

Commentary
on the
Strange Fire
Conference, 2013

Strange Fire Conference
Grace Community Church
John MacArthur
10/16/13 to 10/18/13

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Revised 3/5/2021

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Notes, Session 1: John MacArthur

The biggest problem in the Church today is discernment. Must be attached to sound doctrine. John wants to help us be discerning.

There are false teachers who are deceivers and know it (in the Charismatic movement).

John wrote *The Charismatics*, *Charismatic Chaos*, and now *Strange Fire*.

There are ½ billion Charismatics in the world today.

There are 1 billion Catholics in the world today.

There are 14 million Mormons in the world today.

We must confront those in error. Leviticus 10 speaks of strange fire.

The highest duty of man is to worship God. The Father seeks true worshippers. Nothing is more serious than worship. We must worship in Spirit and in truth with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and all our love according to His revealed truth.

Aaron was consecrated in Leviticus 8. Aaron offers sacrifice in Leviticus 9:6. He was commanded by God. The glory of the Lord appeared as a result.

Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron, offered fire on the altar, which He had not commanded them. Fire came out from the Lord and slew them because they offered strange fire. One could not bring strong drink or wine into the tent of meeting or they would die. This could be the reason for Nadab and Abihu's judgment by God.

You better come before the Lord with honor and repent and be holy. Nadab and Abihu were part of the 70 elders chosen to assist Moses in Numbers 11:16. In Exodus 24 it is recorded that they saw God and ate and drank. They were leaders in Israel. Like Ananias and Saphira in Acts 5, they died for their sin.

In Exodus 32, the golden calf was made by Aaron at the request of the people. They worshipped the true God in a false form. The punishment on those who corrupted worship of the true God was severe.

False worship dishonors Father, Son, and mostly Holy Spirit. This is grounds for judgment, for which the punishment is severe.

In Matthew 24 Jesus said to Jewish leaders that they attributed the works of the Holy Spirit to Satan. Now it is reversed. The Charismatics attribute things to the Holy Spirit that are done by the devil. Hindus exhibit demon possession with expressions of worship which are identical to those in the Charismatic movement. This is the kingdom of darkness. They are following patterns that blaspheme His name.

Serious is the crime that attributes words and deeds to the Holy Spirit that He did not do or say. The movement itself offers nothing to enrich true worship. It doesn't make any contribution to sound doctrine, or Biblical interpretation.

They testify that they have faith in the apostles and the reformers. These already have sound doctrine. Nothing coming from the Charismatic movement saves people though some have been saved through those in the movement who are sound in the Gospel. But truth of the Gospel does not come from the movement itself. The movement is loaded with unsaved people.

John fears that the vast majority are in the dark. Jesus warns, "Depart from Me, I never knew you..." This is a prophecy to the movement, he says.

It is possible to become a believer in spite of the movement, but not by the message of the movement. No movement has done more damage to the Church than the Charismatic Movement. Its success comes from the kingdom of darkness. It is a Trojan horse that has entered the City of God.

Reformed theology is sound doctrine, and not a haven for false teachers. No false miracles, shaking, or babbling are found in the Reformed environment.

In 1657 John Owen wrote about Communion with God. That is, Trinitarian communion. We respond to each individual member of the Trinity. Just as there is love, grace, and life, so there is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in that order.

The Holy Spirit convicts, regenerates, guides, sacrifices, but doesn't speak gibberish. The Holy Spirit seals us, sheds love abroad in our hearts. It displeases God to make a mockery of worship.

In Romans 12 we have true worship. All three persons should lie level within us giving them equal honor, says Owen. In Hebrews 10:29, it says how much sorer punishment shall he deserve who insults the Spirit of grace, and tramples the Son of God.

There is a group who espouses Openness Theology.

The Spirit is the breath of the Almighty. The ruach in Hebrew. This is a warning to those who violently insult the Spirit of grace. People should be terrified of insulting the Holy Spirit.

Any Satanic deception that has ever been offered has not been greater than the false doctrine of eternal security. So says a Charismatic, John says. But this is dangerous. It is insulting the Holy Spirit. Benny Hinn is a false teacher who says that he received the anointing by visiting the graves of Aimee Semple McPherson and Kathryn Kuhlman.

Speaking of God in any irreverent manner is taking His name in vain. This misrepresents God. In Deuteronomy 28:58 it says that if you don't honor the name, all diseases will come on you. Such will not go unpunished.

God is patient. The false Charismatic movement will not stop God's judgment. We need the Holy Spirit that is revealed in Scripture. He is the Spirit of truth, comforter, power of the Most High.

John calls for the restoration of the true worship of the Holy Spirit. The zeal of His house consumes John.

The Charismatic movement demands acceptance because of love. One great tribute to the Spirit of God is that He is the greatest gift to us. In Romans 8:26-30, and all of Romans 8, is the Holy Spirit chapter. He intercedes for us because He knows the will of God. Ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit is to conform us to Christ. We must press toward the mark of the high calling to be like Christ.

In 1 John 3:1, we see that we will be like Him when we see Him. Until then, the Holy Spirit is working in us to conform us to Christ.

Look how the Holy Spirit works in Christ. He didn't knock Him down, talk gibberish through Him, or laugh uncontrollably. He was the constant companion of Jesus. Jesus yielded Himself to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit empowered Him.

Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit empowers us also. The Holy Spirit is committed to doing in us what He did in Jesus.

In John 16:7 we see that the Holy Spirit was sent because Jesus left. In John 14:16 we see Him as the Spirit of truth, who teaches us all things and brings all things to our remembrance. In John 15:26 we see that the Holy Spirit testifies of Jesus. In John 16:13 we see that He discloses truth to us so we can be conformed to Christ likeness. He empowers us to be more and more like the Son of God.

John says he will believe in the Charismatic movement when he sees its leaders look more like Christ Jesus. He would never attribute the Charismatic Movement to the work of the Holy Spirit. He is content with the doctrine he has. The work of the Holy Spirit is being unfolded in people's lives.

Commentary:

John says that the "biggest problem in the Church today is discernment". He bases this discernment on sound doctrine.

John says that there are "false teachers who are deceivers and know that they are deceiving people in the Charismatic movement. He has written several books about this so he is not explaining the "sound doctrine" that he holds in this session.

John then notes that in Leviticus 10 it speaks of strange fire. He is referring to **Leviticus 10 (KJV):1** Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. **2** And fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD.

Now no true Christian would deny that “the highest duty of man is to worship God”, and that, “The Father seeks true worshippers”, and that, “We must worship in Spirit and in truth with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and all our love according to His revealed truth”.

John then notes that Aaron was consecrated a priest as in **Leviticus 8 (KJV):6** And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water. 7 And he put upon him the coat, and girded him with the girdle, and clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod upon him, and he girded him with the curious girdle of the ephod, and bound it unto him therewith. 8 And he put the breastplate upon him: also he put in the breastplate the Urim and the Thummim. 9 And he put the mitre upon his head; also upon the mitre, even upon his forefront, did he put the golden plate, the holy crown; as the LORD commanded Moses. 10 And Moses took the anointing oil, and anointed the tabernacle and all that was therein, and sanctified them. 11 And he sprinkled thereof upon the altar seven times, and anointed the altar and all his vessels, both the laver and his foot, to sanctify them. 12 And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him, to sanctify him. 13 And Moses brought Aaron's sons, and put coats upon them, and girded them with girdles, and put bonnets upon them; as the LORD commanded Moses.

Aaron also offered sacrifice as he was commanded by God as in **Leviticus 9 (KJV):6** And Moses said, This is the thing which the LORD commanded that ye should do: and the glory of the LORD shall appear unto you. 7 And Moses said unto Aaron, Go unto the altar, and offer thy sin offering, and thy burnt offering, and make an atonement for thyself, and for the people: and offer the offering of the people, and make an atonement for them; as the LORD commanded. 8 Aaron therefore went unto the altar, and slew the calf of the sin offering, which was for himself. 9 And the sons of Aaron brought the blood unto him: and he dipped his finger in the blood, and put it upon the horns of the altar, and poured out the blood at the bottom of the altar:

And “The glory of the Lord appeared as a result”, as in **Leviticus 9 (KJV):23** And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the people. 24 And there came a fire out from before the LORD, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces.

Although John seems to imply that the reason Nadab and Abihu died for offering strange fire was because they were drinking strong drink or wine, there is nothing mentioned of strong drink or wine in Leviticus, chapter 10 in reference to Nadab and Abihu. The reason that Nadab and Abihu died when they offered strange fire before the Lord was simply because they offered an offering that the Lord had not commanded them as we read again in **Leviticus 10 (KJV):1** Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. 2 And fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD.

Nothing is said of strong drink or wine here.

The sin of Ananias and Sapphira was that they lied to the Holy Ghost as we read in **Acts 5 (KJV):1** But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? 4 While it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. 5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

And Sapphira came in afterwards in **Acts 5 (KJV):9** Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. 10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. 11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

John notes then that the punishment for false worship in the Old Testament was severe as it certainly was in the case of the golden calf that was made by Aaron at the request of the people, for we read in **Exodus 32 (KJV):20** And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it. 21 And Moses said unto Aaron, What did

this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them? 22 And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief. 23 For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. 24 And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf. 25 And when Moses saw that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies:) 26 Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. 27 And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. 28 And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men.

And in **Exodus 32 (KJV)**:35 And the LORD plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made.

John then boldly accuses the Charismatics of attributing “things to the Holy Spirit that are done by the devil”. He says that the “Hindus exhibit demon possession with expressions of worship which are identical to those in the Charismatic movement. This is the kingdom of darkness. They are following patterns that blaspheme His name.”

John does not name the patterns he is talking about here, though he does mention “false miracles, shaking, or babbling” that are not “found in the Reformed environment”.

John does allow for some to be “sound in the Gospel” in the Charismatic movement, although he says that, “the truth of the Gospel does not come from the movement itself. The movement is loaded with unsaved people.”

When Jesus warns, “Depart from Me, I never knew you...”, this is a prophecy to the movement, he says.

John also says that the Holy Spirit “doesn’t speak gibberish”, referring to speaking in tongues by Charismatics.

John says that the Charismatics “make a mockery of worship”, and “insults the Spirit of grace, and tramples the Son of God”. These are serious charges.

John then says that there is a group of Charismatics who espouses Openness Theology. The Wiley Online Library says this about Openness Theology:

Openness theology (also known as “open theism” and “free will theism”) is a theological movement critical of some key aspects of classical theism, including the immutability, impassibility, and timelessness of God. The positive claims of the openness theologians principally regard God's responsiveness to prayer and willingness to adjust providential plans in light of human decisions and actions. There is debate among scholars as to whether openness theology is properly seen as a brand of Arminian theology.

John does not name the group he is speaking of. John does mention Benny Hinn, who he says “is a false teacher who says that he received the anointing by visiting the graves of Aimee Semple McPherson and Kathryn Kuhlman.”

John expects judgment to fall on the Charismatic movement in the form of all diseases, the same as the curse upon Israel if they are disobedient as in **Deuteronomy 28 (KJV)**:58 If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD; 59 Then the LORD will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance. 60 Moreover he will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt, which thou wast afraid of; and they shall cleave unto thee. 61 Also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, them will the LORD bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed.

Now then John also says, “Look how the Holy Spirit works in Christ. He didn’t knock Him down, talk gibberish through Him, or laugh uncontrollably. He was the constant companion of Jesus. Jesus yielded Himself to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit empowered Him.”

John says that the “Holy Spirit is working in us to conform us to Christ”. John then mentions the following scriptures and says that the “Holy Spirit is committed to doing in us what He did in Jesus”.

John 14 (KJV):16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

John 15 (KJV):26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: 27 And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

John 16 (KJV):7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. 8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 Of sin, because they believe not on me; 10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; 11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 12 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 13 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. 14 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

John seems to allow for the fruit of the Spirit, but not the gifts of the Spirit. He says, “he will believe in the Charismatic movement when he sees its leaders look more like Christ Jesus. He would never attribute the Charismatic Movement to the work of the Holy Spirit. He is content with the doctrine he has. The work of the Holy Spirit is being unfolded in people’s lives.”

We will wait to receive more information on exactly what things John says that Charismatics attribute to the Holy Spirit that are done by the devil, before making more commentary.

Notes, Session 2: Joni Erickson Tada, R.C. Sproul

Numbers 11:26 – 70 elders – The Lord took of the Spirit on Moses and put it on the 70 elders, including Medad and Eldad who prophesied in the camp. Joshua is livid as a result. He wanted the power to remain on Moses. But Moses replies, “Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets. Moses also wanted them to be filled with the Spirit. Joel prophesied in 2:28 that the Spirit would be poured out on all flesh.

Acts 2:16 Peter tells the crowd that they were not drunk but that this is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel. Jewish believers were there on Pentecost. All of them received the Holy Spirit. Pentecost was a feast of the Jews. This was not normal for every age. This was a singular event where the Holy Spirit was poured out on the whole Church. There were four distinct people groups in redemptive history. And the temple was divided with the Tabernacle in one part, and then the court of the Gentiles. The four groups were the Jews, the God fearers, the Gentiles, and the Samaritans. All are spoken of in Acts.

The God fearers were converts to Judaism who had not submitted to circumcision. The initial converts were Jews. The question was where do these groups fit. So there was not one Pentecost but four, one for each group.

Acts 8 was for the Samaritans. Acts 8:14 says that the Holy Spirit had not fallen on any of them yet, and that they were baptized only. Peter and John came and laid hands on them, and they then received a mini Pentecost.

Acts 10 relates what happened at the house of Cornelius, a God fearer. In Acts 10:44, the Holy Spirit was poured out on Gentiles also. Peter’s testimony was that they received the Holy Spirit just as he and the other apostles had. He remembered what John said, that you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit. God also granted repentance to life among the Gentiles. All of the God fearers received the Holy Spirit baptism. This points to the significance of the apostles realizing that the Gospel was for God fearers as well.

Acts 19 relates how the disciples at Ephesus were baptized in water in Jesus’ name and after Paul laid hands on them they then received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. All the Ephesians who were there received the Holy Spirit’s empowering for ministry. The significance is that the Ephesian Gentiles were included in another mini Pentecost. Ephesus had trouble with the Holy Spirit, R.C. Sproul says.

In 1 Corinthians 12:12, it says that by one Spirit were we all baptized into one body. There is not one member but many. The significance of Pentecost is that it is for all believers. Ephesians 3:2 describes the role the Gentiles have in the Church. This mystery is revealed here, which was once hidden but now is made clear. That is, that all are one in Christ. He is our peace, having made both one. We both have access by one Spirit through Christ. Charismatics have a low view of Pentecost. Pentecost was just to show oneness in Christ. All are called to participate in the Great Commission. The equipping has happened to each who is in Christ. All have been equipped with the Holy Spirit.

Commentary:

First of all, we read of the 70 elders in **Numbers 11 (KJV):23** And the LORD said unto Moses, Is the LORD's hand waxed short? thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not. 24 And Moses went out, and told the people the words of the LORD, and gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people, and set them round about the tabernacle. 25 And the LORD came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease. 26 But there remained two of the men in the camp, the name of the one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad: and the spirit rested upon them; and they were of them that were written, but went not out unto the tabernacle: and they prophesied in the camp. 27 And there ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp. 28 And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, one of his young men, answered and said, My lord Moses, forbid them. 29 And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the LORD's people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!

