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THE HOLY SPIRIT
IN THE
NEW TESTAMENT

Gregory A. Smith

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The Holy Spirit in the Gospels

Introduction
What is your relationship to the Holy Spirit? What role has he played in your life this week? Do His place in the Trinity and his relation to the Christian life remain a mystery to you? Do you feel uncomfortable talking about Him?

We ought not to feel squeamish about the Holy Spirit. Orthodox Christianity has affirmed since the earliest days of church history that the Spirit is one with the Father and Son, a co-equal in the Godhead. We should therefore be no less comfortable speaking of the Spirit than of God the Father or Jesus Christ.

The Creed of Nicea-Constantinople, which dates to 381 AD, proclaims, "We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets."

The Holy Spirit in the Gospels: The *Example* of Christ
The life and ministry of Jesus were saturated with the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Following are some of the ways the Spirit was involved in Jesus's earthly work:

- ❒ Jesus's dependence on the Holy Spirit was prophesied in the Old Testament (comp. Is 42:1; Mt 12:18; comp. Is. 61:1; Lk 4:18).
- ❒ Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Mt 1:18-20; Lk 1:35).
- ❒ The Holy Spirit participated in Jesus's baptism (Mt 3:16; Mk 1:10; Lk 3:21-22; Jn 1:32).
- ❒ Jesus's forerunner, John the Baptist, was himself a Spirit-filled man (Lk 1:15).
- ❒ John the Baptist announced that Jesus would baptize his followers with the Holy Spirit and fire (Mt 3:11; Mk 1:8; Lk 3:16; Jn 1:33).
- ❒ Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil (Mt 4:1ff; Mk 1:12-13; Lk 4:1-2).
- ❒ Jesus carried out his ministry in the Spirit (Lk 4:14; cf. Lk 4:18). He cast out demons by the power of the Spirit (Mt 12:28). He rejoiced in the Spirit (Lk 10:21).

The Holy Spirit in the Gospels: The *Teachings* of Christ
The bulk of Jesus's teaching concerning the Holy Spirit can be found in John 14-16. Following are the key truths concerning the Spirit set forth in these chapters:

- ❒ The Holy Spirit is a "Comforter," otherwise translated as "Helper" or "Counselor" (14:16; 14:26; 15:26). The Holy Spirit is also the "Spirit of truth" (14:17; 15:26; 16:13).
- ❒ The Father sends the Holy Spirit at the Son's request (14:16). The Father sends the Spirit in Jesus's name (14:26). Jesus sends the Spirit from the Father to provide spiritual help in His absence (15:26; 16:7). The Spirit proceeds from the Father (15:26).
- ❒ The Holy Spirit is the believer's permanent possession (14:16). The believer is intimately joined with the Spirit (14:17). Unbelievers, by contrast, cannot perceive the Spirit (14:17).
- ❒ The Holy Spirit's ministry includes several elements: guiding believers into the truth concerning all things (14:25-26; 16:12-13); bringing Jesus's words to His disciples' remembrance (14:25-26); testifying about Jesus (15:26); enabling believers to witness (15:27); speaking on behalf of Jesus, bringing glory to Him (16:13-15); convincing the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (16:8-11); and revealing things to come (16:13).

Conclusion

By example and precept, Jesus taught us the important role that the Spirit plays in a successful Christian life. We should, therefore, earnestly seek to deepen our relationship with Him. We should not let others' excesses distract us from the reality of our need of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth. We can begin our journey of knowing the Spirit by addressing Him in prayer, submitting to His work in our lives, and assimilating the Word through which He does His work.

Learning Objectives

1. To reduce the discomfort that participants may feel in talking about the Holy Spirit.
2. To survey the core of the Gospels' teaching concerning the Holy Spirit.
3. To persuade participants of the importance of developing an intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit.
4. To encourage participants to adopt habits that facilitate a Spirit-led life.

The Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts

Introduction
There is a lot of controversy concerning the role of the Holy Spirit in Christian life--both personal and corporate. This lesson will summarize the teaching of Acts on the Holy Spirit, emphasizing the Spirit's baptism, the Spirit's filling, and the Spirit's power.

The Holy Spirit in Acts: The *Baptism* of the Holy Spirit
The book of Acts establishes the pattern that *the Holy Spirit is imparted to genuine believers at the time of their conversion*. This pattern is reinforced in several ways.

- ❒ The imparting of the Holy Spirit to believers was foretold by Jesus before His ascension, a fact that Luke was careful to note (Acts 1:4-5: "ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence"). This promise was obviously fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost (2:1-4). Through the power of the Spirit the disciples spoke "with other tongues" (2:4). Peter interpreted this phenomenon as the fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32 (2:16-21).
- ❒ From Pentecost forward it became the norm that believers receive the Holy Spirit at the time of their conversion. At Pentecost Peter identified the receipt of the Holy Spirit as a consequence of salvation (2:37-39; note the language of conversion: "repent," "remission of sins," "call"). The apostles subsequently referred to the Holy Spirit as God's gift to those who obey Him--presumably, by trusting Christ for salvation (5:32). Peter's confrontation with Simon the sorcerer establishes without ambiguity the fact that the Holy Spirit is a gift given freely to believers (8:18-24).
- ❒ The conversion of the first Gentiles in Cornelius's home was accompanied by the falling of the Holy Spirit (10:44-48). Peter later reflected on this event, equating it with what occurred to the Jewish believers on the Day of Pentecost (11:15-18; 15:7-9).
- ❒ A few variations from the norm are recounted in Acts, but these serve merely to reinforce the norm. Those who came to faith in the Samaritan revival did not experience the baptism of the Spirit immediately. Rather, the Spirit was imparted to them through the laying on of Peter and John's hands (8:12, 14-17). Saul received the Spirit through the mediation of Ananias three days after his conversion (9:17). Perhaps the most puzzling impartation of the Spirit concerned a dozen or so disciples of John the Baptist (19:1-6). These men professed to have believed and had been baptized, but had no knowledge of the Spirit. Craig Blomberg suggests that they were not truly converted until their encounter with Paul (346). After trusting in Christ and being baptized, they received the Holy Spirit through the imposition of Paul's hands. The fact that Luke described these incidents in some detail suggests that they were exceptional.
- ❒ In summary, most converts in Acts were baptized with the Spirit at the moment they came to faith in Christ. The instances when water baptism and/or the laying on of hands preceded the impartation of the Spirit were extraordinary.

The Holy Spirit in Acts: The *Filling* of the Holy Spirit
The book of Acts illustrates that *the Holy Spirit works his will by filling believers* with His presence and power. Christians should therefore seek to be filled with the Spirit on a continual basis.

- ❒ When Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit he boldly proclaimed Jesus as Christ to the Jewish leaders (4:8ff). When Paul was filled with the Spirit he confronted a sorcerer who was hindering the cause of evangelism (13:9ff).
- ❒ The early church recognized the importance of designating faithful, Spirit-filled men to carry out the Lord's work. The Jerusalem church refused to delegate food distribution to men who were less than

Spirit-filled and wise (6:2-6). In addition, it selected Barnabas as its representative to Antioch because of his spirituality (11:22-24).

- ❒ The filling of the Holy Spirit is associated with joy. The disciples experienced it even in the face of persecution (13:50-52).
- ❒ The early church prayed for the filling of the Holy Spirit, seeking to represent the Lord boldly before the world (4:29-31). Paul made tentative plans in the Spirit; in other words, he sought the Spirit's direction for his life (19:21).

The Holy Spirit in Acts: The *Power* of the Holy Spirit

The book of Acts demonstrates that *the Holy Spirit leads and empowers the church for growth and service*. The church's success is vitally tied to its relationship with the Spirit.

