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles because they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, "Can anyone withhold water for baptising these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we (Jews) have?" And he commanded them to be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 10:44-48).

Just prior to Peter being in the house of Cornelius God had given him the vision of a great sheet descending upon the earth full of all kinds of unclean animals according to the Levitical law and reptiles and birds of the air and in which he heard a voice from heaven saying, "Rise and eat," But Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that

is common or unclean." To which the voice came to him again saying "What God has made clean, do not call common." This happened three times (Acts 10:11-16). God in this vision is showing Peter that He is pouring out his Spirit upon the Gentiles who the Jews at this time believed to be an unclean race without God.

NOTICE: in (Acts 8:14-17) the focus is Samaritans. The Jews at Jerusalem did not accept the Samaritan Jews (they considered them an unclean people). This is because after Israel seventy-year Babylonian captivity they remained in the land of Samaria and took Samaritan women to be their wives and in Cornelius' house (Acts 10:44-48) the focus is Gentiles receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. The gift of speaking in other languages was primarily to evidence to the unbelieving and doubting Jews that God was pouring out His Spirit upon those they rejected and considered unclean and was accepting them into His Kingdom.

CAN WATER BAPTISM BE DENIED TO THOSE WHO HAVE RECEIVED THE HOLY SPIRIT?

- **Acts 10:44-47:** While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. ⁴⁵And the believers from among the circumcised (Jews) who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. ⁴⁶For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, ⁴⁷"Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?"

While Peter speaking the Holy Spirit fell on both the Jews and the Gentiles in Cornelius' house and the Jews who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. Notice everyone understood what these people were saying while they were speaking in tongues clearly showing that the word tongues simply mean another language or dialect other than their own native language. It is interesting to note that they were not teaching anything while speaking in this other language but praising and glorifying God. The words, "Who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" (v47) refer to the Day of Pentecost when God poured out the Holy Spirit on the one hundred and twenty in the upper room (Acts 2:1-5). The Holy Spirit in this context has nothing to do with eternal salvation since all those in the upper room were already faithful disciples of the Lord and saved, the Holy Spirit in the context of these verses was a gift God gave to Jews and Gentiles alike to show unbelieving Jews that God was pouring out His Spirit on all flesh (meaning both Jews and Gentiles alike) in fact these people as yet have not even been water baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

WATER BAPTISM

Many religious people today believe that after Christ's death and resurrection water baptism is not important to God, but even though those in Cornelius' house were godly people and God found them worthy to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit Peter still commands them to be water baptised (v48) clearly showing that the apostle Peter never considered for a moment that water baptism had been done away with no matter how spiritual a person feels or how gifted in God they are. Added to this there are many examples of new converts being water baptised long after Jesus' death and resurrection throughout the book of Acts. Even more than this the founder of our faith the Son of God did not consider himself above being water baptised, but humbled himself and allowed John to publically water baptise him clearly showing that not one of us should be so prideful that we think being water baptised is beneath us and has no spiritual value before God.

For further information concerning water baptism, see the title: "Water Baptism" (ON WEBSITE MENU).

THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit that the Gentiles are now receiving in Cornelius house is the same gift of the Holy Spirit that the Jews received at the beginning (Acts 2). In these verses the gift of the Holy Spirit refers to a language that had not been learned falling on both Jews and Gentiles to act as a testimony to unbelieving and doubting Jews that God was pouring his Spirit out on all flesh (people of all nations) since they heard them praising God in their own languages. Peter message to those in Cornelius house was: "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him" (Acts 10:34-35).

SPEAKING FOREIGN LANGUAGES EVIDENCED BEING BAPTISED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

- **Acts 11:15-18:** As I (Peter) began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. ¹⁶And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, "John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. ¹⁷If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?" ¹⁸When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life" (eternal)

Peter in these verses is recounting his vision of the unclean animals descending from heaven in a sheet and his experience of the Holy Spirit in the house of Cornelius and telling it to the Jews at Jerusalem (Acts 10:44-47). Peter after explaining to the Jews how the Lord had miraculously brought him to the home of Cornelius tells them that the Holy Spirit fell on those in Cornelius house as it fell on them on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). He then told the Jews of the circumcision party that when he saw the Holy Spirit being poured out on those gathered in Cornelius house it was the same as when God poured the Holy Spirit out on those at the beginning and that he remembered that Jesus had told them (the apostles):

- John baptised with water, but you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said this to the apostles when he appeared to them after his death and resurrection and told them to wait at Jerusalem until they were baptised in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:1-5). Just a few days later on the day of Pentecost the apostles were waiting in an upper room with many others and were all filled with the Holy Spirit and people from about sixteen different languages heard them speaking of the mighty works of God in their own native language and clearly understood what they were saying (Acts 2:7-11).