It is stated in the notes above that, “Pentecost was a feast of the Jews. This was not normal for every age. This was a singular event where the Holy Spirit was poured out on the whole Church.”

As to who was present when Peter spoke, we read in **Acts 2 (KJV):5** And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. 6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. 7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? 8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? 9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, 10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

Jews of every nation under heaven, and proselytes, were present during this celebration of Pentecost. This was definitely a singular event. It was the inauguration of the Church age. And indeed, Peter did speak as in **Acts 2 (KJV):15** But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: 15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. 16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; 17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: 18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: 19 And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: 20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord come: 21 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Peter then explains the prophecy to them as we continue in **Acts 2 (KJV):22** Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: 23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: 24 Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. 25 For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: 26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: 27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. 28 Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. 29 Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. 30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; 31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

Then Peter preached the Gospel to them as we continue in **Acts 2 (KJV):32** This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. 33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. 34 For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, 35 Until I make thy foes thy footstool. 36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Peter’s preaching was so effective that 3000 souls were saved as we continue in **Acts 2 (KJV):37** Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. 37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? 38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call.

Peter says that the promise of the Holy Spirit is for them and for their children and for all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call.

In verse 39 Peter speaks of “the promise”. He is referring to the gift of the Holy Ghost in verse 38. But he is also referring to Jesus’ words in **Acts 1 (KJV):4** And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. 5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

The promise was the gift of the Holy Ghost, to be received at the baptism with the Holy Ghost. This was to be an empowering for ministry as we continue in **Acts 1 (KJV):6** When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? 7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. 8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Now to repeat, we read in **Acts 2 (KJV):39** For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call.

That is, the promise, the gift of the Holy Ghost, to be received at the baptism with the Holy Ghost, is “unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call”. We may assume that the 3,000 that were saved and baptized with water, were also baptized with the Holy Spirit for Peter says that the same promise that the disciples were promised by Jesus in Acts 1:4 was also for them.

So this was not a mini Pentecost. This promise, that is, the gift of the Holy Ghost, is to be received at the baptism with the Holy Ghost, and is for the whole church, as many as shall be born, even as many as the LORD our God shall call, even “all flesh” as Joel prophesied. It was not just a mini Pentecost for the Jews, or for the Samaritans, or for the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius, or for the God fearers.

So in Acts 8, we do not read of any mention of a mini Pentecost. The Samaritans heard the word of God and then believed, and then they were baptized. When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John that the Samaritans might then receive the Holy Spirit as we read in **Acts 8 (KJV):12** But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. 13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. 14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: 15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: 16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

The Samaritans had believed and were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. We continue to read in **Acts 8 (KJV):17** Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. 18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, 19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. 20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. 21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. 22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. 23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. 24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the LORD for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

It is evident that the Samaritans must have spoken with tongues and prophesied when they received the Holy Spirit because Simon saw or heard something that made him want the power to do this as well.

In fact, there was also no mini Pentecost for the God fearers as R.C. Sproul suggests. We read that Cornelius feared God with all his house in **Acts 10 (KJV):1** There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, 2 A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always.

But the conclusion of the circumcised believers who were present at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the house of Cornelius was that God had poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit on the Gentiles, and not just the

God fearers, as we continue in **Acts 10 (KJV):**44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. 45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

And the evidence of their having received the baptism with the Holy Ghost was that “they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God”, as in verse 46 above.

Certainly this was a divine appointment for Peter and those who were with him so that they would know that the Gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles, and not just the God fearers. But because the experience was just like the experience that Peter and the apostles had, we are to understand that the promise is for “all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call”. Again, this was not just a mini Pentecost for the Gentiles, or the God fearers.

Now as to the fact that this experience was confirmation to the Jews that the Gospel was also to be preached to the Gentiles we begin reading in **Acts 11 (KJV):**1 And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. 2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, 3 Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.

The fact that the Gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles was not known to those of the circumcision in Jerusalem. Peter was called out for fellowshiping with Gentiles. We now read Peter’s explanation as we continue in **Acts 11 (KJV):**4 But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying, 5 I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me: 6 Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw four footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. 7 And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat. 8 But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth. 9 But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. 10 And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven. 11 And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me. 12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house: 13 And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; 14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. 15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. 16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. 17 Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? 18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

God granted the “like gift” on those of the house of Cornelius as he did to the 120 in the upper room. They then concluded that “God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life”, and he also granted them the gift of the Holy Ghost, the baptism with the Holy Ghost.

So since the Jewish believers now believed that the Gospel was also for the Gentiles, what are we to understand is the significance of the experience of the disciples in Ephesus in Acts 19, whom Paul encountered?

Now we read as in **Acts 19 (KJV):**1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, 2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. 3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. 4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them,

the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. 7 And all the men were about twelve.

The significance of the experience of the disciples in Ephesus in Acts 19, whom Paul encountered, is that this experience is also for us who were then “afar off”. We are of those “many” whom “the LORD our God shall call” to Himself.

It is not as R.C. Sproul says, “Pentecost was just to show oneness in Christ”. Pentecost is to show that the baptism with the Holy Ghost is for all believers, “even as many as the LORD our God shall call”. Pentecost was to empower the believers with the Holy Spirit, and to equip them for ministry in the body of Christ, and to be a witness to the world.

And as Jesus spoke in **John 14 (KJV)**:12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. 13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

Notes, Session 3: Dr. Steve Lawson

Calvin was a cessationist. The miracles in the New Testament attested to apostolic authority. They are not for now. Neither is the ministry of the apostle for now. Neither is the laying on of hands for now. This was all part of the rocket launch of the Church. Now there is the primacy of the word.

Rome asked Calvin where are the miracles that we may know that you are of God. Rome claimed that miracles were necessary to prove Calvin's ministry. Calvin responded that they would need an entirely new Gospel to do this. Calvin remarks on Mark 16:17 that miracles more probably were just for a time at the Gospel's commencement. The reason that Rome was looking for miracles was to prove that the doctrine of Calvin was from Calvin himself, and not from God.

Acts 14:3 states, "Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands." The purpose for miracles, Calvin said, was to attest to the truth of their message. That is, the purpose was to prove that the apostles were speaking for God. Calvin says that the gift of tongues and other such things have ceased, but the Holy Spirit is still regenerating people.

It says in Isaiah 30:1 Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin:

And in Acts 21:9, Philip had daughters who prophesied.

In Romans 12:6, the gift of forthtelling – that is preaching – is still active, but foretelling is not.

And in Hebrews 1:1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

Christ brought the final conclusion of God's message. The fanatics wrongly appeal to the miraculous, said Calvin. God has made an end to all prophecies. It is not lawful to go beyond the simplicity of the Gospel. To do so opens doors for the impostors of the devil.

A charismatic Calvinist is an oxymoron. There are two streams of revelation, the word, and tradition say Roman Catholics. The Charismatics say that the two streams are the word and prophecy, and this dilutes the message.

Calvin believed in the joining together of the Spirit and the word.

Commentary:

Calvin may have been a cessationist, but it really doesn't matter. What matters is what the word of God teaches. We have already shown in the previous section that the promise of the Holy Spirit that Peter refers to in Acts 2:29 was for "all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call". And yes, the purpose of miracles is to attest to the truth of the message. But it is also for the benefit of those receiving the miracle. We may not expect to have miracles to the same extent that the apostles had, for we read that "great grace was upon them all" in **Acts 4 (KJV):33** And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

But this was a time just after the believers had just witnessed the crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus. We, as those who afar off, can only imagine what that must have been like. However, Jesus did teach that the one who believes will do the works that He does in **John 14 (KJV):12** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

What works did Jesus do? Jesus tells us in **John 11 (KJV):2** Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, 3 And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? 4 Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: 5 The blind receive their 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. 6 And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

These are the works of Jesus. And this is the promise in **Mark 16 (KJV):17** And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; 18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

Now Calvin lived in the time of the Reformation, having been born in 1509 and having died in 1564. The gifts of the Spirit were not formally recognized as being active in the Roman Catholic Church in his time. So in Calvin's experience, they had ceased. But Luther recognized that the gifts of the Spirit were ours as he writes that "the Spirit and the gifts are ours" in his great hymn, A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.

Mr. Lawson says that the purpose of miracles was to prove that the apostles were speaking for God. Isn't the same need present today?

In regards to prophecy, we read in **Roman 12 (KJV):6** Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;

Dr. Lawson says that, the "gift of forthtelling, that is preaching, is still active, but foretelling is not", and "Christ brought the final conclusion of God's message". And to support this, he quotes from **Hebrews 1 (KJV):1** God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

But we read in **John 16 (KJV):12** I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. 15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

Jesus had yet many things to say to say to His disciples, but they could not bear it then. But He said when the Holy Spirit is come, he will guide them into all truth. So the revelation of the word of God was not complete when Jesus ascended, but was complete with the Revelation of John.

The apostles and prophets who were eyewitnesses of His glory have laid the foundation of the New Testament, which is complete with the Revelation of John. So there is no new revelation to add to the New Testament. All spiritual activity must be in accordance with the word of God rightly divided.

Now in regards to foretelling, let us first understand that prophecy is not the same as preaching. We read again in **John 11 (KJV):5** The blind receive their 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.

The Greek word translated "preached" in verse 5 above is **εὐαγγελίζω** (pronounced euaggelizō), and means to bring good news, to announce glad tidings.

We read that Jesus preached the Gospel in **Matthew 4 (KJV):23** And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

The Greek word translated "preaching" in this verse is **κηρύσσω** (pronounced kērussō), and means to publish, proclaim openly: something which has been done.

Preaching is also not teaching. The word for teaching in the above verse is **διδάσκω** (pronounced didaskō), and means to teach, to hold discourse with others in order to instruct them, deliver didactic discourses. Jesus preached the good news that the Kingdom of God was at hand, and then He taught them what that means.

Now prophecy is spoken of as a spiritual gift in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):10** To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

The Greek word translated prophecy in this verse is **προφητεία** (pronounced prophēteia), and "signifies the speaking forth of the mind and counsel of God (pro, forth, phemi, to speak: see PROPHET); **An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, M.A., Vol. III, page 221.**

Vine continues, “Though much of O.T. prophecy was purely predictive, see Micah 5:2, e.g., and cp. John 11:51, prophecy is not necessarily, nor even primarily, fore-telling. It is the declaration of that which cannot be known by natural means, Matt. 26:68, it is the forth-telling of the will of God, whether with reference to the past, the present, or the future, see Gen. 20:7; Deut. 18:18; Rev. 10:11; 11:3....” **An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, M.A., Vol. III, page 221.**

Vine continues, “In such passages as 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 2:20, the ‘prophets’ are placed after the ‘Apostles’, since not the prophets of Israel are intended, but the ‘gifts’ of the ascended Lord, Eph. 4:8,11; cp. Acts 13:1; the purpose of their ministry was to edify, to comfort, and to encourage the believers, 1 Cor. 14:3, while its effect upon unbelievers was to show that the secrets of a man’s heart are known to God, to convict of sin, and to constrain to worship, vv. 24, 25.” **An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, M.A., Vol. III, page 221.**

While Vine assumes that “With the completion of the canon of Scripture prophecy apparently passed away, 1 Cor. 13:8, 9.” **An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, M.A., Vol. III, page 221,** he has correctly stated what prophecy is. That is, “prophecy is not necessarily, nor even primarily, fore-telling. It is the declaration of that which cannot be known by natural means”.

Vine’s assumption that prophecy has passed away is based on **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):8** Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. 9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. 11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. 13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

In verse 10 above, we read that, “when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away”. Apparently Vine did not take into account **1 John 3 (KJV):1** Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

It is evident from verse 2 that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. When we see him, we shall be like him. This is when the perfect is come. This is when that which is in part shall be done away. Then shall I know even as also I am known. Tongues and prophecies will cease when knowledge vanishes away, as in verse 8 above.

In other words, now we see through a glass, darkly; but then we will see Him, “face to face”. And again in **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):9** For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

So we still only know in part. Therefore, prophecy has not ceased. But all prophesy must now be judged by the Scripture, according to the Old and New Testaments.

The ones who wrote the Scripture to give us the canon were eyewitnesses of his majesty as Peter says in **1 Peter 1 (KJV):15** Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance. 16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. 18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. 19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: 20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

The canon is closed, and the word of God must not be added to as the apostle John reveals in **Revelation 22 (KJV):18** For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and

out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. 20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. 21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

The purpose of prophecy in the Church is as it has always been, as we read in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV)**:1 Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. 2 For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. 3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. 4 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

The Lord revealed through Paul that we should desire to prophesy in verse 1 in order that others may be edified, exhorted, and comforted in verse 3 above. All prophecy in the Church must be judged according to the word of God as we read in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV)**:29 Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. 30 If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. 31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. 32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. 33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

Paul wanted them all to be able to prophesy so that all may learn to prophesy. Let all things be done decently and in order as we are commanded in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV)**:40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

The Lord did not command the Corinthians through Paul to stop prophesying, or to stop speaking in tongues. He wanted them all to speak in tongues as is written in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV)**:5 I would that ye all spake with tongues but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

Prophecy is more effective in the church because it edifies the church, whereas speaking in tongues only edifies the one speaking as we read in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV)**:4 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

So the order in the church is to prophesy, one at a time, to edify the church. If one speaks in a tongue, he should pray that he may interpret. This is what the Lord is teaching us in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV)**:13 Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret. 14 For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. 15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. 16 Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? 17 For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. 18 I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: 19 Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.

The one who prays in a tongue does not understand what he is saying, but in his spirit he is speaking mysteries to God as we read in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV)**:2 For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.

This will sound like gibberish to the unlearned, or the unbelievers. That is why we do not speak in tongues in the church unless there is an interpretation. But we pray in private in this way. This is what he is saying in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV)**:15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

When we pray in tongues, we are praying with the spirit, and we are trusting that God knows the mysteries that we are praying. This is why Paul prayed so often in tongues as we read again in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV)**:18 I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: 19 Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.

The word “unknown” is not found in the Greek, but is implied by the context. When the apostles prayed in tongues it was the Spirit that gave them utterance in **Acts 2 (KJV)**:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

They did not pray with their understanding, but with the Spirit for the Spirit gave them what to speak. One of the operations of the gift of speaking in tongues is to speak in a known tongue that is not known to the speaker. This is what happened in **Acts 2 (KJV):5** And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. 6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. 7 And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? 8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? 9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, 10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

When we pray privately, this is another operation of the gift of speaking in tongues which may be in the tongues of angels as we read in **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):1** Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

The tongues of angels are not known languages on earth. Now in regards to the interpretation of tongues, notice that we must pray that we may interpret as in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):13** Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret.

The interpretation of tongues is also a gift of the Spirit as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):10** To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

This gift of the Spirit is not the learning of the tongue, but the speaking forth in the moment by the Spirit the interpretation of the tongue that the Spirit gives. Speaking in tongues is a gift of the Spirit and not a natural ability. The tongue is not known to the speaker. The interpretation of tongues is also a gift of the Spirit and not a natural ability. The tongue is not known to the interpreter.

