

PNEUMATOLOGY

Introduction and History

A. Introduction

Throughout church history the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, as well as the Holy Spirit Himself, has often been ignored and minimized. Early church leaders and theologians concentrated on hammering out their understanding of other doctrines such as Christology and soteriology. While the average Christian did have some understanding of the ministry of the Holy Spirit and His importance in their lives, the doctrine was neither systemized until more recently nor was the emphasis on the Holy Spirit given its proper place. With the birth of the Pentecostal movement at about the turn of the twentieth century, followed by commencement of the charismatic movement some six decades later all of this changed. Suddenly the Holy Spirit was thrust into a position of prominence. False teaching has always forced the church to purify and crystallize its theology. On the negative side, much error and overemphasis on the Holy Spirit and His ministry ensued. On the positive side, it forced Bible students to grapple with the Scriptures to comprehend the truth about the third member of the Trinity. Today, while there is still widespread erroneous teaching concerning the Holy Spirit, there is a much better understanding of who He is and what He does. This study will attempt to outline some of this truth.

B. Historical development (see IHCC p.1 and Ryrie pp. 111- 120).

The early church understood that the Holy Spirit existed as a member of the Trinity but was content to enjoy the benefits afforded through Him rather than attempt to develop a theology about Him. It was not until false teachings centered on the Holy Spirit began to arise that church leaders dug into the Scriptures to develop a better understanding of Him. What follows is some of

the major events in the development of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

1. Montanism (2nd century)

Gnosticism had infiltrated the early church (the roots of Gnosticism can be seen in New Testament books such as Colossians and 1 John, as those writers corrected some of its false teachings) and brought with it a stale, intellectual form of Christianity. Montanism did not challenge the deity or personhood of the Holy Spirit, but sought to infuse the church with new life and, in the process, went beyond the Scriptures. Montanus, the founder of the movement, declared that the "age of the Paraclete" had come and with it new revelations from God. He and a few other prophets began to announce that the world was coming to an end. While the Montanists were not heretics, and their motives seemed to be pure (a more spiritual church), their insistence upon new revelations and prophecies (most of which proved to be unfulfilled), led the church to determine that additional revelation, apart from Scripture, was no longer being given by the Holy Spirit. However, a glance at the Christian landscape today would show that the Montanist issue is still with us.

2. Monarchians and Sabellianism (3rd century)

Sabellius championed a form of monarchianism, called modalism, which taught that the Trinity was a manifestation of form rather than essence. In other words, God was in the mode of the Father in the Old Testament, Jesus in the New Testament, and the Holy Spirit today. According to modalism, there are not three persons within the Godhead but One who manifested Himself in different forms. The Holy Spirit would be the role that God is playing out today. Modalism survives today in the Oneness Pentecostal circles.

3. Arianism (early 4th century)

Arius's anti-Trinitarian views would force the church to convene in the now famous Council of Nicaea in 325 AD at Nicaea in northwest Asia Minor. Arius denied the deity of the Son, viewing Him as generated by the Father at a point in time. The Son, on the other hand, created the Holy Spirit. The opposition against Arianism, led by Athanasius, condemned Arius's view concerning the Son but only affirmed its belief in the Holy Spirit. Athanasius himself, however, clearly taught the deity of the Holy Spirit. Arianism, although condemned, continued to have heavy influence on Christianity for decades to come and can still be found alive in most of the cults such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormonism.

4. From Nicaea (325 AD) to the Reformation

Questions concerning the deity of Christ, as well as the exact nature of the Holy Spirit, continued to plague the church and the Council of Constantinople was convened in 381 to deal with the issues. While the Council took a strong position on Christ, it did not clearly elucidate the essence of the Holy Spirit or His relationship with the other members of the Trinity. The Synod of Toledo was called in 589 to settle the question of whether the Spirit proceeded from the Father only or from both the Father and the Son. The Synod determined that the Spirit proceeded from both and this was accepted by the Western Church. The Eastern Church, however, would not accept the Synod's decision (believing the Spirit proceeded only from the Father). This issue resulted in a church split, known as the Great Schism, which has never been mended.

5. From the Reformation to the present

All the creeds coming out of the Reformation affirmed the person, deity and work of the Holy Spirit. But in the 16th century a group known as the Socinians denied the pre-

existence of the Son and claimed that the Holy Spirit was merely an energy sent by God, not a Person. Socinian ideas live on in Unitarianism. While all orthodox churches today accept the understanding of the Holy Spirit as articulated by Augustine and reaffirmed by the Reformed creeds, many cults and liberal denominations deny the deity and/or person of the Holy Spirit. Many other groups misunderstand and misrepresent His ministry, as we will see later. The Jehovah's Witnesses, for example, believe the Holy Spirit is the active force of God, but not a person.

C. Is the Holy Spirit a person or a force?

1. The Greek word *pneuma*, often translated "*spirit*," properly means wind, as when Jesus said, "The *pneuma* blows where it will" (John 3:8). It can speak of any invisible power and often even of angels (Heb 1:14) (C. Hodge). Therefore we understand the Holy Spirit to be a spiritual force or power.
2. The Spirit is also identified as the third member of the Trinity (Matt 28:19). As such we discover what He does and who He is.
 - What He does: He is the power of God, the person through whom the work of God is directly exercised.
 - Who He is: "As Father and Son are terms expressive of relation, it is natural to infer that the word Spirit is to be understood in the same way. The Son is called the Word, as the revealer or image of God, and the Third Person is called Spirit as His breath or power. He is also predominantly called the Holy Spirit, to indicate both his nature and operations. He is absolutely holy in His own nature and the cause of holiness in all creatures" (C. Hodge).
3. In the NT alone the Holy Spirit is mentioned almost 300 times. But is He a person or simply a force or power that

goes out from God and/or Christ? Scripture teaches that He is a person.

I. PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

A. A right knowledge of who the Holy Spirit is affects everything we do, say and think. A proper understanding of the Spirit, therefore, can revolutionize our lives. On the other hand a false understanding will lead to faulty living.

B. Today some people doubt the personality of the Holy Spirit. They may consider Him a power, a force, or energy, but they refuse to admit He is a person. However, Scripture clearly shows that He is a person.

C. The Holy Spirit has the attributes of personality:

1. Intellect: He knows and searches the things of God (1 Cor 2:10-11); He has a mind and is seen as distinct from the Father (Rom 8:27); He teaches men (1 Cor 2:13). If He can think and search and teach, He must be a person.
2. Emotions: He is grieved by the sinful actions of believers (Eph 4:30); He loves (Rom 15:30). If He can love and be grieved He must be a person.
3. Will: The distribution of the spiritual gifts are according to the will of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:11); He forbade Paul from preaching in Asia (Acts 16:6-11). If He can make decisions He must be a person.