PETER WILL DECLARE A MESSAGE BY WHICH CORNELIUS WILL BE SAVED

The angel told Cornelius, "Peter would declare a message to him by which he and his household would be saved" (v14). The message Peter proclaimed to Cornelius was: God is showing no partiality or favouritism to Jews or Gentiles, but whoever fears the LORD and does what is right is acceptable to God regardless of their nation or their birthright and that everyone (Jew or Gentile) who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ receives forgiveness of sins through his name (Acts 10:34-44). It was while Peter was speaking these words that the Holy Spirit fell on those gathered in Cornelius house which was a miraculous sign that God was confirming in a spectacular way what Peter was saying and to testify to the Jews that God was pouring his Spirit out on both Jews and Gentiles alike (i.e., upon

all flesh). The Holy Spirit in this context refers to the gift of speaking in a language that had not been learned falling on both Jews and Gentiles to act as a testimony to doubting Jews that God was pouring his Spirit out on Jews and Gentiles since they heard them praising God in their own languages.

GIVING UP THE SPIRIT IS MORTAL DEATH

- **Acts 12:23:** Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him (Herod) down, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and breathed his last (gave up the ghost in KJV).

During King Herod's reign he brought great fear, terror and persecution upon those confessing Christ. After taking his seat upon the throne clothed in royal robes, he delivered an oration to the crowds which incited them to shout, "The voice of a god, and not of a man!" And immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory (most likely spoke terror against Christians). After Herod's death the word of God multiplied since the terror and persecution, he brought upon those confessing Christ was no longer a threat.

Herod was eaten by worms: this expression implies that he was not given a royal burial as fitting of a king, but most likely was left to rot and decay on the surface of the earth showing that he was not a king his subjects respected or honoured.

BAPTISED IN HOLY SPIRIT

- **Acts 13:52:** the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

This verse is in the context of the Jews in the city of Antioch stirring the people up against Paul and Barnabas and violently driving them out of the region. Paul and Barnabas shook the dust off their feet against them and went to Iconium when the disciples heard that Paul and Barnabas were safe, we are told they were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit in this context refers to the excitement and joy brothers and sisters have when they hear good news concerning another brother or sister, especially one who they deeply respect and love.

GOD MAKES NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN JEWS AND GENTILES

- **Acts 15:7-9:** after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the Gospel and believe. ⁸And God, who knows the heart bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, ⁹and he made no distinction between us and them having cleansed their hearts by faith.

The debate was over circumcision, certain Jewish men were teaching those (at Antioch) (v22) that it was impossible to be saved without being circumcised and upholding Moses Law. Paul and Barnabas try to convince them otherwise by pointing out the truth that God knows the heart and had given proof that Gentiles could be saved without being circumcised by pouring out the Holy Spirit upon Gentiles in the same manner that he did to the Jews in Acts chapter two. Paul and Barnabas had no success in persuading them so they with some others they travel to Jerusalem to ask the apostles and the elders about this question. The church, the apostles and the elders at Jerusalem welcome them, but those of the Pharisees who had believed much of what the apostles taught concerning the Lord Jesus Christ remained adamant that they still had to keep the Law of Moses to be saved and therefore reasoned that it was necessary to be circumcised even if a person believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. This

kind of faith is common in the global church today, its faith in Christ plus works. It means that faith in Christ and God's grace are not enough to save us to eternal life, we must by self-effort earn our righteousness that leads to eternal life by strictly adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions to complete our righteousness and be counted worthy of eternal life. Those who have this kind of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ only believe that his blood partially cleanses them from all sin and since it is not enough to cleanse them completely it must be added to by our own self-effort, but this is not only a false Gospel, but will also robs those who believe this destructive teaching from God's grace and without grace no-one can be saved. The following words of Paul show the enormous importance of trusting in God's grace in Christ. Paul in his letters wrote:

- I do not nullify the *GRACE* of God, for if justification were through the law (or any form of religious self-effort), then Christ died for no purpose (Gal. 2:21).

This means, when a brother or sister in Christ begin to justify themselves through the law and self-effort, they nullify the grace of God and by their actions declare that Christ's death was of no value. Equally as horrific as this Paul states:

- When we forsake *GRACE* we separate ourselves from Christ because it was only by *GRACE* that God made us alive in Christ (Gal. 5:4) (Eph. 2:5).