- ❒ The writer of Acts portrayed the Holy Spirit as the Source of spiritual power (1:8). He attributed Jesus's success in ministry--particularly in training the apostles and performing healings--to the work of the Spirit (1:2; 10:38). Thus the earthly work of Christ serves as a model of ministry led and empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- ❒ The Holy Spirit led and enabled the early Christians to witness boldly on behalf of Jesus (4:8ff; 5:30-32). Driven by the Spirit, Paul witnessed to the Corinthian Jews concerning the identity of Jesus as Messiah (18:5). The Spirit empowered Stephen's message to his fellow Jews, forcing them to decide for or against Christ (6:8-10). Through the Spirit Paul confronted Elymas the sorcerer's deceitful ways (13:9ff).
- ❒ The Holy Spirit oversaw every aspect of the church's advance in the first century. Acts specifically names Him as the Agent behind the church's growth (9:31). The Spirit directed Philip to witness to the Ethiopian eunuch (8:29ff). He transported Philip from the desert to Azotus so he could engage in a preaching mission (8:39-40). He directed Peter to accompany men to Cornelius's house, leading to the inclusion of Gentiles in the church (10:19-20; 11:12). He revealed to a prophet named Agabus that a famine was imminent, enabling the Antioch church to send relief to Jerusalem (11:27-30). He prevented Paul and his companions from pursuing their plans to minister in particular regions (16:6-7). And He warned Paul of the dangers of going to Jerusalem (20:22-23; 21:4, 10-11).
- ❒ The church's relationship with the Spirit is of paramount importance. This is perhaps nowhere more clearly portrayed than in the story of Ananias and Sapphira, who died because of their irreverence0020toward the Spirit (5:1-11). For the most part, however, the early church leaned heavily on the Spirit's direction and empowerment. The Jerusalem church considered Spirit-filling to be so important that it required it of leaders who would perform seemingly insignificant tasks (6:2-6). It designated Barnabas, a Spirit-filled man, to journey to Antioch on its behalf (11:22-24). Its leaders sought the Spirit's wisdom in making resolutions that would affect the Christian world of their day (15:28-29). The church at Antioch responded to the Spirit's instruction to commission Barnabas and Saul for missionary service (13:1-4). And Paul recognized the Spirit's role in appointing church leaders in Ephesus (20:28).

Learning Objectives

1. To survey the core teachings of the book of Acts concerning the Holy Spirit.
2. To clarify the distinction between the baptism and filling of the Spirit.
3. To persuade participants of the vital role the Spirit plays in the life of the church.
4. To encourage participants to seek the filling of the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit in the Epistles & Revelation

Introduction
The Holy Spirit occupies a prominent place in the epistles and Revelation, being mentioned more than 100 times. A study of these references shows that the Spirit ministers both to believers and unbelievers.

Salvation
The Spirit plays a major role in the execution of God's salvation plan.

- ❒ The Spirit was the Mediator of Christ's sacrifice to God for the sins of mankind (Heb 9:13-14).
- ❒ The Spirit is active in communicating the gospel to the unsaved (1 Thess 1:5; 1 Pet 1:12). He witnesses concerning the identity of Jesus Christ as Son of God (1 Jn 5:5-9). He joins the Bride--the church--in inviting the lost to come to Jesus (Rev 22:17). As "the Spirit of grace" He is offended when Christ's atoning sacrifice is rejected (Heb 10:29).
- ❒ The Spirit is the Source of life (2 Cor 3:6). He imparts that life to those who come by faith to Jesus Christ (Gal 3:13-14). Possession of the Spirit is thus a telltale sign of genuine faith (Rom 8:9; 8:15; Jude 17-19). The Spirit's continuing presence means that the believer's body is His temple (1 Cor 6:19-20).
- ❒ The Spirit is implanted in believers' hearts as a pledge or deposit guaranteeing future redemption; this indwelling constitutes a seal (Rom 8:9-11; 8:23; 2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; Eph 1:13-14; 4:30).