D. The Holy Spirit has these actions of personality:

1. He teaches (John 14:26).
2. He witnesses (John 15:26).
3. He convicts (John 16:7-8).

4. He regenerates (John 3:5-7).
 5. He directs and commands (Acts 8:29).
 6. He performs miracles (Acts 8:39).
 7. He calls and sends forth to service (Acts 13:2, 4).
 8. He intercedes (Rom 8:26).
 9. He guides (Rom 8:14).
- E. The Holy Spirit has these ascriptions of personality:
1. The Spirit can be obeyed (Acts 10:19-21).
 2. He can be lied to (Acts 5:3, cp v. 4).
 3. He can be resisted (Acts 7:51).
 4. He can be blasphemed (Matt 12:31).
 5. He can be insulted (Heb 10:29).
- F. The Holy Spirit is referred to with personal pronouns.
- The Greek word for spirit is *pneuma* (from which we get our English words that have to do with air, like “pneumatic” and “pneumonia”) and is a neuter gender word. Nevertheless on several occasions the Spirit is called by the personal pronoun “He” indicating that the apostles recognized the Spirit as a person not just a force (John 15:26; 16:7-8; 16:13-14; Eph 1:13-14).
- G. The Holy Spirit has the associations of personality.

- The fact that He is associated with the Father and Son, who are presented in Scripture as persons, in the Great Commission (Matt 28:19, 20) proves that He is a person as well, and yet distinct from the other two members of the Trinity.

II. DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

A. Early church understandings:

Charles Hodge wrote: (*Systematic Theology*, Volume 1, pp. 532-534)

During the Ante-Nicene period, the Church believed concerning the Holy Ghost what was revealed on the surface of Scripture and what was involved in the religious experience of all Christians. There is to them one God, the Father, whose favour they had forfeited by sin, and to whom they must be reconciled; one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, through whom this reconciliation is effected; and one Holy Spirit, by whom they are, through Christ, brought to God. The Arians and semi-Arians taught that the Son was created by the Father, [and] held that the Spirit was created by the Son...In the Creed of the Apostles it is simply, "I believe on the Holy Ghost." The same words without addition are repeated in the Nicene Creed, but in the Creed of Constantinople it is added, "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the divine, the life-giving, who proceedeth from the Father, who is to be worshipped and glorified with the Father and the Son, and who spake through the prophets." In the Athanasian Creed (so-called), it is said that the Spirit is consubstantial with the Father and the Son; that He is uncreated, eternal, and omnipotent, equal in majesty and glory, and that He proceeds from the Father and the Son. These creeds are catholic, adopted by the whole Church. Since they were framed there has been no diversity of faith on this subject among those recognized as Christians.

B. Titles of the Holy Spirit

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|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Revealing His Character | |
| a) The Lord the Spirit | 2 Corinthians 3:18 |
| b) The Spirit of glory | 1 Peter 4:14 |
| c) The Spirit of life | Romans 8:2 |
| d) The Spirit of holiness | Romans 1:4 |
| e) The Holy Spirit | Matthew 1:20 |
| f) The Spirit of the Almighty | Luke 1:35 |
| 2. Relating Him to the Father | |
| a) The Spirit of God | Genesis 1:2;
Matthew 3:16 |
| b) The Spirit of the Lord | Luke 4:18 |
| c) The Spirit of Jehovah | Judges 3:10 |
| d) The Spirit of the Lord God | Isaiah 61:1 |
| e) The Spirit of the Living God | 2 Corinthians 3:3 |
| 3. Relating Him to the Son | |
| a) The Spirit of Christ | Romans 8:9 |
| b) The Spirit of Jesus Christ | Philippians 1:19 |
| c) The Spirit of Jesus | Acts 16:7 |
| d) The Spirit of His Son | Galatians 4:6 |
| | (cf. Romans 8:15-16) |
| e) The Spirit of the Lord | Acts 5:9; 8:39 |
| 4. Reflecting His Works | |
| a) The Spirit of glory | 1 Peter 4:14 |
| b) The Spirit of life | Romans 8:2 |
| c) The Holy Spirit | 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 |
| d) The Spirit of wisdom | Ephesians 1:17 |
| e) Spirit of truth | John 14:17 |
| f) Spirit of grace | Hebrews 10:29 |
| | (cf. Zechariah 12:10) |
| g) Spirit of adoption | Romans 8:15 |

C. Attributes

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|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Omnipotence | Luke 1:35; 1 Peter 3:18 |
| 2. Omnipresence | Psalm 139:7-12 |

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|---------------------------------------|---|
| 3. Omniscience | Isaiah 40:13, 14;
1 Corinthians 2:10, 11 |
| 4. Truth | 1 John 5:7 |
| *Jesus also claimed to be "the Truth" | (John 14:6) |
| 5. Holiness | Luke 11:13 |
| 6. Lifegiver | Romans 8:2 |
| 7. Eternality | Hebrews 9:14 |

D. Actions of the Holy Spirit

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|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. Creation of the universe | Genesis 1:2 |
| 2. Inspiration of Scripture | 2 Peter 1:21;
2 Timothy 3:16 |
| 3. Begetting Christ | Luke 1:35 |
| 4. Convicting | John 16:7-8 |
| 5. Regenerating | John 3:5, 6; Titus 3:5;
1 Peter 1:23 |
| 6. Comforting (Helper) | John 14:16 |
| 7. Interceding | Romans 8:26 |
| 8. Sanctifying | 2 Thessalonians 2:13 |

E. Association

1. With Jehovah

The New Testament often identifies the Holy Spirit with Jehovah of the Old Testament:

Acts 28:25—Isa 6:1, 9
Heb 10:15-17—Jere 31:31-32

2. With God (Matt 12:31-32; Acts 5:3-4)
3. With the Father and Son (Matt 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14)

F. Symbols

There are a number of symbols of the Holy Spirit in Scripture that reveal something of His nature or work.

1. Dove (Matt 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22)
Association with love, peace and purity (Matt 10:16).
Except for the mention of the dove released from the ark, all OT references to doves are in connection with sacrifices.
2. Water (John 7:37-39; Titus 3:5)
A symbol of life and cleansing.
3. Oil (Luke 4:18; Acts 10:38; Heb 1:9) (see Rev 1:20; 2:1,5)
Associated with anointing, inaugurating to a new task and as the source of power for service. In the OT, priests, prophets and kings were all anointed with oil.
4. Fire (Acts 2:3)
Fire in Scripture symbolizes the presence of God (Ex 3:1ff), the power of God (1 Kings 18:38-39), the protection and guidance of God (Ex 13:21), and the purging judgment of God. (Heb 12:29; Luke 3:16, 17)
5. Seal (Eph 1:13; 4:30)
Showing ownership or security.
6. Pledge (Eph 1:14; 2 Cor 1:22)
First installment or down payment of future glory.

