

## Basic Bible Doctrine

### Lesson 6: The Holy Spirit

#### I. Introduction:

Of the three members of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit is undoubtedly the least known and appreciated. Yet, He is most intimately and vitally involved in our conversion, birth into the family of God, and our maturation into Christlikeness. Thus, in this study, we will learn about the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

#### II. The Person of the Holy Spirit:

##### A. Who is the Holy Spirit?

1. He is a person.
  - a. With intelligence (*Isa. 11:2; 40:13*)
  - b. With a will (*1 Cor. 12:11*)
  - c. Knowledge of God (*1 Cor. 2:11*)
  - d. Who loves (*Rom. 15:30*)
  - e. He also speaks (*Acts 8:29*), intercedes (*Rom. 8:26*), commands (*Acts 13:9-12*), teaches (*1 Cor. 2:13*), testifies (*John 15:26*), reproves (*John 16:8*), guides (*Rom. 8:15*), and prays (*Rom. 8:26*).
  - f. **Question:** Knowing that the Holy Spirit is a person with a will, what do you suppose He wants to do? (*cf. 1 Thess. 4:3*)

##### 2. He is God

- a. Equated with the Father and the Son (*Matt. 28:19*)
- b. He is described as “Holy” (*Matt. 1:18; Matt. 28:19; Acts. 1:2*)

- c. He knows the depths of God (*1 Cor. 2:11*)
- d. He is cross identified with the LORD (*Acts 28:25* and *Isa. 6:8-9*)
- e. He is eternal (*Heb. 9:14*)
- f. He is omnipresent (*Psalms 139:7-10*)
- g. He is omniscient (*1 Cor. 2:10-11*)
- h. He is omnipotent (*Luke 1:35*).
- i. **Question:** In light of all of these truths, what type of power does the Holy Spirit have?
- j. **Question:** In light of the previous truths, to what degree can the Holy Spirit carry out His will?

### **III. Pentecost:**

Pentecost was the second of the three great harvest festivals of Judaism, coming between Passover and Tabernacles. In the New Testament (cf. *1 Cor 16:8*) it is referred to as “Pentecost,” which means *fiftieth* in Greek. In the Old Testament it is referred to as the Festival of Weeks or of the First Fruits, the first term referring to its coming a “week of weeks” after Passover, the second to the fact that an offering of two loaves prepared from the wheat harvest was made on this day. Pentecost was reckoned as coming exactly fifty days after the first day of the Passover. It was a day of “solemn assembly,” and all work ceased. It was also one of the most popular pilgrim festivals, even more so than Passover, which was likely due to the improved weather conditions by the time of Pentecost.<sup>1</sup>

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

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<sup>1</sup>Polhill, John B. Vol. 26, *Acts*. The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001, c1992.

#### **IV. The Current Ministry of the Holy Spirit.**

As the third person of the godhead, the Holy Spirit has always existed. But, something changed during Pentecost. The nature of this change has confused many people and they have concluded that the disciples received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Yet, a quick survey of the previous work of the Spirit in the lives of the Old Testament Saints will show us that the disciples had the spirit before this momentous event. The purpose of this section is twofold, to answer the question “What happened during Pentecost” as well as inform us about the current ministries of the Holy Spirit.

A. **Regeneration:** An inner re-creating of fallen human nature by the gracious sovereign action of the Holy Spirit.

1. *John 3:5-8: Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. <sup>6</sup> “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup> “Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ <sup>8</sup> “The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”*
2. *Titus 3:5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,*
3. Is it possible to be renewed without the Holy Spirit? Why or why not?
4. *This occurred when the Lord gave us our new heart. Instead of having a heart of stone we have a heart of flesh.*

B. **Indwelling:** The Spirit’s continual residence within the saint following the occasion of regeneration. In other words, the Spirit resides in the believer forever.