> "The image of God's sealing his people combines all these meanings--authenticity, ownership, mystery, worthiness, preservation (2 Cor 1:22). [. . .] The Holy Spirit's coming as promised is a seal and down payment, proof that God's people are sealed for the day of redemption (Eph 1:13-14; 4:30)" ("Seal").

- ❒ Believers are washed, sanctified, justified, renewed, and baptized by the Spirit (1 Cor 6:11; 12:13; 2 Thess 2:13; Tit 3:5).

Mediation of Spiritual Truth
There is much evidence to suggest that the Holy Spirit is the Mediator of spiritual truth.

- ❒ The Spirit is said to be responsible for several specific portions of the Old Testament. The author of Hebrews attributes to Him the symbolism behind the Old Testament tabernacle (9:6-8), the book of Psalms (3:7-11; cf. Ps 95:7-11), and the book of Jeremiah (10:15-17; cf. Jer 31:33-34). Peter attributes the whole of Old Testament prophecy to the moving of the Spirit (2 Pet 1:20-21). In addition, he specifically credits the Spirit with revealing Messianic prophecies to the prophets (1 Pet 1:10-11).
- ❒ In the New Testament period the Spirit revealed the mystery of the church to apostles and prophets (Eph 3:4-6). Paul attributed his message to Timothy to the Spirit's voice (1 Tim 4:1). The Spirit gave John the information contained in the book of Revelation through visions, speech communication, and transportations (Rev 1:10; 4:2; 14:13; 17:3; 21:10). The messages to the seven churches of Asia are attributed to Christ as well as the Holy Spirit (Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). In sum, the Spirit is the Mediator of God's mysteries to the believer (1 Cor 2:6-16).
- ❒ The Spirit accompanies believers as we proclaim the gospel (1 Pet 1:12). He confirms our message by attesting to the reality of Jesus's incarnation (1 Jn 4:1-3) and to His identity as Lord (1 Cor 12:3).

Fellowship with God

As believers we enjoy fellowship with the Holy Spirit. Through Him we enjoy fellowship with the Father and the Son.

- ❒ The Spirit is a Person believers can grieve (Eph 4:30) and quench (1 Thess 5:19). Obviously, then, we have a personal relationship with Him (cf. 2 Cor 13:14; Phil 2:1).
- ❒ The Spirit mediates our access to God the Father on the basis of Christ's death (Eph 2:18). He nurtures our relationship with the Father by affirming our identity as His children (Rom 8:15-17; Gal 4:6-7).
- ❒ The Spirit is instrumental in mediating believers' worship (Phil 3:3) and prayer (Eph 6:18; Jude 20-21). In fact, the Spirit intercedes on our behalf so that our prayers actually serve to accomplish God's will in our lives (Rom 8:26-27).

Spiritual Growth

One of the Spirit's most predominant roles is that of enabling Christians to achieve spiritual growth.

- ❒ Believers receive the Spirit by exercising faith in God's message, not by performing the works of the law. The same is true of spiritual growth: It is a work of the Spirit brought about by faith, not works (Gal 3:2-5). We should not infer from this, however, that we have no responsibility in the matter. In fact, we are called on to sow to the Spirit--that is, to make provisions for spiritual health and growth (Gal 6:7-8).
- ❒ The Holy Spirit empowers believers to overcome the sinful habits of the flesh (Rom 8:3-6, 12-13). We avail ourselves of the Spirit's power by *walking* in Him. By walking in Him we suppress the works of the flesh and produce the Spirit's fruit (Gal 5:16-25; cf. Eph 5:9; Rom 14:17).

> "[. . .] walking at a more figurative level becomes a prime metaphor for [. . .] a person's lifestyle (with the image of walking suggesting continuing progress in time and in a chosen direction)" ("Walk, Walking").