G. Procession

1. Definition: The procession of the Holy Spirit means that in His being and eternity He is related to the Father and in that He proceeds from them He is related to the Son.
2. He proceeds from the Father (John 15:26). He proceeds from the Son (John 16:7).
3. It is notable that in 1054 the Roman Catholic Church, which takes the position that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the

Father and the Son, split from the Greek Orthodox Church which teaches that He proceeds only from the Father.

H. Subordination

- Definition: Voluntary obedience of the Holy Spirit to the Father and Son that permits the accomplishments of the divine purpose in the economy of God (John 14:26).

III. THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT PRIOR TO THE CHURCH AGE.

A. The Holy Spirit and Creation

We generally think of creation as an act of God the Father, but the entire Godhead was involved. That the Son was instrumental in creation is taught in John 1:1-5 and Colossians 1:16-17. There are indications that the Holy Spirit was involved as well:

Genesis 1:1,2 – The Hebrew word for “God” is “Elohim” which is plural. While usually understood as a plural of majesty, describing the greatness of God, it nevertheless leaves room for the New Testament revelation concerning the Trinity. Therefore, stating that Elohim created the universe leads to the possibility that the Holy Spirit was involved.

Isaiah 40:12-14 – connects the Spirit with creation.

John 6:63 – It is the Holy Spirit who gives life indicating that He gave life to all living creatures at the time of creation.

Job 33:4 – Elihu declares that God’s Spirit made Him. However, theology based upon the pronouncements of Job’s friends carries little weight.

B. The Holy Spirit in relation to revelation and inspiration.

1. Definitions:

Revelation: "The disclosure of that which was previously unknown." Ryrie

Inspiration: "God's superintending human authors so that, using their own individual personalities, they composed and recorded without error His revelation to man in the words of the original autographs." Ryrie

The word "inspiration" means God breathed.

God's Part – Superintended

Man's Part – Composed

Record – Original autographs without error

2. Scriptures showing the Spirit's involvement in revelation or inspiration:

2 Timothy 3:16, 17

2 Peter 1:19-21

1 Corinthians 2:9-13; 14:37

John 14:26; 16:14; Ephesians 2:20

1 Timothy 5:18 – Paul quotes from both

Deuteronomy 25:4 and Luke 10:7.

2 Peter 3:16

Romans 16:26

3. Implications:

Guarantees the infallibility, inerrancy and authority of the Scriptures.

C. The Holy Spirit's ministry to people in the Old Testament.

1. Selective indwelling

- a. The Holy Spirit did not permanently indwell believers, but came upon certain saints for a period of time for a particular purpose. Some examples:

- Joseph (Genesis 41:38)
- Joshua (Numbers 27:18)
- Daniel (Daniel 4:8; 5:11-14; 6:3)
- Samson (Judges 14:6)
- David (1 Samuel 16:13)
- Bezalel (Exodus 31:3; 35:31)

b. The purpose for this indwelling was to enable individuals to perform certain ministries with God's enablement.

c. The indwelling was transitory and was usually withdrawn.

- Samson (Judges 13:25 cp. 16:20)
- Saul (1 Samuel 10:10; cp. 16:14)
- Ezekiel (Ezekiel 2:2; 3:24)

d. For this reason David was concerned with losing the Holy Spirit (Psalm 51:11).

2. Restraint of sin

- Some Scripture passages seem to indicate that the Holy Spirit had a general ministry of restraining sin so this world (and man) is not as bad as it could be (Gen 6:3; Neh 9:20).

3. Regeneration

- "Though the Old Testament does not speak directly to the issue of the Spirit's work in regeneration it is a fair inference to say that the Holy Spirit did regenerate people in the O.T. since people were saved then. The specific ministries of indwelling, baptizing and sealing, though, seems especially related to the New Testament era" (Mike Vlach, *The Holy Spirit: A Study of His Person and Work*).
- Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus (John 3:1-21) indicates that this Old Testament Jewish teacher should have known about regeneration (3:3-10).

IV. HOLY SPIRIT IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST

A. His birth (Luke 1:35)

- “The result of the virgin birth was the incarnation. A human nature was conceived, not a person, for the Second Person existed always. With the conception of the human nature the God-man came into existence, and it was a perfect humanity.”
Ryrie

B. His anointing (Luke 4:18; Acts 4:27; 10:38; Heb 1:9)

1. Jesus’ anointing would be for the purpose of recognizing that He was Messiah and setting Him apart for service.
2. Scripture never specifically says when the anointing took place, although many believed it was at His baptism. It was after the baptism that Jesus began His public ministry and performed miracles.

C. He was filled and led (Luke 4:1).

The filling was permanent (Isa 11:2; 42:1).

D. He was empowered (Matt 12:28; Luke 4:14-15, 18).

E. The Holy Spirit’s role in the death of Christ.

The only direct reference is Hebrews 9:14; even here it is disputed as to whether this is a reference to the Holy Spirit or to Christ’s own spirit. Although this may be the best understanding, it is in doubt.

F. The Holy Spirit’s role in the resurrection of Christ.

1. Three passages have bearing:

Romans 8:11 – “Spirit” here refers to the Father’s spirit.

Romans 1:4 – Debated as to whether this refers to the Holy Spirit or Christ’s spirit.

1 Peter 3:18 – Unclear as to whether this refers to the Holy Spirit or Christ’s spirit and unclear whether this statement is made in reference to Christ’s death or resurrection.

2. Therefore, there are no clear references in Scripture proving that the Holy Spirit was involved in Christ’s resurrection, although Romans 1:4 leans in that direction.

G. The blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (Matt 12:31, 32).

1. Jesus had cast out many demons including some that were considered impossible to exorcise (12:22-23). As a result some demons were beginning to recognize His Messiahship (12:23). The Pharisees rejected the truth and accused Jesus of being in a league with the devil (12:24). Jesus defends Himself in a series of arguments (12:25-29), the most important of which is that His casting out of demons was evidence that the Kingdom of God had come upon them (v. 28).
2. “Since it was by the Holy Spirit’s power that Jesus cast out demons, to attribute these works to the power of the devil was to blaspheme the Holy Spirit. Such rejection—evidence of a hardened heart—can never be forgiven, not because God withdraws His grace but because man withdraws himself from all possible contact with God.” Ryrie

V. THE HOLY SPIRIT’S CHURCH AGE MINISTRIES.

- Prior to the ascension of Christ there was ample evidence that the Holy Spirit’s ministry would change after Christ had left the earth (John 7:39; 14:16-17; 15:26; 16:7; 16:13; Acts 1:5; 1:8; 2:1-4).