Now, a charismatic Calvinist is not an oxymoron. The word and the Spirit must be joined together. The Spirit of God is the illuminator of the word of God to us. This is what Paul is saying in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):14** But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

As we read the word of God, the Spirit of God enlightens our minds with the truth of the word of God. This renews our minds so that we are not conformed to this world as in **Romans 12 (KJV):1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

As we grow in grace and knowledge, we become spiritual as we read now in context in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):9** But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. 16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? but we have the mind of Christ.

He that is spiritual judges all things. It is true that Roman Catholics place their tradition on an equal footing with the word of God. But this is an untenable position in the word of God. Tradition may not invalidate the word of God as Jesus said in **Matthew 15 (KJV):1** Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, 2 Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they wash not their hands when they eat bread. 3 But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? 4 For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and,

He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. 5 But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; 6 And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. 7 Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, 8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. 9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

Mr. Lawson asserts that, “The Charismatics say that the two streams are the word and prophecy, and this dilutes the message.” But Mr. Lawson does not name the Charismatics who say this. Instead he makes a generalization of all Charismatics. It is evident that he misunderstands the true function of prophecy in the New Testament. It is not for foretelling as it was in the Old Testament, but it is for edification, exhortation, and comfort as in **1 Corinthian 14 (KJV):3** But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

There is not to be anything added to the word of God in our present day. But prophets can still edify, exhort, and comfort through prophesying.

Notes, Session 4: Conrad Mbewe (a pastor from Zambia)

In **John 17 (KJV):**16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

The organizing principle after Jesus is gone is the written word. The failure of keeping the word central and sufficient has produced the Charismatic Movement. “Born again” is an expression that is associated with the Charismatic Movement in Africa.

TBN is a staple diet of many. This form of Christianity appeals to the African spirituality. Come, receive your healing, deliverance, and your breakthrough, they say. This plugs into the African mind. There are layers to be dealt with. First, the angels and demons. Second, the ancestral spirits. God is far away in the African mind.

Until these layers are dealt with, they think that you can’t get close to God. But this is not Biblical as you quickly realize. This is a thin veneer of Bible translation. If the people rush in throngs to the witch doctor’s den, they will quickly rush to these churches. The Word of God is no longer governing our thinking and practice.

The Churches today are multiplying but this is bad news. Jesus is God and all powerful and can give us new hearts and lead us from glory to glory. But He says “sanctify them through the truth, thy word is truth.” John 17:17. The Charismatic movement has caused an upset in the study and exposition of His word. They do not go to Bible Study any more. Their Gospel consists of 20 minutes of motivational speaking, and then what problems they may be facing are addressed. The “man of God” in the front will help them get over their problems. The problem is that the problems may be fixed but there is no real conversion. There is no singing of hymns but just the repeating of a phrase over and over, and dancing at the end. This is not the glory of God. Spiritually dead people cannot produce godliness or Spirit led worship divorced from the word. The moment you open the door to revelatory gifts, where do you stop?

The Bible is no longer referred to when you allow these revelatory gifts. God is concerned! Africa is strategically placed to be the next export of the faith. But they need to get Christianity back to the Bible. The counterfeit is being exported.

Commentary:

The word of God is indeed the truth. But when the Bible is no longer referred to, this is a problem. But the Bible speaks of revelatory gifts, and to nullify the gifts because of the misuse of their operation is also a problem. The Corinthians were misusing the gifts, and Paul corrected their misuse, but he did not nullify the gifts. Instead, he simply taught them the correct order for the operation of the gifts. To point out a problem in a Charismatic group is a good thing. There is a need for correction in many Charismatic groups, just like there is a need for correction in evangelical and non Charismatic groups. This does not mean we nullify the word of God when it speaks the truth about the gifts of the Spirit. The Bible gives good instruction in the operation of spiritual gifts. We must study to show ourselves approved, in order that we may rightly divide the word of God. To just rail against those who misuse the gifts is not helpful.

The Corinthians were babes Paul says in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):**1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

If there are ancestral spirits to be dealt with, the teaching of the word of God must be central, for Jesus taught in **John 8 (KJV):**31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

But the word of God rightly divided must be taught. We do not nullify the gifts of the Spirit with our teaching if we are going to rightly divide the word of God. The milk of the word must be given first, and then the meat. The first truths about salvation should be taught to new believers as in **Hebrews 6 (KJV):**1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of

repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

This is the foundation that must be laid in new believers. Charismatics would do well to take heed to this. And so would a lot of not Charismatic churches. We are living in a day where new believers are taught in many churches that the only thing they have to do is go to church on Sunday, and tithe. The foundational truths are never taught.

It is not always true that “the Bible is no longer referred to when you allow these revelatory gifts”. Charismatics need correction just as much as others in the body of Christ. Let us all study to show ourselves approve unto God as Paul encouraged Timothy in **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):15** Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Notes, Session 5: John MacArthur Strange Fire

1 John 4:1-8 test the spirits – meaning persons. Test, assess whether they be human or angelic; test their purity.

1 Thessalonians 5:21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. **22** Abstain from all appearance of evil.

Demons exist. Satan operates a kingdom of lies that runs the world. He is a roaring lion seeking to devour. His ministers are angels of light. Satan operates in false religion, and behind false doctrine.

2 Corinthians 10:3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, **4** for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. **5** *We are* destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and *we are* taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, **6** and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.

These verses speak of spiritual warfare. We don't have authority to bind Satan. We can't fight war with human weapons. We need divine power. We must engage in destruction of fortresses, that is, prison, or tombs in the Greek. We must destroy speculations, ideas, belief systems since it is a battle for the mind. It is not about chasing demons.

In 2 Corinthians 10:5, people are fortified in systems that are anti-God (antichrist in John's language). Our job is to crush these ideologies. Satan is the architect of these ideologies and doomed to hell are all those in them.

The warning by Jesus, Paul, Peter, and Jude is about false prophets. Five times in 2 John and five times in 3 John there is a warning to be faithful to the truth. Jude is earnestly contending for the truth. We need to test the spirits. We can't just accept everything.

In 1730-1740 was the Great Awakening. Jonathon Edwards wrote "Distinguishing Marks of the Mark of the Spirit of God". These are timeless tests given by the Holy Spirit. We must examine everything to see what is true.

In 1 John 3:24 we know that He abideth in us by the Spirit which he hath given us. We don't have a red light that goes off when the Holy Spirit moves in us. The Holy Spirit's work is invisible. The effects of His work are visible.

In John 3:8 we see the wind's effect. He produces in us repentance, and hatred of sin. We delight in Scripture, and love for believers. We increase in Christ's likeness by Him and worship is a way of life.

After 1 John 3, John's thoughts turn to deadly deception of false spirits. In the Charismatic movement, if you criticize them and hold them to Scripture, they will condemn you. They turn discernment into iniquity. To survive, they attack the truth warriors and turn them into enemies of the Holy Spirit. They have been very successful in silencing evangelicalism.

Beloved, don't believe it! Charismatics do not want examination. The tests are as follows:

#1. The true work of the Holy Spirit exalts the Lord Jesus Christ.

Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God. **1 John 4:1** Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. **2** By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; **3** and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the *spirit* of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.

Every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. (this is Docetism, which is the belief that Jesus only appeared to be in a human body but was not really). This is the spirit of antichrist.

In 451 A.D at the Council of Chalcedon, Monophysitism, the belief that Jesus Christ had only one nature, which was either divine or a synthesis of divine and human, was condemned. The council asserted that Jesus Christ had two natures, human and divine, which are unmixed in the one person, Jesus Christ.

All cults have aberrant Christology. Wherever there is a diminishing of the Gospel or Christology, the work is not of the Holy spirit.

John 14:15 "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. 16 "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever;

The devil seeks to draw attention away from the truth about Christ and distract with a false view of Christ and the Holy Spirit.

If the Charismatic Movement was of the Holy Spirit, they would be taking up their cross and following Jesus Christ. When the Holy Spirit is the person sought, there is a preoccupation with counterfeit manifestations.

In Ephesians 3:17, Paul is praying to the Father that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith. Jack Hayford is obsessed with the Holy Spirit, and preoccupied with Him. The movement is actually anti-Christ. It is full of delusions and lies. The book, Heaven is for Real is bad enough and a case in point.

There are heresies concerning Jesus. Kenneth Copeland said of Jesus that God was not His father on the cross, for He said, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Creflo Dollar said that God never sleeps but Jesus did.

The Word of Faith Movement is blasphemous. Why don't charismatics call these people out? These are misrepresentations of the Gospel.

In 1 Peter 1:12 it was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look.

The Holy Spirit is faithful to the Gospel. Any movement that can embrace fully Roman Catholicism is false because Roman Catholicism is a false system.

Pope John Paul II recognized Catholic charismatics. That system has one king and it is the king of darkness.

One out of five charismatics are Catholic. Catholics have a corrupt false Gospel.

Modalism – sometimes He's the Father, sometimes the Son, sometimes the Holy Spirit. This is a problem when we look at the Baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist. Oneness Pentecostals (leader is T.D. Jakes) are modalists. They deny the trinity. The Council of 325 A.D. in Nicaea condemned Modalism.

Joel Osteen, who has the largest church in America, has a shallow variety of universalism.

Mitt Romney said that he believes Christ is his savior. Mormonism claims to have experienced the same experiences of the charismatics. Joseph Smith claims that the Spirit was poured out at the dedication of their temple and people spoke in tongues.

The Prosperity Gospel is the defining principle of the Charismatic Movement. This Gospel preys on the poor. This is why the movement has grown. It has no relation to the true Gospel. It offers carnal comfort by lying to the poor. This is the majority (90%) of the Charismatic movement.

#2. Opposes Satan's interests. **1 John 4:4** You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. 5 They are from the world; therefore they speak *as* from the world, and the world listens to them.

Music, emotion, promises of prosperity, and ecstatic experiences are of the world. This is why the movement works. On the other hand, we have overcome the world.

Joel Osteen wrote "Your Best Life Now". If you're going to heaven, this is not your best life.

Mindless numbing music does nothing to shape a holy life. It is a Ponzi scheme.

Nine of ten Pentecostals live in poverty. In Nigeria, India, and the Philippines, Pentecostal believers believe that if they have enough faith, they will prosper.

The widow who gave her last mite is an example of someone who is suckered into a religion of works.

#3. The true work of the Holy Spirit points us to the Bible. **1 John 4:6** We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

Peter Wagner says that prayer is two way. It reveals things to us.

Jack Deere says that the sufficiency of Scripture is a demonic doctrine.

In order to fulfill God's purpose, we must hear through the written word and the word freely spoken.

#4. **1 John 4:7** Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. **8** The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

The true work of the Holy Spirit elevates love toward God and others.

In the Charismatic movement, everything is about me, my edification, what I can get, and it is not loving.

It should be clear from these tests that the Charismatic Movement fails the test.

2 John:7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ *as* coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. **8** Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward. **9** Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son. **10** If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into *your* house, and do not give him a greeting; **11** for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds.

Don't receive anyone with an aberrant Christology.

Commentary:

John MacArthur says that Satan "operates a kingdom of lies that runs the world", "is a roaring lion seeking to devour", and "His ministers are angels of light". In John MacArthur's mind, Satan is real, but he only "operates in false religion", and "behind false doctrine".

John refers to **2 Corinthians 10:3** For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, **4** for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. **5** *We are* destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and *we are* taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, **6** and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.

To him our spiritual warfare is limited to the mind. He then says "We don't have authority to bind Satan. We can't fight war with human weapons. We need divine power." But Jesus cast out demons who were controlling people's lives. Listen to the story of the man from the Gadarenes who was possessed by devils in **Luke 8 (KJV):26** And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee. **27** And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs. **28** When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not. **29** (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.) **30** And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him. **31** And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep. **32** And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them. **33** Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked. **34** When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country. **35** Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. **36** They also which saw it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed. **37** Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again. **38** Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying, **39** Return to thine own

house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him.

Was it Jesus' purpose only to confirm that the word of God is true here? Did not His purpose also include setting this prisoner free? This man was set free, and sitting clothed at Jesus' feet, and in his right mind.

There is a battlefield in the mind that we are fighting in. And it is true that we are destroying speculations, ideas, belief systems that are anti-God and anti-Christ by rightly dividing the word of God. And we must take up the sword of the Spirit to do this. But this is only part of our mission. Jesus' mission was as He taught us in **Luke 4 (KJV):17** And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, **18** The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, **19** To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. **20** And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. **21** And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

This is our mission also. We are to heal the broken hearted, and to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty them that are bruised, and to preach the accept year of the Lord.

The Lord is my strength, my shield, my rock, my fortress, my deliverer, my refuge, and a very present help in trouble, or time of need as we read in **Psalms 28 (KJV):7** The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.

And in **Psalms 18 (KJV):2** The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.

And in **Psalms 46 (KJV):1** God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

And in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):16** Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

As to our authority to bind Satan, the scripture says in **Luke 10 (KJV):17** And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. **18** And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. **19** Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. **20** Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

Jesus says that we have authority over all the power of the enemy. And we read in **Matthew 28 (KJV):18** And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. **19** Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: **20** Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

And these signs shall follow believers as we read in **Mark 16 (KJV):17** And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; **18** They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. **19** So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. **20** And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

Satan is the prince of the power of the air as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):1** And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; **2** Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

Satan has not yet been bound in the bottomless pit as in **Revelation 20 (KJV):2** And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years...

This is why we must put on the full armor of God that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil as we read in **Ephesians 6 (KJV):10** Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. **11** Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. **12** For we

wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

We do not war against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. The whole purpose of spiritual gifts is to equip us against our enemy. The Gospel includes authority over all the power of the enemy in Jesus' name.

Again we read in **Mark 16 (KJV)**:17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

This is what the gifts of discerning of spirits and the working of miracles is for. We must identify the spirit we are going to cast out by the discerning of spirits, and then we have the power to cast it out in Jesus' name by the gift of working of miracles. We must know our authority to do this. God has not left us without power against our enemy, Satan. We now go in Jesus' authority and power as we read again in **Matthew 28 (KJV)**:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

We are to observe all things whatsoever Jesus has commanded his disciples. And He is with us always, and we are to go therefore in His authority and power.

The apostle John says in **3 John 1 (KJV)**:4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

We must rightly divide the word of God in order to know the truth. And we are encouraged to test the spirits as we read in **1 John 4 (KJV)**:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. 2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: 3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

John MacArthur mentions **1 John 3 (KJV)**:24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

And we see the wind's effect in the new birth as we read in **John 3 (KJV)**:8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

It is true as John MacArthur says, that "We don't have a red light that goes off when the Holy Spirit moves in us. The Holy Spirit's work is invisible. The effects of His work are visible." It is also true that we walk by faith and not by sight as we read in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV)**:7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

John MacArthur then says, "In the Charismatic movement, if you criticize them and hold them to Scripture, they will condemn you. They turn discernment into iniquity. To survive, they attack the truth warriors and turn them into enemies of the Holy Spirit. They have been very successful in silencing evangelicalism. Beloved, don't believe it! Charismatics do not want examination."

John does not mention any names in his criticism. He simply brands everyone who is Charismatic in this way. So everyone who is Charismatic and operates in the gifts of the Spirit is part of the Charismatic movement, and as such is someone who will not abide in the teaching of the Scriptures.

Now it is true that Jonathon Edwards was a man mightily used by God, and he wrote "Distinguishing Marks of the Mark of the Spirit of God". John MacArthur says that, "These are timeless tests given by the Holy Spirit." He is using the four tests in this writing as a test whether the Charismatic movement is a valid movement of the Spirit of God. He begins with **Test #1**.