- ❒ Believers are instructed to arm themselves with spiritual armor (Eph 6:10ff). One of the elements of this armor, God's Word, is referred to as the Spirit's sword (Eph 6:17). From this we may infer that the Spirit carries out warfare on our behalf.
- ❒ Believers are commanded to be filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18). The Spirit's filling is associated with wisdom and discernment of God's will (v 17); freedom from intoxication (v 18); praise and thanksgiving (vv 19-20); and mutual submission (v 21).
- ❒ The Holy Spirit ministers to believers in other ways. For example, He interacts with our consciences to bring about assurance of righteous behavior (Rom 9:1-2). By implication, He also convicts us when we are in sin. In addition, He is our source of inner strength (Eph 3:16).

Edification of the Church

The New Testament shows that the Holy Spirit is vitally involved in the development of the church.

- ❒ In the New Testament period the Spirit demonstrated His concern for the well-being of local churches by advising them concerning their strengths and weaknesses (Rev 2:7; 2:11; etc.). The Spirit is no less concerned for churches' spiritual health today. We should seek out His direction in the life of our church.
- ❒ The Spirit baptizes believers into the body of Christ, the church (1 Cor 12:12-13), and gifts them for service within it (vv 4-11). The Spirit is active in building up the church to be a fitting dwelling place for God (Eph 2:19-22). The local church body is a temple where the Spirit dwells (1 Cor 3:16). His presence demands holiness on the part of the church's members (v 17).
- ❒ The Spirit performs a bonding work among Christians of diverse backgrounds and personalities (Eph 4:1-4). Among the things Christians have in common is that we are all equally related to the one Spirit (v 4). We should endeavor to live out the reality of our oneness by maintaining visible unity

among brothers and sisters in Christ (v 3). This necessarily involves practicing humility and patience (vv 1-2).

- ❒ The Spirit revealed the mystery of the church to apostles and prophets who would serve as the church's foundation (Eph 3:5-7; cf. 2:20). Furthermore, the Holy Spirit calls men to the sacred trust of administering His Word (2 Tim 1:14; cf. 1 Tim 6:20).

Empowerment for Ministry

Ministry is impossible outside the context of the working of the Spirit. The Spirit directs every aspect of believers' service to God, one another, and the world.

- ❒ The ministry of the new covenant is the ministry of the Spirit (2 Cor 3:4-6). The Spirit is given to those who turn to the Lord through the preaching of the gospel (vv 12-17). Interestingly, it is the Spirit who empowers preachers to share the message of Christ, so that the ministry is carried out, in a sense, by the Spirit Himself (vv 1-3, 18).
- ❒ The preaching of the early church was carried out "by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven" (1 Pet 1:12). Paul carried out the entirety of his ministry "by the Holy Spirit" (2 Cor 6:6). Paul enjoined Timothy to keep the ministry that had been entrusted to him by the Holy Spirit (2 Tim 1:14).
- ❒ The salvation message of Christ's apostles was reinforced by the Holy Spirit through miracles and spiritual gifts (Heb 2:3-4). The Spirit gives a variety of gifts to believers for the benefit of the church. These are distributed according to His sovereign will (1 Cor 12:4-11).
- ❒ The Holy Spirit empowered Paul's speech and actions so that his ministry was fruitful from Jerusalem to Illyricum. The Spirit's manifestation evidently included both miraculous phenomena and the power of spiritual persuasion (Rom 15:18-19). The Spirit made Paul's ministry in Corinth effective. He did not approach the Corinthians with his own rhetorical devices, but with the power of God (1 Cor 2:4-5). Paul's ministry of the gospel to the Thessalonians was no mere speech communication. In fact, it was carried out with the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Thess 1:5).

Conclusion

The whole of the Christian's experience--from new birth to resurrection, both individually and corporately--is bound in up in the working of the Holy Spirit. We overlook His vital role in our lives to our own spiritual detriment.