- Some of His ministries unique to the church are:

A. Grace

- Grace itself is not unique to the church age, but a particular ministry of grace in relationship to the Holy Spirit is part of the church age. For this reason some have designated the church age as the age of grace.

1. Common Grace.

- Common grace is God's outpouring of undeserved favor upon mankind in general. It comes in three forms:

a. Universally bestowed favors:

- God graciously gives to all humanity His goodness (Psalm 145:9; Luke 6:35); sunshine and rain (Matt 5:45; Acts 14:17).

b. Restraint of sin:

- 2 Thessalonians 2:6-7 indicates that some power restrains sin so that neither individuals nor the world system is as evil as it could be. This power is an instrument used by God and many believe it to be human government (Rom 13:1-4). But most likely it is the Holy Spirit indwelt people of God, who are removed at the Rapture.
- At certain points of time and/or with certain individuals, the Lord removes His restraint of sin, giving men over to their own sinfulness, allowing them to live in unrestrained corruption (Rom 1:24, 26, 28).

c. Conviction: (John 16:7-11)

- Jesus promised that when the Holy Spirit came He would convict the world of 3 things:
 - 1) Sin—man needs to be convicted of the fact that they are sinners and the ultimate sin is the rejection of Christ.
 - 2) Righteousness—man needs to be convicted of the righteousness of Christ, proven through the resurrection and ascension; only a righteous one could save them from sin.
 - 3) Judgment—man needs to be convicted of coming judgment upon those who reject Christ and the proof of such judgment is the condemnation of the devil.
- The Holy Spirit's conviction of the world lays before mankind the truth of God so that he is without excuse, but it does not guarantee his salvation, and in fact most will reject the Lord (Rom 1:18-20).

2. Efficacious Grace

- a. This is grace that is effective in bringing salvation; it is that which produces the desired effect. It is saving grace as opposed to common grace.
- b. The biblical support of the doctrine is based on the use of the word "call" (Rom 8:28; 1 Tim 6:12; 2 Peter 1:3, 10; John 6:37, 44; Gal 1:15-16). To those not called the gospel remains foolishness (1 Cor 1:21-29).
- c. The need for effectual grace is found in the spiritual state of the lost, who are:

1 Corinthians 2:14 – unable to discern

Romans 3:10-12 – do not seek God
Romans 5:10 – enemies of God
Romans 8:7-8 – unable to please God
Ephesians 2:1-3 – dead in sin
Ephesians 2:2 – led by Satan
2 Corinthians 4:3-4 – spiritually blind

- Common grace is sufficient to reveal God and thus to condemn, but efficacious grace is necessary for salvation.

B. Regeneration

1. Definition: "The supernatural, instantaneous, and direct act of God whereby He imparts eternal life to all that trust in Christ." Waterhouse. It speaks of our new birth in Christ (John 1:13).
2. Regeneration is not synonymous with justification, sanctification or conversion—even though these may happen at the same time.
 - Justification is being "declared righteous".
 - Sanctification is being "set apart" to God.
 - Conversion means a "turning around."
 - Regeneration is the impartation of new life.
3. Due to the total depravity of man and the power of sin, regeneration must be of God for it could never be accomplished by man.
4. The agency of regeneration is the Holy Spirit. It is He who gives spiritual life.
 - John 3:3, 5-8
 - Titus 3:5
5. Features of regeneration.

- It is not a process, it is instantaneous. No one is partially regenerated.
- It is nonexperiential. That is, regeneration is not subject to the senses—it is not a felt experience.

6. Results of regeneration

- New Life: new birth implies new life
- New creation (2 Cor 5:17):
The regenerate walk by the Spirit (Rom 8:4; Gal 5:16) are led by the Spirit (Rom 8:14) and can be filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18).

C. Indwelling

1. Definition: "The ministry of the Holy Spirit during the church administration whereby at the moment of salvation He takes up permanent residence in the believer." Waterhouse
2. Who is indwelt?
 - a. Jesus clearly taught that there would be a major change in the ministry of the Holy Spirit after His departure in which the Spirit would indwell all believers of the church age (John 7:38-39; 14:16-17).
 - b. The epistles indicate that all true believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. As a matter of fact the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the very definition of a Christian (Rom 8:9, 11; 1 Cor 6:19; Jude 19; 1 John 3:24).
 - c. There is never a command in the New Testament to be indwelt; one is indwelt at the moment of conversion (Gal 3:2).
3. Indwelling is permanent

- a. John 14:16-17 and 23 promise that the Holy Spirit will be with us forever.
- b. The indwelling of the Spirit is linked with eternal security. If the mark of the Christian is the indwelling of the Spirit, then to lose that indwelling would be to lose salvation. Another ministry of the Spirit—the sealing ministry (see below) guarantees that we cannot lose our salvation.
- c. Ephesians 4:30 tells us that sin can grieve the Spirit, but it does not remove the Spirit.

D. Baptism

1. The Greek phrase *en pneuymati agio* is found in 7 New Testament passages (Matt 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5, 11:16 and 1 Cor 12:13). While the Greek is identical in each passage translations vary. The preposition “*en*” has been translated as “in”, “with” or “by” which often causes confusion.
2. Because of this some have tried to draw a distinction between baptism “by” the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:13 and “with” the Spirit in Acts 1:5. These individuals would teach the baptism in Acts is for power and the sign of the baptism is tongues, while the baptism in 1 Corinthians 12:13 is for spiritual union and is not evidenced by a sign. However there is no distinction between the two baptisms in the Greek. Both are baptism “*en*” (with) the Holy Spirit.
3. In each of these passages it is Jesus who baptizes and the Holy Spirit who is the agent used by Christ.
4. Definition: Christ placing a believer into the Spirit in order to produce union with Christ and fellow believers.
 - a. Christ does the baptizing.

- b. The believer is placed into the Spirit.
 - c. The believer is united (or joined) with Christ (Gal 3:27, 28; Rom 6:3, 5).
 - d. The believer is united (or joined) with the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13).
5. Timing and Scope: Since all Christians are Spirit-baptized, this baptism had to occur at the moment of conversion. There is no subsequent or second baptism of the Spirit found in Scripture and there is no command to seek Spirit baptism.
6. Ephesians 6:5 is clear that there is only one baptism. Water baptism is the outward symbol of Spirit baptism which is considered the one true baptism.
7. "When the Scriptures wish to stress the Holy Spirit's presence in believers, they use the idea of indwelling. When the Scriptures wish to stress the presence of believers in the Holy Spirit, then they use the idea of baptizing."
Waterhouse

E. Sealing

1. Definition: "The Holy Spirit is the guarantee or pledge of greater blessing to come. His work "seals" a believer until the day of redemption." Waterhouse

It is the act whereby God places the believer in Christ and seals the transaction with the Holy Spirit, guaranteeing eternal redemption. It is God's mark of ownership in the believer.