1. *Rom. 8:9-11: However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. <sup>10</sup> If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup> But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.*
2. *I Cor. 6:19: Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?*

3. Is it possible to be regenerated without subsequently being indwelt? Why or why not?
  4. *Our bodies host the third person of the Trinity, thus we are a temple of the Holy Spirit. God with all of his power, wisdom, and goodness actually takes up residence within us. Subsequently, with His power in immediate proximity we can conquer sin and triumph over temptation.*
- C. **Sealing:** The Spirit is the pledge or guarantee that the believer will enter into his completed redemption at the return of Christ. It's the deposit that the Lord has placed within you which He will reclaim when He returns.
1. *II Cor. 1:22: who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.*
  2. *Eph. 1:13-14: In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,<sup>14</sup> who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.*
  3. Is it possible to be regenerated and indwelt without subsequently being sealed? Why or why not?
  4. *Understanding that we have been sealed by the Holy Spirit gives us great comfort in knowing that the Lord will come back for us.*
- D. **Filled:** The act whereby an individual's life is controlled and directed by the Spirit of God as opposed to the flesh. This manifests itself outwardly in an obedient walk with the Lord.
1. *Eph. 5:18: And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,*
  2. *Gal. 5:16: But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.*

3. Is it possible for an Old Testament Saint to be filled with the Spirit? Why or why not?
  4. Being filled is not necessarily an everyday occurrence for the Christian. It occurs when a Christian continually repents of their sin, seeks right standing with God, and walks obediently with the Father. When this happens, they enjoy close fellowship with their Father and are empowered to live the Christian life.
- E. **Baptizing:** The work of the Holy Spirit in placing the believer into union with Christ as the Head and with other believers as the Body of Christ.
1. *I Cor. 12:13: For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.*
  2. *Gal. 3:27: For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.*
  3. *Eph. 4:5: one Lord, one faith, one baptism,*
  4. What must be formed before a believer can be Baptized into Christ?
  5. What else does the Holy Spirit provide to aid and assist the church in its ministry (*I Cor. 12:4-11; I Peter 4:10*)?
  6. Is it possible to be regenerated, indwelt, and sealed without being baptized? Why or why not?
- F. **Empowering:** The Spirit's coming upon an Old Testament person in order to empower that person for a certain task.
1. *Gen. 41:38: Then Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find a man like this, in whom is a divine spirit?"*
  2. *Exodus 31:1-5: Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup> "See, I have called by name Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. <sup>3</sup> "I*

*have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all kinds of craftsmanship, <sup>4</sup> to make artistic designs for work in gold, in silver, and in bronze, <sup>5</sup> and in the cutting of stones for settings, and in the carving of wood, that he may work in all kinds of craftsmanship.*

3. *Judges 3:10: The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel. When he went out to war, the LORD gave Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand, so that he prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim.*
  
4. *Judges 14:5-6: Then Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother, and came as far as the vineyards of Timnah; and behold, a young lion came roaring toward him. <sup>6</sup> The Spirit of the LORD came upon him mightily, so that he tore him as one tears a young goat though he had nothing in his hand; but he did not tell his father or mother what he had done.*
  
5. Is it possible to be empowered without being regenerated? (hint: Balaam and Saul)
  
6. In the case of Pentecost, what did the Holy Spirit empower the disciples to do? (cf. *Acts 1:8; I Cor. 12:4-11*)

#### G. Conclusion:

The ministry of the Holy Spirit post-Pentecost extends beyond regeneration. It baptizes both Jews and Gentiles into the Body of Christ and equips this new entity (the church) with spiritual gifts to take the gospel to the world.

#### H. Other Ministries of the Holy Spirit:

1. **Conviction of Sin (*John 16:8*):** The Holy Spirit Convicts the world of their unrighteousness before God.
  
2. **He Helps us to Understand the Scriptures (*I Cor. 2:14-16*):** Since the Holy Spirit wrote the Scriptures, He can give us tremendous insight into its meaning.
  
3. **Helps us to Pray (*Rom. 8:26*):** When we don't know how to pray as we ought, the Holy Spirit guides us.