Learning Objectives

1. To survey the roles the Spirit plays in salvation, sanctification, and service.
2. To persuade participants of their need to seek the Spirit's direction and power for continued growth.
3. To motivate participants to cultivate a closer relationship with the Spirit.

Appendix: Are Tongues for Today?

Introduction
If asked if to explain whether tongues are for today, most Christians would probably respond in terms of their own observation and experience. These, however, are inadequate starting points for discussion. This excursus will examine the New Testament to answer six fundamental questions pertaining to tongues.

Do Tongues Occupy a Prominent Place in the New Testament?
The New Testament authors do not seem to place great emphasis on the matter of speaking in tongues.

- Tongues are mentioned specifically in only 3 of the 27 books of the New Testament: Mark, Acts, and 1 Corinthians. The authenticity of Mark 16:9-20, containing the book's only reference to tongues (v. 17), is seriously questioned by many scholars. Acts refers directly to tongues only 4 times (2:4, 11; 10:46; 19:6). In addition, it is narrative of historical events rather than a treatise of theological truth. 1 Corinthians, while containing an extended discussion of tongues and spiritual gifts, is obviously corrective. These texts can scarcely be the foundation for a major biblical doctrine.
- The book of Acts mentions the Holy Spirit approximately 50 times. Given that tongues are named only 4 times, it is evident they are not the primary expression of the Spirit in the life of the believer.
- There are more than 100 references to the Holy Spirit in the latter half of the New Testament (Romans through Revelation). Yet tongues are named specifically in only 3 chapters of a single letter (1 Cor 12-14). Other ministries of the Spirit (e.g., sealing, indwelling, filling, fruit-bearing, empowering, and interceding) seem to be more prominent in the later New Testament.
- The New Testament contains several "lists" of spiritual gifts. It is significant to note that only 1 of these passages mentions tongues, and there it occupies last place (1 Cor 12:8-10, 28-30). Three other spiritual gifts passages omit any reference to tongues (Rom 12:6-8; Eph 4:11; 1 Pet 4:10-11).

What Were the Tongues of the New Testament?
The tongues of the New Testament were known languages of the time.

- The Greek word *glossa*, which underlies references to tongues, admits several meanings: the organ of speech (e.g., Lk 16:24; Phil 2:11; Jas 3:5ff); the language of a people (e.g., Acts 2:11); and, by extension, a people group (e.g., Rev 5:9; 7:9).
- The Jews visiting Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost acknowledged that the disciples were speaking in their own languages (Acts 2:6, 8, 11).
- While many scholars (e.g., Louw and Nida 389; Haarbeck 3:1080) distinguish the tongues of 1 Corinthians from those of Acts, there is no clear warrant for doing so. Paul implied that tongues convey meaning, though it may not be understood by the hearer. Tongues are, nevertheless, languages of some sort (1 Cor 14:6-13). They are not merely ecstatic speech (cf. 1 Cor 14:2).
- David Lowery concludes: "The same may be said of the meaning of the word <u>glossa</u> elsewhere in the New Testament. Whether it was used literally of the physical organ [. . .] or figuratively of human languages [. . .], it nowhere referred to ecstatic speech. If it is reasonable to interpret the unknown with the help of the known, the obscure by the clear, then the burden of proof rests with those who find in this term a meaning other than human language" (537-38).

What Was the Purpose of Tongues in the New Testament?
Tongues accomplished several purposes in the New Testament:

- Tongues attest to the credibility of the Christian faith (Mk 16:17; cf. Heb 2:3-4).
- Tongues attract the attention of unbelievers, especially Jews, giving visibility to the apostolic message (Acts 2:4ff; 1 Cor 14:21-22; cf. Is 28:11-12).

- Tongues provide visible evidence of the conversion of Gentiles and others whose salvation might be called into question (Acts 10:44-46; 19:1-6).
- Tongues enhance the speaker's own relationship with God (1 Cor 14:2, 4, 14).