Test #1

The true work of the Holy Spirit exalts the Lord Jesus Christ.

And “every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God”, just as in **1 John 4:1** Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; 3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the *spirit* of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.

I do not know a Charismatic who does not agree with this scripture. But John then says, “Every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. (this is Docetism, which is the belief that Jesus only appeared to be in a human body but was not really). This is the spirit of antichrist.”

He brands the whole Charismatic movement as believing that Jesus Christ did not come in the flesh. Now Docetism is defined as the doctrine, important in Gnosticism, that Christ's body was not human but either a phantasm or of real but celestial substance, and that therefore his sufferings were only apparent.

Irenaeus was a bishop of Lyons in France, and wrote *Adversus Heresies* (Against Heresies) from about 177 to 202 A.D. Irenaeus was defending the Church against Gnosticism. We will discuss Irenaeus later in an upcoming chapter.

John MacArthur then says, “If the Charismatic Movement was of the Holy Spirit, they would be taking up their cross and following Jesus Christ. When the Holy Spirit is the person sought, there is a preoccupation with counterfeit manifestations.”

I am not sure of the context of what John means by “taking up their cross and following Jesus Christ”. It seems that what he is referring to is a grin and bear it sort of attitude. But we read in **Matthew 8 (KJV):16** When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: 17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.

But what did Jesus mean when he spoke of taking up our cross. Let us read context in **Matthew 10 (KJV):34** Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. 35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. 36 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. 37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. 39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

When we stand up for Christ, it may set us at variance with our family, or our household. Our cross has more to do with persecution than with bearing sickness and disease, although it may include that.

John MacArthur does not believe that any of the gifts of the Spirit are valid manifestations today. His belief is that Spiritual gifts have ceased. All manifestations today are therefore in his mind, “counterfeit manifestations”. And anyone seeking the gifts of the Spirit has a preoccupation with counterfeit manifestations because John does not believe that any of the gifts of the Spirit are valid today.

He then mentions **Ephesians 3 (KJV):17** That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love.

And he concludes that Jack Hayford is not seeking Christ but the Holy Spirit as he then says, “Jack Hayford is obsessed with the Holy Spirit, and preoccupied with Him.”

I have attended Church on the Way, where Jack Hayford was pastor, during the 1970's. I can attest to the fact that Jack Hayford is a believer in Jesus Christ, and worships Him only. He is not preoccupied with the Holy Spirit. Neither is his Christology aberrant.

John MacArthur then again brands the whole movement as he says, “The movement is actually anti-Christ. It is full of delusions and lies. The book, **Heaven Is for Real** is bad enough and a case in point.” He

does not say what he finds wrong with the book. I have in fact read the book, **Heaven Is for Real**, and I do not find any delusions or lies therein. It is a good testimony of a Christian family who wrote about an experience they had with their son. They wrote about their experience, and wrote very honestly. There is no reason to believe otherwise.

And yes there is some false teaching by people such as Kenneth Copeland. Here is a quote from the internet:

<https://rootedinchrist.org/2008/01/01/kenneth-copeland%E2%80%99s-false-teachings-and-false-gospel-message/>

Quote: "I've had ugly books written about me because I said that Jesus died spiritually, but the fact is, I didn't say that the Bible said it. Jesus became our substitute. If he hadn't died spiritually, then we could never have been made alive spiritually. But He did! On the cross, Jesus was separated from the glory of God. He allowed Himself to be made sin for us, and He became obedient to death. He went into the pit of hell and suffered there as though He was the One Who had committed the sin." (**The Power of His Resurrection by Kenneth Copeland/ http://kcm.org/studycenter/articles/seasonal/power_of_resurrection.php**)

Jesus did not die spiritually, and he did not suffer in hell. He went to Abraham's bosom to receive the righteous dead, and take them captive to heaven. There were two partitions in hell, or Sheol as in Hebrew. This is revealed in **Luke 16 (KJV):**19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, 21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. 27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: 28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. 29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

And we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):**8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

Jesus descended into Sheol and took all the righteous dead with Him to heaven because, by His blood, the door into heaven was opened. The righteous dead could not enter heaven until Jesus died on the cross for our sins. Now the door is open. This is explained in chapter 9 of Hebrews as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):**6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. 7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: 8 The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: 9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; 10 Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings,

and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. 11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

And in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):**24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

The fact that Kenneth Copeland teaches something false does not nullify the truth in the word of God about spiritual gifts. The Charismatic movement does not speak with one voice.

And because one is a Catholic does not mean they cannot be saved. Listen to what the Spirit of God says to the church of Laodicea in **Revelation 3 (KJV):**14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; 15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. 16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. 17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: 18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. 19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. 20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. 21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. 22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

I am a former Catholic, and I opened the door to him. And I know Catholics who believe in Jesus, and they have not yet come to the knowledge of the error of their traditions. But that does not mean that they are not saved. Nor does it mean that all Catholics are saved. Christ is outside of this church but He knocks, and anyone who opens the door to Him will be saved.

In regards to T.D. Jakes and "modalism", this was true of him in the past but he has now changed his opinion as we read on the internet:

<http://www.bpnews.net/37054/td-jakes-says-he-has-embraced-doctrine-of-the-trinity>

Jakes -- who once made the cover of Time magazine, which asked if he might be the next Billy Graham -- said he was saved in a Oneness Pentecostal church. Oneness Pentecostalism denies the Trinity and claims that instead of God being three persons, He is one person. In Oneness Pentecostalism, there is no distinction between the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. It is also called "modalism," and it is embraced by the United Pentecostal Church International.

"I began to realize that there are some things that could be said about the Father that could not be said about the Son," Jakes said. "There are distinctives between the working of the Holy Spirit and the moving of the Holy Spirit, and the working of the redemptive work of Christ. I'm very comfortable with that."

Jakes said he prefers the term "manifestations" instead of the term "persons" -- a position he has stated before.

He also said that "many of the circles that I came from would never allow me in their pulpit [now] because they consider me a heretic."

Southern Baptist leaders applauded Jakes' transformation while also saying Jakes isn't fully where he should be on that and other issues.

"It is encouraging to see T.D. Jakes moving away from the heresy of modalism," said Malcolm B. Yarnell III, director of the Center for Theological Research at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. "However, we should pray for him and exhort him privately and publicly to move into biblical orthodoxy without equivocation. Much of what Jakes stated about God the Trinity in this interview was correct. For instance he noted the simultaneous but distinct movements of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in the baptism of Jesus. This is very true, though I might have described it differently."

This is not to say that the United Pentecostal Church International has changed their opinion. Modalism is error, and should be rebuked.

Joel Osteen professes a belief in Jesus Christ, but he is weak when asked whether Mormons, Jews, or atheists will be going to hell. He says he doesn't know. God is the judge of human hearts.

Regarding the Mormons, they are a cult. There is no saving message in the Mormon faith. So any manifestation of spirits by them will be false.

John ends his argument for test #1 by saying, "The Prosperity Gospel is the defining principle of the Charismatic Movement. This Gospel preys on the poor. This is why the movement has grown. It has no relation to the true Gospel. It offers carnal comfort by lying to the poor. This is the majority (90%) of the Charismatic movement."

The Prosperity Gospel is not the defining principle of the Charismatic Movement. There are many issues in the Charismatic Movement. Correction is needed. But the defining principle of the Charismatic Movement is the truth in the word of God concerning spiritual gifts. When the word of God is rightly divided, we see that Spiritual gifts are the equipment that God has graciously given to believers to war a good warfare.

Test #2

A defining mark of a true work of God is that it opposes Satan's interests.

1 John 4:4 You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. **5** They are from the world; therefore they speak *as* from the world, and the world listens to them.

John MacArthur says, referring to the Charismatic movement, that all of the "Music, emotion, promises of prosperity, and ecstatic experiences are of the world. This is why the movement works. On the other hand, we have overcome the world."

John then says, "Mindless numbing music does nothing to shape a holy life. It is a Ponzi scheme." That is, it is a form of fraud in which belief in the success of a nonexistent enterprise is fostered by the payment of quick returns to the first investors from money invested by later investors.

John then says, "The widow who gave her last mite is an example of someone who is suckered into a religion of works."

I had to check this comment, if maybe I had heard wrong. But here is what I found on his website:

<https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/TM13-6/testing-the-spirits-john-macarthur>

You know, the prosperity gospel is more morally reprehensible than a Las Vegas casino because it masquerades as religion. They take your money in Las Vegas but you expect it because it's run by the Mafia. You don't expect the people that represent God to do the same thing. And when Jesus saw the widow put her last mite into the temple offering, He said, "This Temple is going to come down. Not one stone will be left on another." I don't know what you have been taught about that story of the widow giving her last two cents. That was not an example of Christian giving. God doesn't expect you

to give your last two cents and go home and die. That's what happens to a widow who is suckered by a religion of works. She was trying to buy with her last two cents her way into the kingdom because that's what she had been taught. And Jesus says, "Any system that sucks people down to the place where they have nothing left in a false hope is coming down." And it did.

But listen to what the scripture actually says in context in **Mark 12 (KJV)**:38 And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces, 39 And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: 40 Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation. 41 And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. 42 And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. 43 And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: 44 For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.

But Jesus commended her for what she did. And Jesus commended her faith to His disciples.

And we then read in **Mark 13 (KJV)**:1 And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here! 2 And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

Judgment was going to come upon Israel because of their unbelief. But the widow had faith in God, and she was commended by Jesus.

This is not to say that the prosperity Gospel is correct in all its claims. But we cannot nullify the word of God because of sin. We must deal with the sin.

Test #3

The true work of the Holy Spirit points us to the Bible.

This is absolutely true. All our experience must be in accordance with the word of God. Again we turn to his website for a more accurate quote:

<https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/TM13-6/testing-the-spirits-john-macarthur>

Listen to Peter Wagner. "Some object to the notion that God communicates directly with us, supposing that everything that God wanted to reveal, He revealed in the Bible. This cannot be true, however, because there's nothing in the Bible that says it has 66 books. It actually took God a couple hundred years to reveal to the church which writing should be included in the Bible and which should not. That's extra-biblical revelation. Even so, Catholics and Protestants still agree on the number. Beyond that, I believe that prayer is two way. We speak to God and expect Him to speak to us. We can hear God's voice. He also reveals new things to prophets as we have seen."

Jack Deere, once a professor at Dallas Seminary, with whom we also had a conversation, says this. He taught at Dallas Theological Seminary and left. Says this, "The sufficiency of Scripture is a demonic doctrine. In order to fulfill God's highest purpose for our lives, we must be able to hear His voice, both in the written word and in the word freshly spoken from heaven. Satan understands the strategic importance of Christians hearing God's voice, so he has launched various attacks against us in this area." Did you get that? Satan is the one calling them to scriptural fidelity.

He further says, "One of Satan's most successful attacks has been to develop a doctrine that teaches God no longer speaks to us except through the written word. Ultimately, this doctrine is demonic, even though Christian theologians have been used to perfect it." Demonic? The test has failed.

First of all, in regards to Peter Wagner, no matter what he says or means by this, the number of the books in the Bible is 66. The canon is closed. It was a process to collect all of the writings of the apostles and assemble them. Usually, we look at the Easter letter of Athanasius for the final tally, although he pushed Esther to the Apocrypha.

What Peter Wagner is referring to is revelation that is not specifically written in the Bible, but is not in addition to revealed truth in the Bible. An example of this is in **Acts 11 (KJV):27** And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. 28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. 29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: 30 Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

Agabus received a word of wisdom which warned the disciples to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea. God knew there would be a famine and he provided for the disciples by giving the spiritual gift of a word of wisdom to Agabus. A word of wisdom is revelation about the plans and purposes of God, and has to do with the future. The disciples knew that this word did not disagree with the word of God, but was in accordance with it. And Agabus was known to be a prophet from Jerusalem. And this famine came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar.

Another example is found in **Acts 21 (KJV):8** And the next day, we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him. 9 And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy. 10 And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. 11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. 12 And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. 13 Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. 14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done. 15 And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem.

This is another example of the word of wisdom by the prophet Agabus. And this came to pass in **Acts 21 (KJV):26** Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them. 27 And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, 28 Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place. 29 (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.) 30 And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut. 31 And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. 32 Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul. 33 Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done.

This persecution of Paul was ultimately also a fulfillment of the prophecy that God gave Ananias at Paul's conversion in **Acts 9 (KJV):10** And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. 11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, 12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. 13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this

man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: 14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. 15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. 17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. 18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. 19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. 20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

In verse 11 above, the Lord gave Ananias a word of knowledge telling him where Saul was, that is, on a street which is called Straight. The Lord also gave him other facts that would help him identify Saul when he arrived at the house. In verse 16, the Lord said gave Ananias a word of wisdom as He said He would show Paul how great things he must suffer for His name's sake. Ananias also exercised the gift of healing that Saul might receive his sight. This event convinced Saul that the Lord had spoken to him, and called him to be an apostle.

Now in regards to Jack Deere's statement, the Scripture is sufficient and is our guide in faith and practice. All revelation through spiritual gifts must be in accordance with the written word of Scripture, and not added in addition to it. But in regards to hearing God's voice, Jesus spoke as in **John 10 (KJV):1** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. 2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. 4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. 5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

We are the sheep, and Jesus is our shepherd. We know His voice, which will always be in accordance with the written word of God. It is when we hear His voice that we are saved as we continue in **John 10 (KJV):6** This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. 7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. 10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. 11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. 12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. 13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. 15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

There is a relationship that the sheep have with Jesus. It is a real living relationship where He speaks to them, and we speak to Him. As we grow in grace and knowledge of the word of God, we will know His voice more and more.

Test #4

The true work of the Holy Spirit is manifesting the love of God.

Just to be clear, here is what I found on John MacArthur's website:

<https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/TM13-6/testing-the-spirits-john-macarthur>

One other test, just mention it. “Beloved, let us love one another, love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who doesn’t love doesn’t know God, for God is love.” The true work of the Holy Spirit is manifesting the love of God. Love toward God, love toward God’s people. The true work of the Holy Spirit elevates love, biblical love. That love shows up toward God in pure, true, holy worship. And it shows up toward others in humble sacrificial desire to serve and edify.

It’s an obvious thing to say, and I’ll close. In the charismatic movement, everything is about me, not about you. The gifts are for me, to edify me. Prayers are for me, to get me what I want. I attach myself to this false system in order that I can get what I desire. It lacks love. Jonathan Edwards wrote about this. There’s a false kind of faith love that exists among people who are in this together, but it is anything but sacrificial. Where you have mysticism and materialism mingled, you have self-absorbed attitudes. It’s about me feeling, experiencing, me getting, me acquiring, me having what I want. It’s infantile self-love, cold-hearted materialism, and selfishness in disguise as a work of the Holy Spirit.

So we don’t need to speculate. We really don’t. We have the tests. Just look at the tests, measure the movement, be discerning like the noble Bereans, and it should be clear to us.

I want to close by reading 2 John 7, “For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward. Anyone who goes too far and doesn’t abide in the teaching concerning Christ, - ” the truth about Christ “ - does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, - ” concerning Christ “ - has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, - ” this true doctrine, “ - do not receive him into your house, do not give him a greeting; for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds.” A warning against any ecumenical embrace of those with an aberrant Christology.