2. Scriptural support

- 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 – It is an action of God.
- Ephesians 1:13-14 – We are sealed with the Holy Spirit at the moment of conversion. We are sealed in Christ with a “view to the redemption.”
- Ephesians 4:30 – We are sealed for the day of redemption.

3. Timing and extent

All Christians are sealed at the moment of conversion, promising their eternal redemption.

F. Filling

1. Definition: To be filled in the Scriptures often means to be controlled. (Luke 4:28; 5:26; 6:11; Acts 3:10; 5:17; 13:45; 19:29; Rom 15:13, 14; 2 Cor 7:4; Phil 1:11). In Ephesians 5:18 Paul compares being controlled by alcohol with being filled with the Spirit.

Therefore, to be filled with the Spirit is to be controlled by the Holy Spirit (cp. Luke 4:1; Acts 6:3, 5; 7:55; 11:24; 13:52).

2. Characteristics

- a) The Spirit-filled life is demanded in the Word (Eph 5:18), while the indwelling, baptism, regeneration and sealing ministries of the Holy Spirit are not.
- b) It is a repeated experience. This is not true of baptism, indwelling, sealing or regeneration. This is proven by the present tense of Ephesians 5:18; and the examples in the book of Acts (2:4; 4:31).
- c) It is experienced by the believer.

d) Filling comes when the believer meets certain conditions.

- In the New Testament no one prays or “tarries” for the filling. The conditions for the filling are obedience and submission to the will of God (Eph 5:18; 1 Thess 5:19; Eph 4:30).

3. Results

a) Fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23).

b) Joyful/sharing hearts (Eph 5:19).

c) Thankfulness (Eph 5:20).

d) Submissiveness (Eph 5:21).

- These results are the same as allowing the Word of Christ to dwell in us (Col 3:16-18).

“A believer is not filled as a jug or bottle is filled with liquid. If that were the idea then one would pray for more of the Holy Spirit. The fact is the Spirit is a person, the Third Person of the Trinity. When a sinner trusts in Christ, he or she is immediately indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:9). At that point the believer possesses all of the Spirit he or she will ever have. The issue then is not how much of the Spirit a Christian possesses, but how much of the Christian’s life the Spirit controls. In other words, the Spirit-filled life is a Spirit-controlled life.”

Stanley D. Toussaint

G. Guiding (Rom 8:14)

Being led by the Holy Spirit is not a mystical experience, but rather the very definition of a Christian. All Christians are led

by the Spirit, but the context of Romans 8 is not decision making, but rather sanctified living. The Spirit leads all Christians toward holiness.

H. Praying (Rom 8:26-27)

Due to our weakness (singular) we do not have the ability to know how to pray as we should. Therefore the Spirit intercedes for us in ways which we could never understand. We can be assured, however, that the Spirit's prayers for us are in accordance with the will of God. And it is the will of God to work all things together for our good, which is conforming us to Christlikeness.

I. Teaching/illumination (John 16:12-15)

1. When the Lord was promised the coming of the Holy Spirit He was referencing the future ministry of the Spirit in which He would guide the believer into all truth. This body of truth would both come from Christ and glorify Christ. This is not a promise of inspiration for every believer, but rather the promise of the revelation of Scripture given through the divinely inspired authors of the New Testament (1 Cor 2:6-10; Eph 2:20; Eph 3:1-5; Heb 2:1-4; John 14:26; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Jude 17).
2. Illumination is often defined as the doctrine in which the Holy Spirit teaches the believers individually, opening their eyes to the understanding of Scripture. This idea is based largely on 1 John 2:27 "As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him." However, this interpretation runs into problems when it says "you have no need for anyone to teach you," when clearly we must be diligent students of the Bible (2 Tim 2:15) and be taught by gifted men (Eph 4:11, 12). The key to understanding the passage

is found in the word “anointing.” This anointing is not a special endowment given to a select few but is a reference to the Holy Spirit coming on, or indwelling, an individual at the moment of conversion; all Christians have been anointed by the Holy Spirit.

At the time of conversion the Holy Spirit removes our spiritual blindness allowing us to see the glory of the Lord (2 Cor 3:14-18; 4:3-6). This opening of our eyes to the truth about Christ is the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit. Additionally, the Holy Spirit enlightens believers, enabling them to comprehend Christ’s love for them and to understand their position as His children and His power in them (Eph 1:18-20; 3:16-19).

The Holy Spirit does not personally instruct us in the Scriptures, else all Spirit-filled Christians would believe identically. But He opens our minds to spiritual truth so that it can be appropriated to our lives. The Spirit’s ministry of illumination allows for believers to possess spiritual discernment that the unbeliever does not have. (1 Cor 2:14-16)

J. Spiritual Gifts

1. Definition: “A divine endowment of a special ability for service upon a member of the body of Christ” – Paul Enns

Spiritual gifts are described in 4 places in the New Testament: Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12-14; Ephesians 4:10, 11; 1 Peter 4:10,11.

Two Greek words are used to describe spiritual gifts:

- Pneumatikos (1 Cor 12:1) meaning “spirituals” or “spiritual things” emphasizing that the Holy Spirit is the origin of spiritual gifts.

- Charisma (1 Cor 12:4) meaning “grace gift.” Gifts find their source in God’s grace.
2. Purpose: To edify (or build up) the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:7; 14:5, 12, 26); for the common good (1 Cor 12:25).
- Gifts are not given for personal edification or spiritual growth.
3. Distribution
- Spiritual gifts were apparently given by Christ through the administration of the Holy Spirit at the time of Christ’s ascension (Eph 4:10, 11).
 - Every believer (apparently at the moment of conversion) has been endowed with a spiritual gift or a combination of gifts (1 Peter 4:10; 1 Cor 12:7, 18).
 - The gifts are sovereignly given according to the will of the Spirit and not determined by the will and desire of man (Rom 12:4-6; 1 Cor 12:11,18; 28-30). While all believers possess spiritual gifts the recognition and development of these gifts may take considerable time and maturity.
4. Knowing one’s spiritual gift(s). Some helpful suggestions for discerning one’s spiritual gifts would include:
- Know what the biblical gifts are.
 - Serve where opportunity affords.
 - Seek council and feedback from wise and mature Christians.
 - Examine areas of interest and desire.