Paul to highlight even more the majestic glory of grace wrote with absolute boldness that:

- It is only by *GRACE* that any brother or sister has been saved (Eph. 2:8).

Paul in these verses is shining a brilliant floodlight on the truth that every brother and sister in Christ is saved, solely by faith and by grace and it is not their own doing, but the gift of God. This means that without grace no-one can be united to Christ and whoever is without Christ is separated from God and without God no-one can be saved to eternal life. This means in regards to eternal salvation, Christ, God, grace and faith, are all on an equal par with each other since no-one can be saved to eternal life without any one of them. This is the reason the author in the book of Hebrews spends so many chapters brilliantly and skilfully explaining to the Hebrews that they must stop their sin of trusting in religious works, the Levitical Law and their priesthood to be counted righteous before God and start trusting in the grace of God that is in Christ and in his righteousness to be saved to eternal life. By extension this means that Christians must stop trusting in attending a church building every week, strictly adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions to be saved. Though the practise of some of these maybe good in themselves they become grossly sinful when believers trust in them for their salvation since not one of them has any power to save to eternal life. The Holy Spirit in this context refers to the gift of speaking in other languages and God's gift of righteousness that leads to eternal life by faith and God's grace.

THE HOLY SPIRIT WITNESSES IN EVERY CITY

- **Acts 20:20-23:** how I (Paul) did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house ²¹testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. ²²And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit not knowing what will happen to me there, ²³except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me.

Paul was preaching to Jew and Gentiles, a holy and righteous message, in every city and as he looked around it was clear to him that the message, he was proclaiming stirred up anger, opposition and persecutions toward him (especially from the Jews). This is what is meant by the expression,

"The Holy Spirit witnesses in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await him." The following example may help understand what Paul meant when he said he was shown by the Holy Spirit. Keep in mind that this example does not apply in all circumstances, certainly Paul would have had direct communication with God at various times in his ministry, but it does give a perspective that may help others in similar circumstances.

- If an evangelist is intending to go to a town or village, but after talking to the people sees that the collective mind of the population is clearly hostile toward the Gospel of Christ and will violently persecute anyone who proclaims it, then in this context it would be biblically correct for the evangelist or any other disciple to say, the Holy Spirit has showed them not to go, because this would be God's will for that evangelist in those circumstances.

Paul knew Asia was hostile toward him proclaiming Christ it would have been foolish for him to go when there were so many other safe cities with people who longed to hear what he had to say. Added to this it was not God's will at this time for Paul to risk being killed since he was God's primary ambassador for Christ, therefore Paul was biblically correct in saying the Holy Spirit showed him not to go. Following are three simplistic secular examples that may help understand this principal:

1. The spirit of Australia showed me I had to love sport to be accepted by the people as a true Australian. Spirit in this context is a term given to the collective spirit of the attitude, thinking and mind of the population of the nation of Australia as a whole.
2. The spirit of the party said, if I don't drink and dance, they will think me square or snobbish. The spirit in this context refers to the collective attitude of all those at the party.
3. The Christian spirit accepts most people this does not mean that there is a spirit named Christian the term applies to the collective attitude of all Christians as a whole.

Shown by the Holy Spirit in certain contexts can mean, shown by the collective voice, attitude or spirit of all those that are holy and the results (good or bad) that God's holy word has on a collective group of people, can be spoken of as the attitude of the crowd or the spirit of the people. If the result is a righteous one, then it can be spoken of as the Holy Spirit of the crowd, but if the result was a violent and hostile one then the term would of course be the evil spirit of the crowd. In Paul's case the result of preaching God's Holy word was imprisonment and afflictions. That is why Paul was able to say, the Holy Spirit (the collective spirit or attitude of the people that heard the Gospel of Christ witnesses (shows Paul) in every city in that region afflictions await him (Acts 20:23). Obviously, this is only one of the ways in which the Holy Spirit speaks to us, clearly like a single diamond reflects many colours the Holy Spirit can speak to us in many different ways (i.e., directly to our spirit, heart or mind and through a friend, the Bible or circumstances etc.). Amongst crowds, groups, companies, religious organizations, churches and nations in most cases there will be a dominant spirit. Over nations it could be a spirit of war, pride, violence, sensuality or one of caring and helping etc., in religious organisations it could be a prideful, superior elite spirit, a dogmatic, legalistic, controlling spirit or a kind caring humble and loving spirit, in a crowd it could be a spirit of joy and excitement or violence and hostility.

THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE PROPHET AGABUS AND PAUL'S BELT

- **Acts 21:11:** And (a prophet named Agabus) coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit. 'This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"

It is interesting to notice in chapter nineteen we are told:

- Paul resolved in the Spirit to go to Jerusalem (Acts 19:21).

And then in chapter twenty Paul says:

- He is going to Jerusalem, constrained (bound in KJV) by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to him except that the Holy Spirit testifies to him in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await him (Acts 20:22-23).

And in chapter twenty-one Luke states:

- The disciples through the Spirit were telling Paul not to go on to Jerusalem (Acts 21:4).

And here in verse eleven the prophet Agabus ties his own hands and feet with Paul's belt and said through the Holy Spirit:

- This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

Upon hearing this all the brothers once again urged Paul not to leave, but he told them that his heart was set on going to Jerusalem even if it meant his death so the brothers could not persuade him to stay and then after doing all they could without any success to stop him going they make an amazing statement:

- Let the will of the Lord be done (Acts 21:10-14).

So, was Paul being led by his own spirit or the Holy Spirit? To understand the answer to this it is helpful to know that the word bound (Acts 20:22) comes from the Greek word (*deo*) and from Strong's Concordance literally means to bind, to be in bonds, to tie and carries the idea of being controlled, compelled, pressured, made, coerced, restrained or hindered with the thought in the mind of something needful and necessary (i.e., must be, ought to, should do). Putting it all together it appears that Paul in his own spirit felt a responsibility to once again attempt to take the Gospel to his Jewish brothers at Jerusalem, we know he had an overwhelming love for them because he says:

- I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh (Rom. 9:3).

But through the checks he felt in his own spirit, through the brothers and the prophet Agabus warning him from going and through difficulties that hindered him it would appear that the Holy Spirit was constraining him from going, but Paul was determined most likely because of his love for his nation, the Jewish people and those he had spent his life growing up with in Jerusalem. So, the statement:

- Let the will of the Lord be done (Acts 21:10-14)

Seems to mean that even if the Lord attempts to warn us from danger what we end up doing for him is still counted as the will of the Lord, but we will suffer the consequences of such a choice.

A typical example: of this would be when an older and mature Christian man finds himself advising a new convert in the Lord who intends to take the Gospel to people who are extremely hostile toward Christianity since being the older man he is able to see that the end result of such an action is most likely not going to be a good one for the young lad, but being young and zealous the young man is determined that the path he is about to take is the right path so he ignores the older man's warning and does what he determined to do, in this scenario the older man can correctly say, "Let the will of the Lord be done," even though the older man knows the path the young convert is taking will most likely lead to sorrow and hardship. This scenario happens in many Christian families there are times when our adult children are determined to take a path we would prefer they didn't, sadly sometimes we have to say as the brothers did to Paul, "Let the will of the Lord be done," and rest in the fact that silver and gold

cannot be produced without fire and though they may suffer in this world if their motive is right toward God they may well be storing up treasure in heaven since the God we worship sees the intent of the heart.

THE HOLY SPIRIT PROPHESED THROUGH THE PROPHETS

- **Acts 28:25-28:** disagreeing among themselves, they departed after Paul had made one statement: "The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet: ²⁶"Go to this people, and say, You will indeed hear but never understand and you will indeed see but never perceive. ²⁷For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.' ²⁸Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen" (cited from Isaiah 6:8-10).

Paul told the disbelieving Jews that the Holy Spirit was right in speaking these words of Isaiah to their fathers, because they were driven by pride, ego and legalism and so steeped in their laws, customs and traditions they could not perceive that the message of salvation Paul was expounding to them was exactly what Moses and the prophets spoke of. Had these Jews humbled themselves and believed Paul's message they would have perceived that Jesus was their Messiah and the Christ who all their fathers, the Scriptures and the prophets said was to come and God would have saved them. In this context the Holy Spirit is the influence of God that is upon a prophet when they are inspired to prophecy.

CONCLUSION

Being full of the Holy Spirit carries the following ideas:

- God is supreme in the mind, heart and life.
- A believer is full of the fruits of the Spirit (love, compassion, kindness, mercy, grace, forgiveness and such like things).
- Christ is the exalted Lord and King of the heart and the mind.
- The core desire and passion of the heart and mind is to honour God and bring a good testimony to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith.
- The heart is full of integrity, honesty, truth morality and decency.
- God's love, wisdom, joy and peace abide in the mind.

When a brother and sister have these qualities dwelling within and flowing through their life it can be said that they are full of the Holy Spirit.

For further information concerning tongues see:

- Acts 2.
- 1 Corinthians 14.

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