4. **Gives us Assurance of Salvation (Rom. 8:16):** The Holy Spirit testifies to our standing before God.
5. **Endowment of Spiritual Gifts (1 Cor. 12: 7ff):** The Holy Spirit empowers each member of the body of Christ with spiritual gifts for service.
6. **Question:** Is it possible to live the Christian life without the power of the Holy Spirit? Why or why not?

#### V. What are the Spiritual Gifts?

*1 Corinthians 12:8-11 For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; <sup>9</sup> to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, <sup>10</sup> and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. <sup>11</sup> But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.*

*Romans 12:6-8 And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; <sup>7</sup> if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; <sup>8</sup> or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.*

- A. **Word of Wisdom:** The connection of wisdom with mystery (*1 Cor. 2:7*) implies those gifted with the word of wisdom dispense divine revelation, particularly in reference to Christ. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit they disclose what was not previously known.
  - Why would this gift be especially useful in the early church?
- B. **Word of Knowledge:** The handmaid of the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge speaks of the ability to grasp and comprehend the mysteries revealed through the word of wisdom.
  - Why would it be important for the New Testament Church to have this gift?
- C. **Faith:** Not to be confused with saving faith, this suggests a supernatural conviction that God will move and operate in a specific way. For instance, God revealed to Paul in the midst of a severe Mediterranean storm that God would spare every man on

board. Though the gift of Faith he was able to say in *Acts 27:25* "**Therefore, keep up your courage, men, for I believe God, that it will turn out exactly as I have been told.**"

- Why would this gift be important to the New Testament Church?

D. **Gifts of Healing:** This refers to the supernatural ability to heal people's physical bodies. "Gift" implies that the person who heals possesses the gift, as opposed to the one being healed.

- How could this gift enhance the ministry of the apostles, and for that matter, the church?

E. **Effecting of Miracles:** Although healings can fit here as a subcategory, this refers to the ability to perform miracles, supernatural works of God. Examples include turning water into wine and walking on water.

- Again, how could this enhance the ministry of the church and how could it hurt it?

F. **Prophecy:** This refers to speaking forth from God, whether in a future prophecy, a present insight, confirmation of an activity, or the like. We will discuss this more later on in the study, but suffice to say that this is Paul's preferred gift, one which he attempts to lift up over tongues.

- Why would prophecy be so important in the governance of the New Testament church?

G. **Distinguishing Spirits:** This speaks of the ability to discern the origin of "inspired" utterances.

- How would this gift protect the New Testament church?

H. **Tongues:** This speaks of the ability to speak in languages never acquired by natural means. This gift arrested the attention of many pilgrims in Jerusalem (*Acts 2*), and was sought out by the Corinthians. More will be mentioned about this gift later on in this study.



- How could this gift help the New Testament church?
  
  - Given its spectacular nature, how could this gift be abused?
- I. **Interpretation of Tongues:** This refers to the ability to translate a language unlearned by natural means into one's own native tongue.
- J. **Teaching:** This is the ability to grasp, arrange, and present revealed truth effectively so that the recipients can have an enhanced understanding of Scripture. <sup>2</sup>
- K. **Pastor Teaching:** This is a combination of the gift of teaching with an element of shepherdly concern. These Christians can effectively minister the gift of teaching in a sensitive situation to comfort, encourage, or admonish the flock.<sup>3</sup>
- L. **Evangelism:** This consists of an unusual ability to persuade lost people to place their trust in Christ, and hence directs its attention primarily toward the will of the person receiving the benefit.<sup>4</sup>
- M. **Exhortation:** This is a speaking gift where persuasion looms the largest. It is geared toward the will of the believer, just as the gift of evangelism is geared to the will of the unbeliever. The persuasion may come in inducing someone to make the correct moral choice, or persuading the suffering to find hope in the Lord.<sup>5</sup>
- N. **Service:** This refers to the different kinds of physical help or relief administered wherever a need exists. <sup>6</sup>
- O. **Giving:** This is the ability to invest material resources in spiritual undertakings so as to reap the maximum spiritual benefit. <sup>7</sup>
- P. **Mercy:** This gift directs itself in particular to those experiencing some kind of distress, misery, pain, anxiety, or something of that sort. The gift consists of special skill in relieving that distress, misery, etc. The right actions and/or the right words at times of that kind of emergency can effectively relieve a crisis through which a victim is passing. <sup>8</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Robert Thomas, *Understanding Spiritual Gifts* (Grand Rapids; Kregel 1999) p. 194.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 196.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 192.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 197.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* p. 198

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* p. 202.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* p. 200.