5. The biblical gifts (See *The Holy Spirit* by Mike Vlach).

- Sign gifts (given in the early church to authenticate the message and the messenger (2 Cor 12:12).
See Appendix for more on sign gifts.
 - a) Apostleship (1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11). The gift of apostleship was given to the Twelve. Paul replaced Judas (Gal 1:1; Rev 21:14). This gift was directly linked to the founding of the church (cf. Eph 2:20) and was verified by miraculous signs (cf. 2 Cor 12:12). This gift is not given today.
 - b) Prophecy (Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 12:10; 12:1-40; Eph 4:11). A person with the gift of prophecy received direct revelation from God that he or she was to proclaim to God's people. This gift, too, ceased after the church became established (Eph 2:20).
 - c) Miracles (1 Cor 12:28) and Healings (vv. 9, 28, 30). This was the ability to perform special signs including healing. Though God heals people today, no one possesses the gift of healing now (Heb 2:3, 4).
 - d) Tongues and interpretation of tongues (1 Cor 12:10). The gift of tongues was the ability to speak in a foreign language that one had never studied (cf. Acts 2:4-11). Interpretation of tongues was a gift that allowed a person to translate what the tongues speaker had said. Tongues was a sign of judgment to unbelievers (cf. 1 Cor 14:22).
 - e) Wisdom and Knowledge (1 Cor 12:8). These gifts involved the ability to understand and communicate direct revelation from God. They are not operative today.

- f) Distinguishing spirits (1 Cor 12:10). This was the ability to distinguish between true and false sources of supernatural revelation when it was being given in oral form before the completion of the canon. This gift is not in operation today.
- Continuing gifts
 - a) Evangelism (Eph 4:11). This gift enables a person to effectively proclaim Christ to those who were unbelievers. In the New Testament evangelists effectively presented the gospel and established churches.
 - b) Pastors (Eph 4:11) "This is the ability to shepherd, provide for, care for, and protect God's people" (Ryrie, p. 373).
 - c) Teaching (Rom 12:7; 1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:12). The ability to explain God's Word to His people.
 - d) Serving – an ability to serve others and bring blessing on their lives (Rom 12:7; 1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:12).
 - e) Faith (1 Cor 12:9). The ability to believe God for specific needs.
 - f) Exhortation (Rom 12:8). Exhortation is the ability to encourage, comfort, and admonish God's people.
 - g) Showing mercy (Rom 12:8). The ability to give special comfort to the sick and afflicted.
 - h) Giving (Rom 12:8). The ability to be generous with one's resources in a manner that edifies others.

- i) Administration (Rom 12:8; 1 Cor 12:28). The ability to manage the church, giving leadership to its people and ministry.

VI. POST-CHURCH AGE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

A. During the Tribulation

1. Many people will be saved during the Tribulation period (Rev 7:3, 9; 14:1-5). We can therefore assume that the Holy Spirit's regeneration ministry continues, but we are not told this specifically. The only mention of the Holy Spirit in relation to salvation during this time is in Zechariah 12:10 which informs us that a remnant of the nation of Israel will be saved by the Spirit.
2. If the Holy Spirit's indwelling ministry is unique to the church age then it should be assumed that the ministry of the Holy Spirit will return to the Old Testament pattern at the rapture of the church. If so, the Holy Spirit will not indwell believers during the Tribulation.

B. During the Millennium

1. Although all who initially enter the Millennial Kingdom will be redeemed (Zech 13:8, 9; Matt 25:31-46), the children born during the Millennium will be unregenerate. Many of these children will receive salvation. It is probable, but never specifically stated, that the Holy Spirit would give new birth to these.
2. As for believers, Joel 2:28-29; Ezekial 36:27; 37:14 and Isaiah 59:21 affirm that the Holy Spirit will indwell them.
3. Christ will also minister during the Millennium in the power of the Holy Spirit (Isa 11:2). Still, at the end of the Millennium Satan will be able to incite multitudes to rebel against Christ (Rev 20:7-9).

C. Throughout Eternity

Although not specifically stated, it can be safely assumed that the Holy Spirit, as a member of the Trinity, will continue to function within the Divine Being as He has throughout eternity.

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APPENDIX

Doctrinal Distinctives of the Charismatic Movement

The focus of the Pentecostal and charismatic movements has always been on shared experiences, not theology. This is especially true of those in the charismatic movement which transcends all denominations. Thus, for example, there are Roman Catholic charismatics, who believe in a sacramental form of salvation, and Lutheran charismatics who believe that infant baptism is redemptive, and Baptist charismatics who believe they are saved through faith alone. While these three types of charismatics might vary widely in their views of the fundamentals of their faith, what they have in common is an experience — the experience of speaking in tongues. While all charismatics do not personally speak in tongues, all would accept the validity of tongues-speaking. This experience does have a doctrinal framework, of course, which could be expressed in the following two statements:

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a second work of grace that brings power in the life of the believer.

The evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues.

The logical conclusion of these statements is that a person who has not been baptized by the Holy Spirit is a “second class” Christian and is not experiencing the power of God in his life. If the charismatics are correct, an important ingredient is missing from the spiritual life of most Christians. If they are wrong they have elevated a questionable at best, or a fraudulent at worst, practice to the centerpiece of Christian living. It would seem vital that believers would want an answer to this puzzle, but such is often not the case. Instead one finds ambivalence in most circles: If speaking in tongues works for you then fine, if not, ignore it. But we are not talking about the latest fad in sneakers; we are discussing an important element of truth. If the baptism of the Holy Spirit is truly a subsequent experience, with the evidence of speaking in tongues, then all Christians should seek this baptism. If it is not, then this theology should be exposed and denounced. We can’t have it both ways.

The biblical foundation for the unique theological position of Pentecostals and charismatics is found almost entirely in the book of Acts.

Four passages are critical:

Acts 2:1-8 — The day of Pentecost when tongues were first spoken.

Acts 8:14-18 — In Samaria where new believers did not receive the Holy Spirit until the apostles came. It should be noted that there is no record of tongues being spoken in Acts 8.

Acts 10:44-48 — At Cornelius' house when the Gentiles received the Spirit.

Acts 19:1-7 — When John's disciples received the Spirit at conversion and spoke in tongues.

A careful study of the above passages, and others, will reveal that it is extremely difficult to base doctrine on the book of Acts. Acts is a book of history, tracing the transitional nature of the early church. Note the transitional nature and the diversity of the reception of the Holy Spirit in these four passages. For example, there is no speaking in tongues in Acts 8; there is no wind or fire except in Acts 2; some who were already saved received the Spirit along with some who were new converts, etc. Later in the New Testament we are informed that the sign that one is a believer is the presence of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 12:13).