First of all, let us note that the Bereans searched the word of God to see whether things were true as we read in **Acts 17 (KJV):10** And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. 11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

Now let us read the Scripture in **1 John 4 (KJV):7** Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. 8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. 12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

If we only read this far in 1 John 4, we might conclude that if we don’t love one another, God is not in us. But let us keep reading in **1 John 4 (KJV):13** Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. 15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

This is the real test whether Christ is in us. And this agrees with **1 John 5 (KJV):5** Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

And **1 John 5 (KJV):10** He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. 11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 He that hath the Son hath

life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

As we continue in 1 John 4, it is clear that John is speaking of our fellowship with the Lord as we read in **1 John 4 (KJV):**16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. 17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. 19 We love him, because he first loved us. 20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? 21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

Loving our brother is an evidence of God dwelling in us. Love is a fruit of the Spirit which grows in us as we grow in grace and knowledge of the word of God. John himself speaks of this growth in **1 John 2 (KJV):**12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. 13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. 14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

Now in regards to John's statement about 2 John 7, let us read his statement again:

I want to close by reading 2 John 7, "For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward. Anyone who goes too far and doesn't abide in the teaching concerning Christ, - " the truth about Christ " - does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, - " concerning Christ " - has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, - " this true doctrine, " - do not receive him into your house, do not give him a greeting; for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds." A warning against any ecumenical embrace of those with an aberrant Christology.

Here are the verses he has quoted without his comments, **2 John (KJV):**7 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. 8 Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. 9 Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. 10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: 11 For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

So according to John MacArthur, "Anyone who goes too far and doesn't abide in the teaching concerning Christ, - " the truth about Christ " - does not have God;"

The word "aberrant" means departing from an accepted standard. Synonyms: deviant, deviating, divergent, abnormal, atypical, anomalous, irregular;

So anyone who is not abiding in the truth about Christ does not have God. So John is saying that the Charismatic movement is not teaching the truth about Christ, that is, who He is, and what He accomplished on the cross, His resurrection, and ascension. In short, they have an "aberrant Christology". They believe that Jesus Christ is not come in the flesh. But to say this without giving any examples of this is to speak into the air.

It is true that not all Charismatics agree on the doctrines of the word of God, just like all Evangelicals do not agree on the doctrines of the word of God. But this does not invalidate the word of God. Nor does it invalidate the salvation of everyone in these particular churches. It is the belief in Jesus Christ that saves us as Paul reveals in **Romans 10 (KJV):**9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe

in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

And in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Again, just to be clear, I also found this on his website:

<https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/TM13-6/testing-the-spirits-john-macarthur>

Not just them. Worldwide, there are 24 million charismatics who belong to a group that can be called oneness pentecostal. What is oneness pentecostalism? Sometimes you see it as “Jesus only.” It denies the Trinity. Twenty-four million, they deny the Trinity, about one out of every four in America. What do they believe? They believe in what is called modalism: That there’s one God and He appears in three different modes, sometimes He’s the Father, sometimes He’s the Son, and sometimes He’s the Spirit, but He’s never all three at the same time.

He has these three modes in which He can appear. A little bit of trouble with that at the baptism of Jesus. Right? I mean, he’s changing hats really fast. But way back in the Athanasian creed, it was settled that God is Father, Son, and Spirit, three co-equal, co-existent, divine persons. Modalism has been condemned throughout all of church history as a heresy at a foundational level that literally attacks the nature of God and cuts you off from the possibility of salvation. Probably the leading oneness pentecostal that you would know is T.D. Jakes, who denies the Trinity. You don’t have the true God, you don’t have the true Christ, you don’t have the true Spirit.

The modalist - search this - there is one God who can be designated by three different names. He can be called Father, Son, and Holy Spirit at different times. These three are not distinct persons. They’re just different modes of the one God. Thus God can be called Father as the creator of the world and lawgiver. He can be called Son as God incarnate in Jesus Christ. He can be called Holy Spirit as God in the church age. Accordingly, Jesus Christ is God and the Spirit of God, but not as distinct persons. Councils of Nicaea, 325; Constantinople, 381; modalism was universally condemned as heresy.

So John MacArthur is saying that most charismatics believe in modalism because that is what the Oneness Pentecostals believe. It is true that the belief of modalism is error, whether it is the Oneness Pentecostals who believe in it or the Evangelicals. If T.D. Jakes believes in it, it is still error. Modalism is heresy. But that does not nullify the truth in the word of God about spiritual gifts.

The warning in 2 John 7 is against those who “confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh”. I don’t know anyone in the Charismatic movement who does not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. But even if there was one who believed this in the Charismatic movement, it would not nullify the word of God as it relates to spiritual gifts.

And John has not given us any specific examples of this belief. Instead, John has noted a belief in modalism by some in the Charismatic movement which is error. But this is not what all charismatics believe. John’s desire is to disqualify the Charismatic movement. So his reasoning is that any false teaching that some may have, even if it has nothing to do with this particular error in 2 John 7, will make their teaching about Jesus Christ in error, and therefore they will have an “aberrant Christology”.

So again, according to John MacArthur, anyone who goes too far and doesn’t abide in all the teaching concerning Christ, and the truth about Christ, does not have God. Or we could say, according to John, anyone who is in error of Christian doctrine is not saved.

However, when we are born again, we begin as babes in Christ, as children as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):12** I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. 13 I write

unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. 14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

We progress from children who rejoice in sins forgiven, to young men or young women who have overcome the wicked one. This growth comes with understanding the word of God.

Now when we are born again, we must long for the pure milk of the word as Peter reveals in **1 Peter 2 (KJV)**:1 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, 2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

There are some things hard to understand in the word of God as Peter explains in **2 Peter 3 (KJV)**:17 And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; 16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. 17 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. 18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Paul explains to the Corinthians that babes in Christ are still carnal. We do not become spiritual by accepting Christ. We begin as babes and must grow as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV)**:1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? 4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

After being planted, we must be watered as in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV)**:5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? 6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

Watering is what a teacher does. The teacher explains the first principles of the faith as we read in **Hebrews 5 (KJV)**:11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. 12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. 13 For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. 14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

We must be taught the first principles of the oracles of God. We do not come by these things automatically. There are many who teach things that are according to the word of God. But there are also those who teach some truth, but also some error. This does not invalidate their salvation. Then there are also those who teach error, and they are not saved. We must be discerning. We must take heed how we hear as Jesus warned in **Luke 8 (KJV)**:18 Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

Notes, Session 6: Tom Pennington A Case for Cessationism

We believe that the Holy Spirit is displaying in us the power of the resurrected Christ. Nothing happens in an individual believer or local church apart from the work of the Holy Spirit.

If you love the Lord, you hate errors, but love the truth. Nothing eternal happens without the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church. We don't believe in the trinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Scripture, as if the Scripture had replaced the Holy Spirit in the trinity. We believe only that the Holy Spirit does not today give miraculous gifts such as speaking in tongues, prophesy, working of miracles, healing, and so forth.

The New Testament does not say that the gifts will continue past the apostle's life time. There are ½ billion people who can be wrong. The Biblical case for cessationism is as follows. It does not mean God no longer does miraculous things. He still saves sinners, which is a miracle. When people are healed after people have prayed, this is a miracle.

Continuationists consist of Pentecostals, Charismatics, and the Third Wave. The main arguments they pose are as follows:

1. The New Testament does not anywhere say that the miraculous gifts will cease during the Church age.

Tom's response: But that argument cuts both ways, because nowhere does the New Testament say they will continue.

2. There are a couple of New Testament Scriptures that say they will continue, such as **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):10** But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

Tom's response: But this is a very controversial passage with disagreements on both sides. You cannot use this passage to support this. For most of Church history this passage was used to defend cessationism.

3. Since the gifts began the Church age, they must continue throughout it. You cannot artificially divide the Church age into the apostolic and the post apostolic.

Tom's response: But unless they believe that there are still apostles today as Peter and Paul, they also divide the Church age. They have become defacto cessationists, at least in part.

4. The 500,000,000 professing Christians who claim to be charismatic can't all be wrong.

Tom's response: But using that same argument, we should also accept all of the Roman Catholic miracles as well, after all, for there are a billion Catholics. There is far more history to those miracles. A billion can be wrong.

Cessatioism Definition: The Holy Spirit no longer gives miraculous spiritual gifts today to believers that were present in the early church as He did during the time of the apostles. These gifts ceased after the apostles died.

But the Holy Spirit does things miraculous, as when a sinner comes to Christ. The apostle Paul says that the only way a person can come to Christ is if God shines His light in them. God can still work miracles today, and can do whatever He wants. He could choose to give someone an ability to speak a language they had never learned. It just would not be a New Testament gift, a revelation from God as it was then.

There are 7 Biblical arguments for cessationism:

1.) The unique role of miracles. There were only 3 primary periods of miracles:

a. The time of Moses and Joshua – 65 years – ended in 1385 B.C.

b. The time of Elijah and Elisha 860-795 B.C. - 65 years

c. The time of Christ - 70 years - through the life of the apostle John

The primary purpose of miracles is always to establish the credibility of the divinely appointed messenger from God. Exodus 6:28-8:1; God put His own words in the mouth of Moses and Aaron.

How were the people to know it was God's own words. Exodus 4:15-16; God gave Moses the capacity

to work miracles. This power was only given to validate that Moses was God's prophet. This continues to be the purpose of miracles in the Old Testament. What he wrote was accepted as the literal word of God. Then in Deuteronomy 18:18 and Numbers 11:29 we have three criteria to know the true word of a prophet of God;

a. Prediction must always come true.

Deuteronomy 18 (KJV):20 But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. 21 And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? 22 When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

b. Must be commanded by God to speak.

c. The word of prophecy must always agree with prior revelation.

Deuteronomy 13:1 If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, 2 and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them, 3 you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you to find out if you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. 4 You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him. 5 But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has counseled rebellion against the LORD your God who brought you from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, to seduce you from the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from among you.

Only those who spoke infallibly were gifted with miraculous powers. In **1 Kings 18:36** At the time of the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, Elijah the prophet came near and said, "O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, today let it be known that You are God in Israel and that I am Your servant and I have done all these things at Your word. 37 Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that You, O LORD, are God, and *that* You have turned their heart back again." 38 Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. 39 When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He is God; the LORD, He is God." 40 Then Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal; do not let one of them escape." So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.

Elijah was here validated as God's prophet.

The primary purpose of Jesus' miracles was to confirm that Jesus was Christ. **John 5:36** "But the testimony which I have is greater than *the testimony of* John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish—the very works that I do—testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me.

John 6:14 Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."

John 7:31 But many of the crowd believed in Him; and they were saying, "When the Christ comes, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, will He?"

John 10:24 The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." 25 Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me. 26 But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep.

John 10:37 "If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; 38 but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father."

Miracles were not primarily for evangelism, nor for alleviating human suffering. The main reason of the working of miracles was to confirm that Jesus spoke the very words of God.

In Acts 2:22 Peter says that Jesus was attested to by miracles and signs. Jesus gave this power to the apostles also, and they served the same purpose.

Acts 14:3 Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

Acts 14:8 At Lystra a man was sitting who had no strength in his feet, lame from his mother's womb, who had never walked. 9 This man was listening to Paul as he spoke, who, when he had fixed his gaze on him and had seen that he had faith to be made well, 10 said with a loud voice, "Stand upright on your feet." And he leaped up and *began* to walk. 11 When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they raised their voice, saying in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have become like men and have come down to us."

Hebrew 2:1 For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away *from it*. 2 For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, 3 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, 4 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.

The miraculous signs were to confirm the word of God, just as Jesus and Moses. Therefore it is reasonable to believe these miraculous powers ended when the last apostle died just as they passed away when Moses died, and then Elijah.

When the revelation period of the apostles ended, so did the gifts of the Spirit. They were no longer needed.

2.) The gift of apostleship ended when John died in approximately 100 A.D.

In 1 Corinthians 12:28 it says that all New Testament offices are gifts as in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):28** And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

In **Ephesians 4:7** But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. 8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

One of the gifts was apostles, but it was a temporary gift.

There were three criteria stated in **Acts 1 (KJV):21** 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— 22 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." 23 So they put forward two men, Joseph called Barsabbas (who was also called Justus), and Matthias. 24 And they prayed and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all men, show which one of these two You have chosen 25 to occupy this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." 26 And they drew lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.

And in **Acts 1 (KJV):2** Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

- a. Witness of the resurrection of Christ
- b. Personally appointed by Jesus
- c. Ability to work miracles

In Matthew 10:1-5 Jesus appointed the twelve apostles to heal every kind of sickness and disease as in **Matthew 10 (KJV):1** And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power

against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. 2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; 3 Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him. 5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:

In **2 Corinthians 12:12** The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.

The gift of aposleship ceased without a clear New Testament statement that it would. Once you have admitted that there are no longer apostles like Peter and Paul, you have admitted that there was a major change in the gifting of the Spirit in the post apostolic church.

- 3.) The foundational nature of apostles and prophets is stated in **Ephesians 2:19** So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

Who were the prophets? They were New Testament prophets. This has now been revealed to His Holy Apostles and prophets in **Ephesians 3:5** which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit;

There have been given some apostles and some prophets in Ephesians 4:11. In 1 Corinthians 3 the builders are building on this foundation. We should not expect more revelation. The role of prophets was completed also. The foundation has been laid.

- 4.) The nature of miraculous gifts should be the same as New Testament gifts. The gifts today bear no resemblance to the New Testament gifts. The tongues in Acts 2:7-8 were languages to which they were born. In Acts 11:15 Peter testifies that the Holy Spirit fell on them just as He did on us at the beginning. In Acts 19 there was nothing in the context that was different than Acts 2. When Luke wrote Acts, he never knew of 1 Corinthians 12, but sill defines the gift as known languages. 1 Corinthians 14 shows us that today's speaking in tongues has no resemblance to that of the New Testament. Then it was for the edification of the church. Today it is mostly a private prayer language. And regarding prophecy, nowhere in the New Testament does it differentiate between Old Testament prophets and New Testament prophets. There is no difference. The New Testament equates prophecy with Old Testament prophecy. Once the prophecy has been approved, it was written down. In Acts 21 the prophecy by Agabus was infallible though not in detail. Agabus used the Old Testament form, "This is what the Spirit says..." New Testament prophecy spoke infallible words. Wayne Grudem says that prophecy should not be prefaced with, "Thus saith the Lord..." but, "I think this is what the Spirit might be saying..." That is not the New Testament gift of prophecy. Healings back then were instantaneous. Today the miracles are the antithesis of New Testament miracles, and incomplete, and unverifiable. The gifts being manifested today are not the same because they are not the New Testament gifts.

- 5.) The testimony of Church History – the miraculous decreases immediately after Pentecost.

In Galatians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, then in 1 Corinthians there is mention of the miraculous gifts but no mention after Hebrews 2:4 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. There is never a mention of the gift of tongues again.

In 1 and 2 Timothy, the directions for the post apostolic church are given, and no mention is made of the gifts of the Spirit.

Hebrews 1 (KJV):1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

Hebrews 2 (KJV):1 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. 2 For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; 3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; 4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

The gifts had already begun to die out. They ceased with the apostles.

In Church history, John Chrysostom said that miracles “now no longer take place.”

Augustine said that the things in the New Testament were done for a sign and it passed away.