Does the Modern Pentecostal Movement Demonstrate That Tongues Are Valid Today?

The modern tongues movement generally does not conform to the following New Testament guidelines:

- Believers should not be expected to possess the same spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12, esp. vv. 7-11, 28-30).
- All spiritual gifts, including tongues, are to be used for the benefit of the whole church, not the individual believer (1 Cor 14:1-5, 12, 26; cf. 1 Cor 13:1-7).
- All messages spoken in tongues should be interpreted (1 Cor 14:5, 13, 27-28).
- The exercise of the gifts in the church should be orderly (1 Cor 14:23, 27, 40).
- Women are to exercise restraint in the public exercise of their gifts (1 Cor 14:34-35).

Does the New Testament Indicate Whether Tongues Would Persist?

The New Testament gives some indication that tongues would fade off the scene.

- Paul specifically stated that tongues would cease (1 Cor 13:8). While there is much debate as to when this prophecy was or will be fulfilled, the fact of the prediction remains. Myron Houghton and Donald Launstein discuss in some detail the timing of the ceasing.
- The final third of Acts omits any mention of tongues.
- There is no mention of tongues in the later books of the New Testament, including Paul's later epistles, the general epistles, and Revelation.
- The miraculous confirmation of the apostolic message seemed to be fading by the time Hebrews was penned (cf. Heb 2:3-4).
- Some of the purposes of tongues lost relevance after the first generation of Christianity. First, Gentiles achieved acceptance in the Christian community early in the apostolic period. Second, the establishment of churches around the Roman Empire, coupled with the writing of the New Testament, established Christianity's credibility. Third, the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD scattered the Jews and diminished their identity (Launstein 6).
- Tongues were not prominent in the post-apostolic period. The church fathers wrote relatively little concerning tongues and other gifts of the Spirit. While some of them seemed to recognize the continued validity of tongues, others (such as Chrysostom and Augustine) denied it vehemently. At least some of the post-apostolic concern with supernatural gifts was associated with a controversial prophetic movement known as Montanism (Hunter; Rogers, Jr.; Wright).
- It is not contrary to God's nature for Him to deal with believers and mankind in general in different ways over the course of time. In particular, miracle-working does not seem to have been common through biblical history. Most miracles performed through human agency occurred in one of three periods: Moses/Joshua, Elijah/Elisha, and Jesus/apostles.

If the Gift of Tongues Is Not Present Today, How Can the Charismatic Movement Be Explained?

Modern tongues may be ecstatic speech associated with a religiously-induced trance.

- Ecstatic speech is not indicative of a revelation from God. Members of heretical sects and even non-Christian religions have been known to experience phenomena similar to modern charismatic tongues. Studies indicate that Christian ecstasy is not linguistically different from that found in other religions (Goodman).
- "Tongues" surface where people expect them to occur. This stands in contrast to the New Testament, where Jewish and Gentile believers spoke in tongues without having been taught to seek them out (Acts 2:1-4; 10:44-46).

Conclusion

The tongues of the New Testament were apparently contemporary languages uttered supernaturally by those who had never learned them. The purposes of tongues included establishing the credibility of the

Christian message; attracting the attention of unbelievers; and providing a visible sign of conversion. The New Testament does not indicate that tongues occupied a prominent place in the life of the early church.

Both biblical and extra-biblical evidence suggest a cessation of tongues early in the life of the church. The modern Pentecostal movement fails to conform to New Testament prescriptions for the exercise of the gift. Modern "tongues" may be ecstatic speech associated with a religiously-induced trance.

Learning Objectives

1. To survey the biblical data concerning the gift of tongues.
2. To assess modern Pentecostalism in the light of biblical principles, historical data, and linguistic study.
3. To encourage participants to adopt the cessationist view of tongues.

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