- Q. **Governing:** This gift consists of a special skill in administrative direction that enables the gifted one to steer the flock of God into channels of most effective service. It has to do with matters of external organization and calls upon resources of shrewd and wise direction – as in the piloting of a ship – that harnesses the maximum potential of a local body of believers.<sup>9</sup>
- R. Who determines who gets what gift (*1 Cor. 12:11*)? How does this knowledge guard against pride?

## VI. Are the Sign Gifts for Today?

In numerous passages in *Acts* we witness the wonders of Paul’s healing ministry as well as speaking in tongues. Such actions have prompted many modern day Charismatics to claim that such a supernatural ministry is normative. The same Holy Spirit who dwelled within the early church dwells in us, and we should not allow our materialistic mindset to interfere with the supernatural works of the spirit.

Essentially, this is an argument of continuity – the unique work of the Spirit seen at the inception of the church continues even today. While many theologians (including myself) agree that many of the gifts given to the early church are present today (i.e. teaching, mercy, etc.) and miraculous events can happen, there is no reason to believe that the sign gifts<sup>10</sup> such as healing, prophecy, and tongues continue to exist. Therefore, in this brief study we will survey God’s purpose for the sign gifts and determine if they are still necessary today.

### A. The Purpose of Miracles:

1. *Matthew 11:2-6* Now when John, while imprisoned, heard of the works of Christ, he sent word by his disciples <sup>3</sup> and said to Him, “Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?” <sup>4</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, “Go and report to John what you hear and see: <sup>5</sup> the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM. <sup>6</sup> “And blessed is he who does not take offense at Me.”

- a. According to this passage what was the purpose of miracles?

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p. 203.

<sup>10</sup> The distinction here between God performing miracles and the continued existence of sign gifts has to do with the empowerment of the individual. Those who argue that the sign gifts have ceased do not argue that miracles have ceased. But they do argue that God is no longer granting individuals special powers to perform such miracles at will.

- b. What is significant about Jesus quoting this portion of the Old Testament (*Isa. 35:5-6; 61:1*)? Why is there a link between the Messiah and miracles?
  
2. *Acts 2:22 “Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know—*
  - a. According to Peter what was the purpose of miracles?
  
  - b. How did such works authenticate Jesus’ ministry?
  
3. *2 Corinthians 12:12 The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.*
  - a. What are the signs of a true apostle?
  
  - b. Why did God give the apostles the ability to work miracles (*Acts 1:8*)?
  
  - c. Does the fact that the apostles were able to work miracles mean that the members of the modern church should expect the same capabilities? Why or why not? (Hint: What privileges or abilities did the apostles have which we do not have?)

## **B. The Purpose of Tongues:**

### **1. Evangelism:**

*Acts 2:6-8 And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. <sup>7</sup> They were amazed and astonished, saying, “Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? <sup>8</sup> “And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born?*

In the proceeding verses Luke describes the conversion of thousands whose attention was originally arrested by the tongue speaking apostles.

## **2. Confirmation of God’s Work:**

### **a. Among the Samaritans:**

*Acts 8:14-15 Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, <sup>15</sup> who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.*

This account portrays how God is at work in Samaritans whom the Jews viewed derisively as “half breeds.” The fact that these longtime rivals of the Jews receive the same spiritual phenomena as the Jewish apostles during Pentecost confirms their rightful place as God’s people.

### **b. Among the Gentiles:**

*Acts 10:44-47 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. <sup>45</sup> All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. <sup>46</sup> For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, <sup>47</sup> “Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?”*

God’s inclusion extends beyond the Samaritans to the Gentiles as well.