Martin Luther said that once the church had been established, the visible appearance of the Holy Spirit ceased.

John Calvin said that these things had passed away, in order to make the preaching of the apostles established forever.

Jonathon Edwards said that the extraordinary gifts had ceased.

B.B. Warfield said these gifts were the credentials of the apostles. It does not continue after the revelation has been given.

The testimony of the key leaders is that the gifts had ceased with the last apostle.

- 6.) The sufficiency of Scripture – the canon is closed. **2 Timothy 3 (KJV):**16 All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.
- 7.) The New Testament rules for gifts in 1 Corinthians 14 give specific guidelines.
 - a. In verses 27-28, two or three may speak in tongues and one at a time. An interpreter must be present, that is, one who understood that language and could interpret. How would anyone know if he was telling the truth or not? In the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter is established.
 - b. Women were not allowed to speak in tongues in the corporate worship, but had to keep silent in the church. They were not allowed to speak in prophecy or in tongues in the church, just as the law also says.
 - c. Prophecy was to be given one at a time and no more than three, and judged according to previous revelation. Women were not allowed to prophesy in the church. **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):**34 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law.

Most Charismatic worship is clear rebellion. Not only are they not the gifts of the Spirit, but they do not practice the gifts according to the guidelines and so grieve, disobey, insult, and hijack the Holy Spirit. We stand in the historic position of the Church. We reject all forms of continuing revelation. Don't ever say, “God told me.” We don't talk about feeling something from God. God does not reveal anything today outside of His word. Don't give credence to the Charismatic movement. Charismatics who do not teach about the Biblical Jesus turn people into twice the children of hell. Those who preach the prosperity gospel preach another gospel.

There are some true brothers in the Charismatic movement. Don't downplay the sufficiency of Scripture.

We must be like the Bereans.

Commentary:

Before we talk about the main reasons why spiritual gifts are still given to believers today, let us discuss the supposed 7 Biblical arguments Mr. Pennington lists for cessationism.

- 1.) The unique role of miracles. There were only 3 primary periods of miracles:
 - a. The time of Moses and Joshua – 65 years – ended in 1385 B.C.
 - b. The time of Elijah and Elisha 860-795 B.C. - 65 years
 - c. The time of Christ - 70 years - through the life of the apostle John

The primary purpose of miracles is always to establish the credibility of the divinely appointed messenger from God.

Whether these were the only primary periods of miracles or not, God only knows. Miracles have always been a subject of faith. They occur when there is faith as is revealed in **Mark 6 (KJV):1** And he went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples follow him. 2 And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? And what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? 3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him. 4 But Jesus, said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. 5 And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. 6 And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching.

Because of their unbelief, Jesus “could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them”.

It was according to their faith that the two blind men were healed as in **Matthew 9 (KJV):27** And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou son of David, have mercy on us. 28 And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. 29 Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. 30 And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it. 31 But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country.

A purpose of miracles is certainly to establish the credibility of the divinely appointed messenger from God, as is ably pointed out by Mr. Pennington. And since this is true, then why would God stop working miracles to convince unbelievers of His presence and salvation?

God bore the first disciples witness as we read in **Hebrews 2 (KJV):4** How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; 4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

But this is also a reason for the continuation of the working of miracles for those who have not believed yet. Why would God stop confirming His word with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will if the same need for credibility is still there?

How can one assert, “Miracles were not primarily for evangelism, nor for alleviating human suffering,” when it is the goodness of God that leads us to repentance as we read in **Romans 2 (KJV):4** Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

Mr. Pennington then also asserts, “The miraculous signs were to confirm the word of God, just as Jesus and Moses. Therefore it is reasonable to believe these miraculous powers ended when the last apostle died just as they passed away when Moses died, and then Elijah.

When the revelation period of the apostles ended, so did the gifts of the Spirit. They were no longer needed.”

This assumes that the only reason for miracles was to confirm the Old and the New Testaments. But God demonstrates His goodness in answered prayer, which no one will deny. And it is reasonable to believe a lot of things, but this does not make those things true.

Is there not the same need today for the Lord to confirm His word? Who is going to believe my word, or anyone else's? Therefore, it is more reasonable to believe that these miraculous powers continue to this day. The revelation period of the apostles has ended, and they had a more sure word of prophecy. No one denies this. But the same need to hear God's voice, and to confirm His word is still with us today. This does not mean there is anything to be added to the word of God today. All revelation today must be judged by the word of God in the Old and New Testaments.

Now, regarding the need to know the true word of a prophet of God, prophecy in the New Testament is not always a prediction. The purpose of prophecy in the New Testament is revealed in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):3** But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

As for whether we must be commanded by God to speak, the Holy Spirit leads us to speak. In the New Testament, the Spirit of God has been poured out on all flesh, that is, all believers. And all may learn to prophesy in the believer's meeting as we read in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):26** How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. **27** If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. **28** But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God. **29** Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. **30** If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. **31** For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

Men and women do not speak infallibly, either in the Old Testament or in the New Testament. We all walk by faith. In 1 Kings 18:36-40 Elijah was validated as God's prophet. But Elijah was a son of Adam just as we are.

And there is nowhere in the word of God where it says that "the primary purpose of Jesus' miracles was to confirm that Jesus was Christ". That was certainly one of the reasons as we read in **John 10:37** "If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; **38** but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father."

But the reason Jesus came was because God so loved the world as we read in **John 3 (KJV):16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

And in **Romans 5 (KJV):8** But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

It is His love that is shed abroad in our hearts as we read in **Romans 5 (KJV):5** And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

The reason miracles do not occur in any age is simply because of unbelief. God has not changed.

2.) The gift of apostleship ended when John died in approximately 100 A.D.

Mr. Pennington adds that the gift of apostle was a temporary gift. He bases this statement on the three criteria as follows:

- a. He must be a witness of the resurrection of Christ
- b. He must be personally appointed by Jesus
- c. He must have the ability to work miracles

He says that these three criteria are mentioned in **Acts 1 (KJV):21** 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— **22** 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." **23** So they put forward two men, Joseph called Barsabbas (who was also called Justus), and Matthias. **24** And they prayed and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all men, show which one of these two You have chosen **25** to occupy this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." **26** And they drew lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.

And in **Acts 1 (KJV):2** Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

But only one of these criteria is mentioned in the following discourse of Peter where he defines how one should be counted as one of the twelve apostles to replace Judas as we read in **Acts 1 (KJV):15** And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,) 16 Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. 17 For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. 18 Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. 19 And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood. 20 For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take.

There is no personal appointment mentioned here by Jesus. And nothing is said about working miracles. The reason for this appointment then was to fill the vacancy of one who “was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry,” and because of the prophecy in **Psalms 109 (KJV):8** Let his days be few; and let another take his office.

The fact that there were other apostles who did not meet this criteria is evident in Scripture.

Barnabas and Paul were called to apostolic work in **Acts 13 (KJV):2** As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

And they are called apostles in **Acts 14 (KJV):14** Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out...

James, the Lord’s brother, was also an apostle as we read in **Galatians 1 (KJV):19** But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

And we read of Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy in **1 Thessalonians 1 (KJV):1** Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

And Paul names all three of them as apostles in **1 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):6** Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

And we read of Epaphroditus in **Philippians 2 (KJV):25** Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

The word for “messenger” in the Greek is **ἀπόστολος** (pronounced apostolos). It is assumed by the translators that the apostolic gift was no longer valid and so they translated it as messenger. But we see a different Greek word for messenger in **Mark 1 (KJV):2** As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

The Greek word translated “messenger” here is **ἄγγελος** (pronounced aggelos). This is the same Greek word translated “messengers” in **Luke 7 (KJV):24** And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind?

And we should count Mark and Luke as apostles also for they wrote the Gospels of Mark and Luke, and the Book of Acts.

None of these apostles except for Paul were witnesses of the resurrection of Christ because that is not necessary. It is true that God chooses our ministry gift as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):18** But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

And He is able to make known to us what that ministry gift is as in **Romans 12 (KJV):4** For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: 5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; 7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; 8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

The function of the apostle is to plant, whereas the teacher waters as it is revealed in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):5** Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? 6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase

Apollos was a teacher because he watered. The apostle also lays foundations in the Church as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):10** According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

The apostle is first in the government of the Church as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):28** And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Signs and wonders and miracles are the signs of a true apostle as we read in **2 Corinthians 12 (KJV):12** The signs a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.

Mr. Pennington then asserts, "The gift of apostleship ceased without a clear New Testament statement that it would. Once you have admitted that there are no longer apostles like Peter and Paul, you have admitted that there was a major change in the gifting of the Spirit in the post apostolic church."

We will comment on this assertion in the next point.

3.) The foundational nature of apostles and prophets is stated in Ephesians 2:19.

Mr. Pennington is basing his assertion that the gift of apostleship has ceased on his belief that the foundation of the Church has been laid as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):19** Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

And he then deletes apostles and prophets from **Ephesians 4 (KJV):11** And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

The reason he does this, he says, is because the foundation has been laid and they are no longer needed.

However, let us read this verse in context as in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):11** And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

The apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are for the "perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ", and not just for laying the foundation of the church. And they are given by the Lord until "we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ".

And this is so that we believers should "be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." The apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are necessary in order to keep us on the foundation which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Every part of the body must be working effectively in their measure in order for the body to make increase "unto the edifying of itself in love".

The foundation of the church has been laid. There is no more need for foundational apostles. But there is still a need for apostolic government as is evident from all of the division in the body of Christ, and the errors in doctrine which are so widespread.

Ministry gifts are not spiritual gifts. A ministry gift is a function in the body of Christ that is given by the Lord as it pleases Him. He is the one who sets the members individually in the body as we have read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):18** But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

Spiritual gifts are given by the Spirit to equip us for our ministry. This is what Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 12 (NASB):4** Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. 6 There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. 7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

The manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. It is not just to testify of the credibility of the word of the apostles. Prophecy is for edification, exhortation, and consolation as we read in **1 Corinthians 14 (NASB):3** But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation.

It is not for additions to the word of God, or new revelation in this sense. It is an assurance that God is with us. It is not just to establish the credibility of the words of the apostles, but to confirm their words. All prophecy today must be judged by the word of God in the Old and New Testaments. And we are to desire earnestly to prophecy, or learn to prophecy, as in **1 Corinthians 14 (NASB):39** Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues.

To forbid to speak in tongues today is to nullify the Scripture.

- 4.) The nature of miraculous gifts should be the same as New Testament gifts. The gifts today bear no resemblance to the New Testament gifts. The tongues in Acts 2:7-8 were languages to which they were born. In Acts 11:15 Peter testifies that the Holy Spirit fell on them just as He did on us at the beginning. In Acts 19 there was nothing in the context that was different than Acts 2. When Luke wrote Acts, he never knew of 1 Corinthians 12, but still defines the gift as known languages. 1 Corinthians 14 shows us that today's speaking in tongues has no resemblance to that of the New Testament. Then it was for the edification of the church. Today it is mostly a private prayer language. And regarding prophecy, nowhere in the New Testament does it differentiate between Old Testament prophets and New Testament prophets. There is no difference. The New Testament equates prophecy with Old Testament prophecy. Once the prophecy has been approved, it was written down. In Acts 21 the prophecy by Agabus was infallible though not in detail. Agabus used the Old Testament form, "This is what the Spirit says..." New Testament prophecy spoke infallible words. Wayne Grudem says that prophecy should not be prefaced with, "Thus saith the Lord..." but, "I think this is what the Spirit might be saying..." That is not the New Testament gift of prophecy. Healings back then were instantaneous. Today the miracles are the antithesis of New Testament miracles, and incomplete, and unverifiable. The gifts being manifested today are not the same because they are not the New Testament gifts.

The nature of the miraculous gifts today is the same as the New Testament gifts, for it is the same Holy Spirit who is giving the gifts. Now Paul gives us a test to know whether one is speaking by the Spirit of God in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):1** Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. 2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. 3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

The word in the Greek for spiritual gifts is **πνευματικός** (pronounced pneumatikos), and means spiritual things. It is from the Greek word **πνεῦμα** (pronounced pneuma), meaning spirit. And this Greek word is from the Greek word **πνέω** (pronounced (pronounced pneō), meaning to breathe, to blow, of the wind.

There are diversities of gifts as we continue in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):4** Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. 6 And there are

diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

The Greek word for “gifts” in verse 4 is **χάρισμα** (pronounced charisma), which comes from the Greek word **χάρις** (pronounced charis), meaning grace. Charisma then means a favour with which one receives without any merit of his own

And the Greek word for “administrations” in verse 5 is **διακονία** (pronounced diakonia), meaning service, ministering, especially of those who execute the commands of others. It comes from the Greek word **διάκονος** (pronounced diakonos), meaning servant.

And the Greek word for “operations” in verse 6 is **ἐνέργημα** (pronounced energēma), which comes from the Greek word **ἐνεργέω** (pronounced energeō), meaning to be operative, be at work, put forth power. So energēma means a thing wrought, operation.

Then the spiritual gifts are listed as we continue in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV)**:8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; 9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: 11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

So the gift of tongues for example, could have more than one operation or working as in verse 6 above, “And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all”.

So one could speak in a tongue of man, and this could be recognized by someone else who spoke that language such as what happened in **Acts 2 (KJV)**:7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? 8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? 9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, 10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. 12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?

The one who is speaking does not know the language he is speaking in. The words he speaks are given to him or her by the Spirit of God. This is the gift of the Spirit. So none of the 120 disciples in the upper room knew what they were saying. It was the Holy Spirit who was speaking through them.

But one who has the gift of tongues could also speak in the tongue of angels as Paul notes in **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV)**:1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

The tongues of angels are not known to man. Paul explains in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV)**:1 Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. 2 For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.

The one who speaks in a tongue is not understood by man in this operation of the gift of tongues. He speaks in the spirit, mysteries.

Paul continues in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV)**:3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. 4 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

It is not that Paul would forbid to speak in tongues. He is laying down the order in the Church that is to be followed. Speaking in a tongue edifies or builds up spiritually the one who is speaking. But in the Church we must understand what is being spoken in order that others may be edified as we continue in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV)**:5 I would that ye all spake with tongues but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

Paul is not against speaking in tongues in private, but he is laying down the order in the church that is to be followed. Speaking in tongues is just as valid as prophecy when it is interpreted, which is also a gift of the Spirit as in verse 10 above, “to another the interpretation of tongues”.

Paul then explains why speaking in tongues without interpretation is of no value in the Church as we continue in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):6** Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine? **7** And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? **8** For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? **9** So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air. **10** There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification. **11** Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me.

When we are in the church, we must excel to the edifying of the church as Paul continues in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):12** Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church. **13** Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret. **14** For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. **15** What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. **16** Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? **17** For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. **18** I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: **19** Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.

Paul is not against them being zealous of spiritual gifts. In verse 1 he tells them to desire them. He is correcting the misuse of the gifts. When I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. Does he say not to pray with the spirit? In verse 15 he says, “What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also”.

He is encouraging them to be sensitive to the presence of the unlearned. In the Greek this word is **ἰδιώτης** (pronounced *idiōtēs*), and means “primarily a private person in contrast to a State official, hence, a person without professional knowledge, unskilled, uneducated, unlearned...” **An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, M.A., Vol. II, page 245.**

The “unlearned” are those who have not been taught about spiritual gifts. Now Mr. Pennington says, “When Luke wrote Acts, he never knew of 1 Corinthians 12, but sill defines the gift as known languages. 1 Corinthians 14 shows us that today’s speaking in tongues has no resemblance to that of the New Testament”.