It should also be noted that most converts, even in the book of Acts, did not speak in tongues. The following believers apparently did not speak in tongues: 3000 at Pentecost (2:41), 5000 men (4:4); the eunuch (8:35-38); at Antioch (13:43); Lydia (16:14,15); Philippian jailer (16:27-34); Berea and Thessalonica (17:4,12); at Athens (17:34); Crispus (18:8); and at Ephesus (19:18). "It would be impossible to build a consistent doctrine about the Holy Spirit from Acts. This is why the epistles were written — to give us doctrine. No apostolic sermon contains an appeal to be baptized with the Spirit" — J.R.W. Stott.

The epistles clearly teach that the purpose of Spirit baptism is to bring us into the body of Christ — Rom 6:3; Gal 3:26, 27; Eph 4:5 (one baptism); Col 2:12; 1 Cor 12:13, 12:14-26 and 1 Cor 12:14-26 which points out that not all speak in tongues).

How do charismatics deal with the apostolic teaching that Spirit baptism occurs at the moment of conversion, brings us into the body of Christ, and is not accompanied with tongues? They do so by teaching that there are actually two Spirit baptisms in the New Testament. This view holds that the first baptism, called the baptism of repentance, happens to all believers and brings them into the body of Christ. The second baptism is baptism with the Holy Spirit for endowment with power, which is signified by tongues. The first is baptism **by** the Holy Spirit, the second is **with** the Holy Spirit. The charismatic position is that when Paul referred to tongues in 1 Corinthians 12-14, he was speaking to believers who had received the first baptism (by the Spirit) and were thus part of the body of Christ. As part of the body of Christ some had received the gift of speaking in tongues — but not all. Obviously then, not every believer will receive the gift of speaking in tongues. On the other hand, when a Christian has received the second baptism ("with" the Holy Spirit), the evidence will be speaking in tongues as a SIGN of that experience.

Therefore, according to this view, some Christians have the gift of tongues, but all Christian who have received the second baptism will evidence this fact with at least an initial experience of speaking in tongues. It is easy to see that the clear teaching of the epistles is being overturned by a poor understanding of the book of Acts. Even Acts refutes this “two-baptism” view when in 11:17 Luke declares the tongues “experiences” of chapters 2 and 10, which were signs, as gifts. Tongues, in the early church, were “sign-gifts.” What they were signs of will be discussed below.

In addition, opposition to this position is found in Ephesians 4:5 which says that there is **only one baptism**. The distinction between “by” and “with” cannot be sustained. The same Greek preposition “*en*” is used both in 1 Corinthians 12:13 and in Acts 1:5. In 1 Corinthians 12:7-13 we are told that God has already given the gifts as He wills. He tells us that we do not all have the same gifts (read 12:4, 7-11, 14-18 and 28-31). In all of the New Testament only 1 Corinthians 12:13 explains the purpose of the baptism of the Spirit which is to bring us into the body (church) of Christ. To claim that its purpose is to give us power from God, and is evidenced by speaking in tongues, is without biblical basis.

The Purpose of Biblical Tongues

Most New Testament scholars agree that tongues in the New Testament were foreign languages — not incoherent gibberish. Acts 2:4-8 is the only passage in the New Testament that sheds light on the nature of tongues. At that event those who heard tongues spoken by the apostles were able to understand them in their own language. The apostles apparently spoke in languages they did not understand — but they spoke in known languages, understandable to the listeners.

Why did God use tongues in the early church? Much debate has taken place over this question. The major theories are presented in the following few paragraphs, with a short commentary following each theory:

Church Edification

The idea is that the gift of tongues was and is given for the edifying of other believers. However, the whole purpose of 1 Corinthians 14:1-19 is to emphasize that tongues were worthless for this purpose.

Evangelization

At Pentecost it was Peter’s gospel message — not tongues — that God used to convict people of their sinful condition. With Cornelius (Acts 10) it was new Christians who spoke in tongues and no unsaved people were present. At Ephesus there was no indication that any unsaved people were present when tongues were spoken (Acts 19:6). Tongues at Corinth were clearly not evangelistic. In fact, Paul remarked that unbelievers observing them would likely be repelled, just as they were at Pentecost (1 Cor 14:23 and Acts 2:13).

Proof of Spirit Baptism

In the New Testament spiritual baptism always has reference to our baptism into Christ and is true of all Christians (1 Cor 12:13).

Devotional

Many use tongues as a devotional prayer language which they believe draws them closer to Christ. However, Paul said that he would rather pray and sing with the Spirit **and** the mind than with just the Spirit alone (1 Cor 14:14-15). The purpose of tongues is as a sign (Mark 16:17), not for personal spiritual growth.

Condemnation

According to 1 Corinthians 14:21, which quotes Isaiah 28:11 and 12, tongues were a sign to the nation of Israel that God was bringing judgment upon them for their sinfulness and rejection of Christ.

Apostolic Authentication

Since, on the testimony of Jesus, tongues were a sign, it remains only to determine what they were a sign of (Mark 16:17). In 2 Corinthians 12:11-13 Paul appeals to signs and wonders as the proofs of the apostolic office. No unusual manifestation of the Spirit's presence (no sign) ever occurred except in the presence of an apostle or by those who had been directly ministered to by an apostle. While others besides apostles spoke in tongues they had been given that gift by the apostles.

*I believe that a combination of these
final two theories rings true.*

Tongues, as a sign gift, point out two things: the judgment of Israel and, in a secondary sense, to the authority of the apostles.

Support for the Apostolic Authentication Theory

There are five facts that show the distinctive character of the apostolic office:

- ⇒ The church was founded on the apostles (Eph 2:20).
- ⇒ They were eyewitnesses of Christ's resurrection (Acts 1:22 and 1 Cor 15:7-9).
- ⇒ They were special authorized agents (Luke 6:13).
- ⇒ The fact of their appointment was authenticated by signs. The absence

of miracles would invalidate the claim of one who asserted that he was an apostle (2 Cor 12:12 and Acts 5:11-13).

⇒ The fact of their authority (2 Peter 3:2, 15-16; 1 Cor 5:13 and 2 Thess 3:6, 14).

Tongues as a Sign

Mark 16:17-20 — While the canonical authority of this text is questionable, we nevertheless find that signs were to be manifested by the apostles and by those to whom they ministered. In verse 20 Mark already (by AD 68) considered these signs past.

In the book of Acts miraculous signs often took place at the hands of the apostles. (**Acts 2:14-21; 2:43; 3:1ff; 4:33; 5:1-16; 5:12; 6:8; 8:6, 18; 9:34, 40; 14:3, 9-10; 15:12; 16:18; 19:11; 20:9-12** — Tongues were signs)

Acts 8:13 — Philip was not an apostle but had the apostles' "hands" laid upon him (6:6). However, his converts performed no signs or wonders. Only when apostles came from Jerusalem and laid hands upon Philip's converts was there any unusual demonstration of the Spirit's presence in them (8:15-17).