### **c. Among Old Testament Saints:**

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

John the Baptist’s disciples had taken their faith as far as it could go. Yet, faith in John’s baptism was not sufficient to save. They had to turn to the Messiah about whom their teacher proclaimed. By God’s good grace, He sent Paul to finish the job and welcome these men into the

church. As a transitional book, Luke includes this account to convey the message that even faithful followers of the last Old Testament style prophet needed more. They needed to believe in Christ and be baptized by the Spirit.

### **3. Impartation of Prophetic Revelation:**

*1 Corinthians 14:2 For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one understands, but in his spirit he speaks mysteries.*

Simply put, a mystery (cf. *1 Cor. 13:2 and 15:51*) is a once-hidden truth of God and His program that has now been revealed. So when one speaks in tongues, they speak a mystery from God. Thus, tongue speaking is essentially untranslated prophecy.

### **C. The Discontinuity of the Gifts:**

To believe in the discontinuity of the gifts is to believe that some of the spiritual gifts of the early church do not operate in the same way today. They do not continuously carry on to the modern era.

1. *Ephesians 2:19-22 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, <sup>20</sup> having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, <sup>21</sup> in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, <sup>22</sup> in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.*
  - a. What distinction(s) does Paul make between Christ, the apostles and prophets, and the rest of us?
  - b. How does the foundational nature of the apostles and prophets grate against the notion that the sign gifts – especially the divine revelatory gifts such as tongues and prophecy - are continuing today?
  
2. *Hebrews 2:2-4 For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, <sup>3</sup> how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, <sup>4</sup> God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.*
  - a. What is the identification of “*those who heard*” in *verse 3*? How are they different from the rest of us (*vv. 3-4*)?

**Note:** Hebrews was likely written by a second generation Christian who was not an apostle. He warns his audience not to neglect the great salvation which was conveyed to us “*by those who heard.*”

One should note that the author separates himself from the apostles who originally heard live teachings from Jesus. The author believed in the credibility of their teachings because it was corroborated with miracles.

- b. Why is it significant that this second generation author bases the credibility of the gospel upon the first generation’s miracles (as opposed to his own)?
- c. Why is it significant that this message was “*confirmed*” (v. 3)?

#### **D. The Reality of Discontinuity**

1. Why would the close of the Canon be a problem to those who maintain that all of the sign gifts (healing, prophecy, tongues, etc.) are in effect? How does this grate against their basic argument?
2. Is it possible to have the gift of apostleship in our day and age? Why or why not?

*Acts 1:21-22 “Therefore it is necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us—<sup>22</sup> beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us—one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.”*

#### **E. The Problem of Verification:**

Whenever Jesus healed someone in Scripture it was always instantaneous, 100% successful, without a recovery period, permanent, and done apart from any major medical attention that could possibly discredit the miracle.<sup>11</sup> One more aspect should be of note, in almost every case of healing it is *organic* in nature. *Organic* afflictions compose roughly a third of all illnesses and are associated with a demonstrable change in a bodily organs or tissue (i.e. a broken bone, torn ligaments, paralysis, etc.). This contrasts with *functional* diseases associated with a change in body or organ tissue without any tissue damage (i.e. a bad back, migraine headaches, a sprained ankle, etc.). When the famed Christian illusionist André Kole met with Oral Roberts and Benny

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. André Kole, “Are Faith Healers for Real?” in Richard Mayhue, *The Healing Promise* (1994; Ferne: Mentor, 1997) p. 54.

Hinn he challenged them to produce evidence of an organic healing, one which could not be explained away by such mental phenomena as the placebo effect. After many promises and in one case a book - by Benny Hinn<sup>12</sup> - no solid proof has been given.<sup>13</sup>

1. How legitimate would Jesus' ministry be if he simply cured people of bad backs and migraine headaches?
2. How does the lack of organic healings challenge the authenticity of faith healers and their contention that healing exists today?
3. Do you believe it is fair to ask those who claim to have the gift of healing for results? Why or why not?