Luke is just telling us what happened. He is not defining anything. And Mr. Pennington is “unlearned” in spiritual gifts, and he misrepresents what is being taught there. He does not understand that tongues in private are being encouraged by Paul, as long as it is not being done in the church if there is no interpretation. Paul even encourages them to speak in tongues in the church, and pray that they may interpret. He says that the one who speaks in a tongue is giving thanks well in verse 17 above, but the other is not edified so do it in private but not in the church unless there is an interpretation. This is not to say that there are not churches today who are out of order in this regard. In those cases, correction is necessary. But we do not nullify the Scripture by misrepresenting what is being taught in 1 Corinthians 14.

Again, the who speaks in a tongue in the church is to pray that he may interpret. The interpretation of tongues is not a human ability in this case, but a gift of the Spirit. If a tongue is spoken in the language of the hearers, there is no need for an interpreter. This is another operation of the gift.

Now Mr. Pennington also says, “Today it is mostly a private prayer language.” This is how it should be. This is what Paul is teaching in 1 Corinthians 14. When we don’t know how to pray as we should, we pray in the spirit as in **Romans 8 (KJV):26** Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

So we read in **1 Corinthians 14:15**, “I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also”.

We are not out of order when we pray in private. Paul is establishing the order when we come together in Church.

Mr. Pennington then continues, “And regarding prophecy, nowhere in the New Testament does it differentiate between Old Testament prophets and New Testament prophets. There is no difference. The New Testament equates prophecy with Old Testament prophecy. Once the prophecy has been approved, it was written down. In Acts 21 the prophecy by Agabus was infallible though not in detail. Agabus used the Old Testament form, “This is what the Spirit says...” New Testament prophecy spoke infallible words.”

Is Mr. Pennington unaware of the difference in the Church age? Has he never read in **Acts 2 (KJV):15** For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. 16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; 17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: 18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:

The prophecy of Joel has been fulfilled in part. This will also happen to Israel when they are saved. So there is most certainly a difference between the Old Testament function of prophecy and the New Testament prophecy. It was restricted to certain individuals in the Old Testament. Now all may prophesy as we read in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):31** For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

It is true that the New Testament believers do not prophesy with the same authority as Peter and the others who were eyewitnesses, who have a more sure word of prophecy as we read in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):15** Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance. 16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. 18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. 19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: 20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

This is the reason all prophecy today must be judged by the written word of God of the Old and New Testaments as Paul commands in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):29** Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.

And prophecy was not therefore infallible. They were to learn to prophesy. Others were to judge in order to help them learn. And prophecy was not written down afterwards by those who gave it. The prophecy in the New Testament is for exhortation, admonition, and comfort as we read in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):3** But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

Mr. Pennington then asserts, “Wayne Grudem says that prophecy should not be prefaced with, “Thus saith the Lord...” but, “I think this is what the Spirit might be saying...” That is not the New Testament gift of prophecy. Healings back then were instantaneous. Today the miracles are the antithesis of New Testament miracles, and incomplete, and unverifiable. The gifts being manifested today are not the same because they are not the New Testament gifts.”

In the Gospel of Mark it is recorded in **Mark 16 (KJV):15** And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. 17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; 18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. 19 So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. 20 And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

The Lord Jesus spoke these words in verse 18, “they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover”. That is, there would be a period of time that would pass before they were completely healed.

Great grace was upon the disciples at that time as we read in **Acts 4 (KJV):33** And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

This was, as has been said, to establish their credibility. They were eyewitnesses, and we need to take heed to their words. But we do not nullify their words, and make them of no effect. Some miracles today are instantaneous. Some are healed gradually, as they recover. It is God who heals. We should not compare ourselves with those who have been eyewitnesses of His glory. But let us heed Paul's command in **Romans 12 (KJV)**: 3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. 4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: 5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; 7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; 8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

- 5.) The testimony of Church History – the miraculous decreases immediately after Pentecost. In Galatians, and 1 and 2 Thessalonians, then in 1 Corinthians, there is mention of the miraculous gifts but no mention after Hebrews 2:4, 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. There is never a mention of the gift of tongues again.

In 1 and 2 Timothy, the directions for the post apostolic church are given, and no mention is made of the gifts of the Spirit.

Hebrews 1 (KJV): 1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

Hebrews 2 (KJV): 1 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. 2 For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; 3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; 4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

The gifts had already begun to die out. They ceased with the apostles.

In Church history, John Chrysostom said that miracles “now no longer take place.”

Augustine said that the things in the New Testament were done for a sign and it passed away.

Martin Luther said that once the church had been established, the visible appearance of the Holy Spirit ceased.

John Calvin said that these things had passed away, in order to make the preaching of the apostles established forever.

Jonathon Edwards said that the extraordinary gifts had ceased.

B.B. Warfield said these gifts were the credentials of the apostles. It does not continue after the revelation has been given.

The testimony of the key leaders is that the gifts had ceased with the last apostle.

Does Mr. Pennington really mean that the miraculus immediately decreased after Pentecost? Or is he just exaggerating for effect? For we read in **Acts 8 (KV)**: 14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) 15 Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. 16 There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.

And in **Acts 4 (KJV)**: 33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

As time passed, and the apostles and other eyewitnesses died, there was a lessening of miracles. But even when the apostles were ministering, they were out and about, winning souls, and planting churches. And in Ephesus Paul knew that that church would suffer from errant disciples as we read in **Acts 20 (KJV):28** Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. 31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. 32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

Believers in these churches that the apostles planted had to grow in grace and knowledge. This would take time. And again we read about the church in Ephesus in **Revelation 2 (KJV):1** Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; 2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: 3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. 4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. 6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. 7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

This church began to leave their first love. And we read of similar instances of a need of repentance in the messages to the other churches in Revelation 2 through chapter 3. And we know from church history that this need of repentance progressed until we find a sacerdotal order, a priesthood, taking over the ministry of the churches. This progressed to the elevation of bishops over groups of churches, and finally to the Pope in the Roman Catholic Church. And this progressed until there was the need for a reformation in 1517 when Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of the Wittenburg Church.

If we know one thing about church history, we know that we cannot rely on church history to establish our doctrine. Miracles are according to our faith as Jesus said to the blind men in **Matthew 9 (KJV):29** Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. 30 And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it. 31 But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country.

And faith is according to our knowledge of the word as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):17** So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

We know from church history that the church began to move away from the foundation of the apostles. This is why there was a need for a reformation. But the reformation did not completely restore all of the foundation that the apostles had laid. We are still in process in the present day Church.

But regarding Martin Luther, perhaps Mr. Pennington never heard of Martin Luther's hymn, A Mighty Fortress Is Our God. Here is the last verse:

That word above all earthly pow'rs, no thanks to them, abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him Who with us sideth;
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;
The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still,
His kingdom is forever.

The one thing that the reformation has taught us is to rely on the word of God, and the Holy Spirit, for our doctrine. And we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):26** These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. 27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man

teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

This is not to say that we do not need teachers, but that we have the ability as members of the body of Christ to discern truth from error by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Now let us look at Irenaeus, who lived from about 120 to 202 A.D. He was bishop of Lyons in France and wrote **Adversus Heresies** (Against Heresies). Here is a portion of his writing.

Book 2: Chapter XXXII.—Further exposure of the wicked and blasphemous doctrines of the heretics.

...

4. If, however, they maintain that the Lord, too, performed such works simply in appearance, we shall refer them to the prophetic writings, and prove from these both that all things were thus **3274 That is, as being done in reality, and not in appearance.** predicted regarding Him, and did take place undoubtedly, and that He is the only Son of God. Wherefore, also, those who are in truth His disciples, receiving grace from Him, do in His name perform [miracles], so as to promote the welfare of other men, according to the gift which each one has received from Him. For some do certainly and truly drive out devils, so that those who have thus been cleansed from evil spirits frequently both believe [in Christ], and join themselves to the Church. Others have foreknowledge of things to come: they see visions, and utter prophetic expressions. Others still, heal the sick by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole. Yea, moreover, as I have said, the dead even have been raised up, and remained **3275** Harvey here notes: “The reader will not fail to remark this highly interesting testimony, that the divine *χαρίσματα* bestowed upon the infant Church were not wholly extinct in the days of Irenaeus. Possibly the venerable Father is speaking from his own personal recollection of some who had been raised from the dead, and had continued for a time living witnesses of the efficacy of Christian faith.” [See cap. xxxi., *supra*.] among us for many years. And what shall I more say? It is not possible to name the number of the gifts which the Church, [scattered] throughout the whole world, has received from God, in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and which she exerts day by day for the benefit of the Gentiles, neither practising deception upon any, nor taking any reward **3276 Comp. Acts viii. 9, 18.** from them [on account of such miraculous interpositions]. For as she has received freely **3277 Matt. x. 8.** from God, freely also does she minister [to others]. **Ante-Nicene Fathers, Edited by Alexander Roberts, D.D. & James Donaldson, LL.D., Hendrickson Publishers, Volume 1, page 409**

So the gifts of the Spirit are reported by Irenaeus to be still in operation in the Church well after the apostles had died. And regarding John Chrysostom, he was born after Irenaeus in 349 and died in 407 A.D.

In regards to Augustine, he was born in 354 A.D. and died in 430 A.D. He believed in baptismal regeneration, in accordance with the Church in his time. He writes in **The Confessions of Augustine** of one Nebridius who, when he was not yet a Christian, and “Whom, not long after our conversion and regeneration by Thy baptism, he being also a faithful member of the Catholic Church...” **Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, Augustine, Prolegomena, Confessions, Letters, Volume 1, page 131.**

Regarding baptismal regeneration, he also wrote, “And that faith suffered me not to be at rest in regard to my past sins, which were not yet forgiven me by Thy baptism.” **Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, Augustine, Prolegomena, Confessions, Letters, Volume 1, page 133.**

And Augustine wrote this of his dead mother, “And although she, having been “made alive” in Christ even before she was freed from the flesh, had so lived as to praise Thy name both by her faith and conversation, yet dare I not say that from the time Thou didst regenerate her by baptism, no word went forth from her mouth against Thy precepts.” **Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, Augustine, Prolegomena, Confessions, Letters, Volume 1, page 140.**

Baptismal regeneration is not a Biblical doctrine. By Jesus’ own testimony, the one who believes has crossed over from death to life as we read in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

This is also the testimony of **John 3 (KJV):16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Baptismal regeneration was even being taught by Irenaeus as we read in the following:

Book 1: Chapter XXI.—The views of redemption entertained by these heretics.

1. It happens that their tradition respecting redemption 2921 Comp. chap. xiii. 6. is invisible and incomprehensible, as being the mother of things which are incomprehensible and invisible; and on this account, since it is fluctuating, it is impossible simply and all at once to make known its nature, for every one of them hands it down just as his own inclination prompts. Thus there are as many schemes of “redemption” as there are teachers of these mystical opinions. And when we come to refute them, we shall show in its fitting-place, that this class of men have been instigated by Satan to a denial of that baptism which is regeneration to God, and thus to a renunciation of the whole [Christian] faith.

In the history of the early church, this came to be a common belief after the time of the apostles. Here is a quote from Philip P. Schaff, the noted historian. "This ordinance [Baptism] was regarded in the ancient church as the sacrament of the new birth or regeneration, and as the solemn rite of initiation into the Christian Church, admitting to all her benefits and committing to all her obligations....Its effect consists in the forgiveness of sins and the communication of the Holy Spirit. Justin [Martyr] calls baptism 'the water-bath for the forgiveness of sins and regeneration,' and 'the bath of conversion and the knowledge of God.' "It is often called also illumination, spiritual circumcision, anointing, sealing, gift of grace, symbol of redemption, death of sins, etc. Tertullian describes its effect thus: 'When the soul comes to faith, and becomes transformed through regeneration by water and power from above, it discovers, after the veil of the old corruption is taken away, its whole light. It is received into the fellowship of the Holy Spirit; and the soul, which unites itself to the Holy Spirit, is followed by the body.'" **History of the Christian Church, by Philip P. Schaff, volume 2, page 253.**

Schaff also says, "From John 3:5 and Mark 16:16, Tertullian and other fathers argued the necessity of baptism to salvation." **History of the Christian Church, by Philip P. Schaff, volume 2, page 253-4.**

In addition, Schaff also says that the effect of baptism “was thought to extend only to sins committed before receiving it. Hence the frequent postponement of the sacrament [Procrastinatio baptismi], which Tertullian very earnestly recommends, though he censures it when accompanied with moral levity and presumption." **History of the Christian Church, by Philip P. Schaff, volume 2, page 254.**

Schaff speaks of the ancient church’s belief that baptism was the “sacrament of the new birth or regeneration.” There is no doubt that this belief started very early on in the Church, as we note that the writing of Justin Martyr (c. 100 – 165 A.D.) preceded Irenaeus slightly.

Not only did the early church believe in baptismal regeneration, but they also believed in transubstantiation, that is, the turning of the bread and the wine of communion into the body and blood of Jesus.

Irenaeus asserts this in part in **Book 4: Chapter XVIII, paragraph 5**, when he says, “For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity.” **Ante-Nicene Fathers, Edited by Alexander Roberts, D.D. & James Donaldson, LL.D., Hendrickson Publishers, Volume 1, page 486**

Irenaeus believed that the wine and bread becomes the Eucharist, the body and blood of Christ, when they receive the word of God as we read in **Book 5 Chapter II, paragraph 3**, where he says “When, therefore, the mingled cup and the manufactured bread receives the Word of God, and the Eucharist of the blood and the body of Christ is made....” And again in the same paragraph he states that the Eucharist is “the body and blood of Christ” when he says, “And just as a cutting from the vine planted in the ground fructifies in its season, or as a corn of wheat falling into the earth and becoming decomposed, rises with manifold increase by the Spirit of God, who contains all things, and then, through the wisdom of God, serves for the use of men, and having received the Word of God, becomes the Eucharist, which is the body and blood of Christ.” **Ante-Nicene Fathers, Edited by Alexander Roberts, D.D. & James Donaldson, LL.D., Hendrickson Publishers, Volume 1, page 528**

And not only did the early church believe in transubstantiation, but they also believed in a sacerdotal order. Philip Schaff states, “The idea and institution of a special priesthood, distinct from the body of the people, with the accompanying notion of sacrifice and altar, passed imperceptibly from Jewish and heathen reminiscences and analogies into the Christian church. The majority of Jewish converts adhered tenaciously to the Mosaic institutions and rites, and a considerable part never fully attained to the height of spiritual freedom proclaimed by Paul, or soon fell away from it. He opposed legalistic and ceremonial tendencies in Galatia and Corinth; and although sacerdotalism does not appear among the errors of his Judaizing opponents, the Levitical priesthood, with its three ranks of high priest, priest, and Levite, naturally furnished an analogy for the threefold ministry of bishop, priest, and deacon, and came to be regarded as typical of it. Still less could the Gentile Christians, as a body, at once emancipate themselves from their traditional notions of priesthood, altar, and sacrifice, on which their former religion was based. Whether we regard the change as an apostasy from a higher position attained, or as a reaction of old ideas never fully abandoned, the change is undeniable, and can be traced to the second century. The church could not long occupy the ideal height of the apostolic age, and as the pentecostal illumination passed away with the death of the apostles, the old reminiscences began to reassert themselves.” **History of the Church, Volume II, Clergy and Laity, page 123, Philip Schaff.**

This history of the Church only validates the need for the Reformation. So it does not matter what John Chrysostom, or Augustine, or Martin Luther, or John Calvin, or Jonathon Edwards, or B.B. Warfield said. What matters is what the word of God teaches. In so much as each of them is in agreement with the word of God, we can agree with them, and learn from them.