Note: Acts records new groups (Jews, Samaritans, Gentiles and Old Testament believers) in the initial act of receiving the Holy Spirit which would later be the mark of all Christians (Romans 8:9).

Acts 10 — God employed a series of supernatural visions in order to have Peter be the one to present the gospel to Cornelius.

Acts 19 — 19 verse 2 should be translated, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" These men were not yet converted. In 19:6 tongues came to authenticate Paul as an apostle.

2 Corinthians 12:12 — Some at Corinth who had been converted under Paul received the gift of tongues to validate Paul's claim to apostleship.

All signs are temporary

Jesus predicted signs only in association with the apostolic ministry. Mark considered the signs as past (AD 68). Hebrews 2:3-4 was written around the same time and also considered the signs as past.

The last recorded miracles in the New Testament took place about AD 58 (Acts 28:3-9). In AD 60 Epaphroditus became sick but he was not healed miraculously (Phil 2:25-30) by Paul. About AD 62 Timothy had a stomach ailment which remained uncured (1 Tim 5:23). Around AD 64 one of Paul's associates was so seriously ill that Paul had to leave him behind, uncured (2 Tim 4:20). Yet earlier Paul had been instrumental

even in restoring life to the dead.

Some gifts were temporary

All signs may be considered as spiritual gifts, but not all spiritual gifts were signs. The gifts of miracles, healings and tongues were sign gifts. All the sign gifts were temporary (compare Acts 11:17 with Mark 16:17). As with the miracles of Jesus, they served to authenticate the position and authority of the apostles.

Support for the Judgment upon Israel Theory

The argument runs as follows: God had warned Israel on several occasions (Isa 28:11,12; 33:19; Deut 28:49,50; Jere 5:15) that when they found themselves invaded and surrounded by those speaking in languages they did not understand, it was a sign to them that they were being judged by God for their disobedience. When, at Pentecost and in the early years of the church, tongues were spoken in the presence of Jews, it would be a sign to them that judgment was coming because of their rejection of the Messiah. That judgment came with the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple and the scattering of the Jewish people in AD 70. At that point the purpose of tongues (as a sign to disobedient Israel) had been fulfilled and therefore tongues ceased. This, I believe, was the primary purpose for tongues.

Tongues Have Ceased

Biblical Evidence

2 Corinthians 13:8-10 *“Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. For we know in part, and we prophecy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away.”*

This passage was written around AD 55, and clearly states that tongues shall cease. The question is when? The answer to that question is often seen as hinging on the meaning of the word “perfect” in the text.

What is *that which is perfect*? Three views:

The Rapture (a view often held by tongues speakers)

However, the term “that which is perfect” cannot refer to the Lord because of the neuter articles. It can be translated “when the perfect thing arrives.” This view also contradicts other Scripture which states that there will be prophecy after the rapture — during the Tribulation (Rev 11:3-13) and during the Millennial Age (Joel 2:28).

The Canon

This is the idea that when the New Testament Scripture had been completely given then the need for tongues would cease, however not even the New Testament allows us to know fully; there is much that we still do not know.

The Eternal State

This is when we will see face to face and is the best understanding of “perfect.” The passage is therefore teaching that both prophecy and supernatural knowledge will cease forever at the point when God ushers in the eternal state. But notice that tongues are not named among those gifts, which are said to be made inoperative by the arrival of the “perfect.” Therefore, tongues could cease prior to this event. With prophecy and knowledge the verb “shall cease,” meaning “to lay aside” or “render inoperative,” is used. With tongues a different verb is used meaning “to stop” or “they will be done away;” it carries with it the idea of a natural cessation.

It is also important to note the voice differences: “will be done away” is in the passive voice, meaning that they will be forced to stop by an outside agent (i.e. that which is perfect). However, “cease” is in the middle voice, which allows for the possibility that tongues could cease in and of themselves, naturally, when their purpose is fulfilled.

Renald Showers takes this position (*Spiritual Gifts* by Renald E. Showers, pp.55-56):

Thus, since “in part” is referring to a partial revelation or knowledge of God, then “perfect” is referring to the total, complete revelation or knowledge of God.

But what specific identifications are to be assigned to the partial and complete bodies of revelation or knowledge? It appears that the partial is the revelation or knowledge of God which came through the revelational gifts and is now contained in the Scriptures, and the “perfect” is the total, complete revelation or knowledge of God which will come to the believer in the future when he is face to face with the Lord.

The Bible certainly contains all the truth and knowledge God intends mankind to have while in our present mortal state...

But in the future, when we are face-to-face with the Lord, we shall receive even more revelation or knowledge of God suitable for life beyond this present age.

This passage of Scripture does not give definitive evidence that tongues have ceased and are no longer operative today — but it allows for such a view. Paul implies that tongues will cease when their purpose is fulfilled. If, as demonstrated above, the purpose of tongues was to authenticate the apostles and their message, and to serve as a sign to Israel of judgment for rejecting their Messiah, then tongues have fulfilled their purpose. Phrased another way, since there are no longer apostles to authenticate, and since Israel has already been judged (in AD 70), tongues no longer have a purpose in the church today. Tongues cessation should then be expected with the passing of the apostles and the judgment of Israel. Both the testimonies of Scripture and of church history verify this fact. There is no record of anyone speaking in tongues in the New Testament after AD 70. What is the record of church history?

Church History Evidence

Apostolic Fathers

It is significant that the gift of tongues is rarely alluded to, hinted at, or found in the Apostolic Fathers. The Fathers wrote to defend Christianity, to correct Christians, to explain doctrines, etc. after the death of the apostles. Yet they did not mention tongues in a favorable light and, for the most part, totally ignored them.

Some examples:

- ◆ Justin Martyr (AD 100-165) wrote about spiritual gifts but did not mention tongues. He never mentions anyone speaking in tongues.
- ◆ Montanus (AD 126-180) did speak in tongues, but was regarded as demon-possessed by Christians of his day.
- ◆ Irenaeus (AD 140-203) said he had heard that some spoke in tongues. He had, however, been influenced by the Montanists and did not speak in tongues nor apparently witness it.
- ◆ Tertulian (AD 150-222) was converted to Montanism for a period of time. He wrote about one lady who spoke in tongues and was a Montanist. This was the last witness to tongues-speaking by any of the Church Fathers.
- ◆ Origen (AD 185-253) said that in his day no one spoke in tongues.
- ◆ Chrysostom (AD 347-407) made no mention of tongues being spoken in his day.
- ◆ Augustine (AD 354-430) wrote that no tongues spoken during his life.

Church history does not prove any doctrinal issues. However, in this case church

history verifies what we would expect from a study of the New Testament: Tongues, having fulfilled their purpose, ceased to exist by AD 70 and were not found in the history of the church.

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