In addition, if revelatory gifts were in place it would be reasonable to seek verification. These gifts can be verified by a Christian communicating the truth of God in a language unknown to them or by accurately predicting something which will come to pass.

#### **F. Conclusion:**

In my experience with this issue one's definition of prophecy serves as the fulcrum. If a charismatic takes the traditional understanding that prophecy is akin to the Old Testament prophets who spoke from God, then it would be difficult to maintain a fixed and final canon. For instance, a modern day prophet would speak with the same authority as Isaiah and could thus be inscripturated.

This has been a problem for many orthodox charismatics which has led them to rethink the nature of New Testament Prophecy. Wayne Grudem in particular has sought to tone down the "authority" of the New Testament prophets. In his view, these prophets provided divine guidance and suggestions but not authoritative commands. Such authoritative "Old Testament" type prophets are only found in the Apostles. Yet, there is strong momentum in theological circles against this thesis.<sup>14</sup> The New Testament church saw no difference between Old Testament and New Testament prophets. They both spoke authoritative and often predictive prophecies from God.

As we discussed earlier, prophecy is closely related to the gift of tongues as tongues is untranslated prophecy (*1 Cor. 14:1-5*). Two reasons support this. In *1 Cor. 14:2* Paul makes it clear that one who speaks in tongues speaks mysteries. A quick survey of the word "mystery" in *1 Corinthians*<sup>15</sup> will show that this term indicates revealing what was once hidden in regards to

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<sup>12</sup> Benny Hinn's book provided ten case studies of organic healing but did not have any documentation

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. p. 58.

<sup>14</sup> Farnell, F. D., "The Current Debate about NT Prophecy," *BSac* 149 (1992): 277-303.

<sup>15</sup> (*2:1; 2:7; 4:1; 13:2; 15:51*)

God and His program. Further, in **14:5** prophecy is not greater than tongues when tongue speech is translated because divine revelation has been understood. For these reasons, I believe that we can conclude that tongues is untranslated prophesy.

So the question we have to ask ourselves is whether or not prophesy is still in existence. If we find that prophesy is temporarily out of service (at the very least it will be back during the tribulation), then tongue speech will cease as well since it is untranslated prophesy.

Two scriptures seem to indicate that it is out of service. The first comes from the glorified Christ as the end of Revelation:

***Revelation 22:18 I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God shall add to him the plagues which are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.***

As you may know Revelation is a prophetic book which was meant to silence false prophets. This warning accomplishes this mission as no prophet can say, “Actually Jesus left this prophesy out of the book.”

In the words of one commentator “The comprehensive scope of Revelation’s coverage of encouragement-parenthesis (**chaps 2-3**) and predictive elements (**chaps. 4-22**) and of the extensive time span from the first century to the eternal state also commends the view that **vv. 18-19** anticipate no more prophesy.”<sup>16</sup> Now, the only way to add to Revelation is to add more prophecies about the future, but Revelation does not allow for this until the Two Prophets come on the scene in Revelation 11.

The second scripture is ***Ephesians 2:20 having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone.*** Notice that the church is being built upon Christ and the foundation of two kinds of men, the apostles and the prophets. Thus, the teachings of both the prophets (i.e. Luke) and the apostles are foundational and important, but they do not necessarily continue beyond the foundation. This is obvious with the apostles as we no longer have anyone who has seen the risen Lord. Their task has been completed, as the foundation has been laid. Subsequently, they are no longer in existence. Thus, the strong link between the Apostles and Prophets seems to indicate that as the Apostles go, so do the Prophets. Therefore, there is strong evidence to believe that the prophetic sign gifts – including tongues - are no longer in effect.

## **VII. Conclusion:**

Although the sign gifts are not in effect, we should in no way believe that the Spirit’s power is diminished. The Holy Spirit is a gift from God which will empower His church to conquer sin, build the church, and advance the gospel. We will never go at it alone, as God will always be with us through the presence and power of His Holy Spirit.

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<sup>16</sup> Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8:22 An Exegetical Commentary*. (Chicago: Moody Press 1995), 517.