Mr. Pennington also asserts, “In 1 and 2 Timothy, the directions for the post apostolic church are given, and no mention is made of the gifts of the Spirit.” But we read in **1 Timothy 4 (KJV):14** Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

The word for “gift” in the Greek is **χάρισμα** (pronounced charisma). Spiritual gifts were very much a part of the early Church.

- 6.) The sufficiency of Scripture – the canon is closed. **2 Timothy 3 (KJV):16** All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Yes, and it is the word of God rightly divided that is “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness”. This was Paul’s command to Timothy in **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):15** Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

The words “rightly dividing” in the Greek are literally “cutting straight.” Wuest Words Studies says that this may refer to “the stone mason’s art of cutting stones fair and straight to fit into their places in a building.” **Words Studies in the Greek New Testament, Kenneth S. Wuest, Volume II, page 135.**

Jesus said we must continue in His word that we may know the truth as we read in **John 8 (KJV):31** Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

All prophecy must be judged by the word of God. It is this very word of God that is the basis of all New Testament prophecy. But revelation in regards to the secrets of men’s hearts is still given to believers today.

- 7.) The New Testament rules for gifts in 1 Corinthians 14 give specific guidelines.
- a. In verses 27-28, two or three may speak in tongues and one at a time. An interpreter must be present, that is, one who understood that language and could interpret. How would anyone know if he was telling the truth or not? In the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter is established.
 - b. Women were not allowed to speak in tongues in the corporate worship, but had to keep silent in the church. They were not allowed to speak in prophecy or in tongues in the church, just as the law also says.

- c. Prophecy was to be given one at a time and no more than three, and judged according to previous revelation. Women were not allowed to prophesy in the church. **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):34** Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law.

Most Charismatic worship is clear rebellion. Not only are they not the gifts of the Spirit, but they do not practice the gifts according to the guidelines and so grieve, disobey, insult, and hijack the Holy Spirit. We stand in the historic position of the Church. We reject all forms of continuing revelation. Don't ever say, "God told me." We don't talk about feeling something from God. God does not reveal anything today outside of His word. Don't give credence to the Charismatic movement. Charismatics who do not teach about the Biblical Jesus turn people into twice the children of hell. Those who preach the prosperity gospel preach another gospel.

There are some true brothers in the Charismatic movement. Don't downplay the sufficiency of Scripture.

We must be like the Bereans.

It is clear from his writing that Mr. Pennington is unlearned in spiritual gifts, as we shall see. There are guidelines for a church, and there are guidelines for a believer's meeting. So we read in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):27** If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. **28** But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.

Mr. Pennington says that when this gift is exercised, "An interpreter must be present, that is, one who understood that language and could interpret." Then what does he think the gift of interpretation of tongues is? This gift is mentioned in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):10** To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

The gift of the interpretation of tongues is given by the Spirit for the purpose of interpreting divers kinds of tongues. This is not one who understands the language as were present in **Acts 2 (KJV):7** And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? **8** And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? **9** Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, **10** Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, **11** Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God

These all could understand what was being spoken because it was one of their own tongues in which they were born. Just as the diverse kind of tongue is not known to the one who speaks it, so the interpretation of tongues is not a natural ability of the one who interprets. The gift of interpretation of tongues is a gift of the Spirit that enables the believer to interpret what is being said in another tongue that is unknown to him or her.

Mr. Pennington's argument against this is as he says, "How would anyone know if he was telling the truth or not? In the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter is established."

The answer is the gift of discerning of spirits, which is another gift of the Spirit. And the interpretation must be judged as if it were prophecy. That is, it must be according to the word of God, rightly divided.

Mr. Pennington then argues, "Women were not allowed to speak in tongues in the corporate worship, but had to keep silent in the church. They were not allowed to speak in prophecy or in tongues in the church, just as the law also says."

He is referring to **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):34** Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law. **35** And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

The law did not say that a woman could not prophesy as we know from **Exodus 15 (KJV):20** And Miriam the **prophetess**, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances.

And in **Judges 4 (KJV):4** And Deborah, a **prophetess**, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time.

And in **2 Kings 22 (KJV):14** So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the **prophetess**, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college;) and they communed with her.

And in **Isaiah 8 (KJV):3** And I went unto the **prophetess**; and she conceived, and bare a son. Then said the LORD to me, Call his name Mahershalalhashbaz.

And in **Luke 2 (KJV):36** And there was one Anna, a **prophetess**, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;

And in the New Testament age we read of Philip's daughters in **Acts 21 (KJV):8** And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him. 9 And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.

We must not take one verse out of context. Women were interrupting the services in the churches. Paul was correcting this. Paul is not disallowing women to prophesy in church. He even speaks of women prophesying in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):1** Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. 2 Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you. 3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. 4 Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. 5 But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. 6 For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. 7 For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. 8 For the man is not of the woman: but the woman of the man. 9 Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. 10 For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels. 11 Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. 12 For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God. 13 Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? 14 Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? 15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering. 16 But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

Paul only wanted an acknowledgment by women of the authority of men. But a woman could pray or prophesy in church, as we read in verse 5 above. This was probably also having to do with local custom for the time.

Mr. Pennington then argues, "Prophecy was to be given one at a time and no more than three, and judged according to previous revelation."

Paul's normative command for prophecy is given as we read in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):29** Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. 30 If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.

But then he continues in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):31** For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. 32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. 33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

The normal operation of the gift of prophecy in the church was for two or three to prophesy and the others would judge. Nothing was written down, for the prophesy of the believers was not for new revelation, but for exhortation, admonition, and comfort as we read in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):3** But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

Now Paul also reveals another reason for prophecy as we read in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):22** Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. 23 If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? 24 But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is

convinced of all, he is judged of all: 25 And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

Prophecy is for those who believe. And Paul says if the whole church meets, and all prophesy, and there is present one who is an unbeliever, or unlearned in the operation of spiritual gifts, the secrets of his heart will be revealed, and he will know that God is in you of a truth. This kind of revelation is not prohibited by the word of God. The secrets of a person's heart are known only to God. And when someone else prophesies these secrets, something they themselves could not have known, the one who is an unbeliever or unlearned will realize that God is real and has just spoken to them personally. So prophecy is a tool in the bag of the believer to win the souls of unbelievers, and to win the hearts of the unlearned.

Mr. Pennington then concludes, "Most Charismatic worship is clear rebellion. Not only are they not the gifts of the Spirit, but they do not practice the gifts according to the guidelines and so grieve, disobey, insult, and hijack the Holy Spirit. We stand in the historic position of the Church. We reject all forms of continuing revelation. Don't ever say, "God told me." We don't talk about feeling something from God. God does not reveal anything today outside of His word. Don't give credence to the Charismatic movement. Charismatics who do not teach about the Biblical Jesus turn people into twice the children of hell. Those who preach the prosperity gospel preach another gospel."

Mr. Pennington believes that the gifts of the Spirit have ceased, so any exercise of the gifts of the Spirit today, in his view, will be "clear rebellion". His guidelines are a misinterpretation of 1 Corinthians 14 as we have shown, and so they are not a standard by which we can judge the exercise of the gifts of the Spirit. This is not to say that some charismatics are out of order. There are many charismatic churches that need to be taught the correct operation of the gifts of the Spirit.

Mr. Pennington can stand in what he feels is the historic position of the Church. But his position is not the Biblical teaching of the Old or New Testament. Church leaders have erred in the past as we have shown. In as much as they agree with the word of God, we can accept their testimony.

Mr. Pennington also rejects "all forms of continuing revelation". What he does not understand is that there are revelation gifts of the Spirit that do not add to the Scriptures, such as the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, and discerning of spirits. These gifts are given by the Spirit to believers to win souls to Christ, and convince the unlearned of the truth about spiritual gifts.

The gifts of the Spirit are also given for the well being of believers. God is love, and He cares about us. Healing is an attribute of God as we read in **Exodus 15 (KJV):26** And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee.

The story of Paul's conversion is a case in point. Paul was an unbeliever who was persecuting the Church.

Let us begin reading in **Acts 9 (KJV):1** And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, 2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. 3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: 4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. 7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. 8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. 9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

Now Paul was present when the Jews killed Stephen as we read in **Acts 7 (KJV):57** Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, 58 And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. 59 And

they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. 60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

But the Lord intervened, and spoke to Saul on the way to Damascus. And Saul was made blind, and was led by the hand into Damascus. He fasted for three days.

Now the Lord was not done, and he spoke to a disciple in Damascus named Ananias, as we continue in **Acts 9 (KJV):10** And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. 11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, 12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. 13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: 14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. 15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

Ananias received a word of wisdom from the Lord to go and lay his hands on one called Saul that he might receive his sight. A word of wisdom is a gift of the Spirit which reveals the plans and purposes of God.

The Lord also gave Ananias a word of knowledge telling Ananias where Saul was, that is, on a street which is called Straight in the house of Judas. A word of knowledge is a gift of the Spirit which reveals a fact that is hidden from our minds, that is, something we could not have known of our own ability.

The Lord also told Ananias that Saul had seen him coming in and “putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight”. This was another word of knowledge. And the Lord told Saul through the vision that he had that this would be the way he would regain his sight.

And Ananias went, as we continue in **Acts 9 (KJV):17** And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. 18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. 19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. 20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

Ananias could not have known that the Lord appeared to Saul on the way that he was going. The Spirit of God revealed this knowledge to Ananias so that Saul would be convinced that this was God's doing.

Ananias also exercised the gift of healing when he laid his hands on Saul, and Saul received his sight. Now this kind of revelation and healing is still given to believers today. This kind of revelation is to convince the lost of the Lord's salvation. God also revealed His purpose for Saul and gave him revelation about his future ministry as we read again in **Acts 9 (KJV):16** For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

Mr. Pennington will not allow anyone to say, “God told me.” He also says, “We don't talk about feeling something from God.”

But God has made a way for us to have relationship with Him. And this relationship is a love relationship. God has made us with feelings. To deny our feelings is to deny a part of who we are. James tells us how to know the wisdom from above, as we read in **James 3 (KJV):17** But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

It is not that we are led by our feelings. We must judge all things by the word of God. But our feelings tell us what is truth and what is not truth. We will have a peace about the wisdom from above. If something is not true, there will be no rest in our spirit. This is how God communicates with us.

The fruit of the Spirit is also mentioned in **Galatians 5 (KJV):22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

The words love, joy, and peace are feeling words. They send us messages. We don't just know God in an intellectual way. We feel His love, His joy, and His peace.

As His sheep, we know His voice as Jesus revealed in **John 10 (KJV):4** And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. 5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

Yet, Mr. Pennington will not allow anyone to say, “God told me”, or to say anything about “feeling something from God”. It is true that God will not speak anything that is not in accordance with His word in the Old and New Testaments. But He does speak to us in our hearts by His peace, and He lets us know that He is there.

Why then is the Holy Spirit called the “Comforter” as we read in **John 14 (KJV):16** And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. 18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

Mr. Pennington then asserts, “God does not reveal anything today outside of His word. Don’t give credence to the Charismatic movement. Charismatics who do not teach about the Biblical Jesus turn people into twice the children of hell. Those who preach the prosperity gospel preach another gospel.”

Is it not true that anyone who does not teach about the Biblical Jesus, or who preaches another gospel, is in error, and not just Charismatics?

Mr. Pennington would disqualify all who would speak in tongues, or exercise any of the gifts of the Spirit today, but then admits, “There are some true brothers in the Charismatic movement. Don’t downplay the sufficiency of Scripture. We must be like the Bereans.”

We must indeed be like the Bereans as in **Acts 17 (KJV):11** These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

We must search the scriptures daily, rightly dividing the word of God. And we must educate those who operate the gifts of the Spirit in the Scriptural method of operation. We must not forbid to speak in tongues, or to prophesy. But we must judge everything according to the Scripture.

The Biblical Truth about the Gifts of the Spirit

Strange Fire

Nadab and Abihu, as sons of Aaron, were priests of the Lord as we read in **Exodus 28 (KJV):1** And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons.

They died when they offered strange fire before the Lord which He did not command them as we read in **Leviticus 10 (KJV):1** And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. 2 And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.

Strange fire has to do with doing something that the Lord has not commanded. So the question is, are the gifts of the Spirit to be exercised today? Are we commanded to exercise the gifts of the Spirit today? And if so, how are they to be exercised?

The Promise of the Spirit

Jesus spoke before He departed, and said to His disciples as in **Luke 24 (KJV):45** Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, 46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And ye are witnesses of these things. 49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

The promise of the Holy Spirit was going to endue them with power from on high. The word “endue” in the Greek is ἐνδύω (pronounced endyō), and means to sink into (clothing), put on, clothe one's self. This is also Jesus' promise in **Acts 1 (KJV):8** But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Again we read in **John 14 (KJV):16** And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. 18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

And in **John 14 (KJV):26** But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

And in **John 15 (KJV):26** But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: 27 And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

And in **John 16 (KJV):7** Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. 8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 Of sin, because they believe not on me; 10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; 11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. 12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. 15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

The Holy Spirit comforts us. He teaches us all things, and brings all things to our remembrance that Jesus has spoken, and He testifies of Jesus. He also guides us into all truth. He also empowers us as Jesus promised in Luke and in Acts.

Now in our day, because the foundation of the apostles and prophets has been laid, we are not receiving any truth that is not in accordance with the written word of God. All revelation today is to be judged as to its agreement with the written word of God in the Bible.

But the Holy Spirit now illuminates our minds, as we read and study the word of God, to know the truth that is written in the word of God in the Bible.

The Holy Spirit was the promise to all believers, and not just the first disciples. After Jesus ascended to heaven, the disciples returned to an upper room in Jerusalem as we read in **Acts 1 (KJV):12** Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. 13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. 14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. 15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)

There were 120 disciples in the upper room. Then in Acts 2 they are all together as we read in **Acts 2 (KJV):1** And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

This was what the prophet Joel promised as we continue in **Acts 2 (KJV):16** But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; 17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: 18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:

This promise of the Holy Spirit was for all who were present, and all who were afar off as we continue in **Acts 2 (KJV):37** Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? 38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call.

The Mission of Jesus

Jesus spoke about His mission in **Luke 4 (KJV):17** And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, 19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. 20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

The Spirit of the Lord was not only upon Jesus to confirm His words. The Spirit of the Lord was upon Jesus for a specific purpose:

- 1.) to preach the gospel to the poor
- 2.) to heal the brokenhearted
- 3.) to preach deliverance to the captives

- 4.) and recovering of sight to the blind
- 5.) to set at liberty them that are bruised
- 6.) to preach the acceptable year of the Lord

All of this was also part of Jesus' mission. Jesus came to preach the gospel to the poor and not just to the rich.

Jesus came to heal the brokenhearted. The heart is the center of our emotions. The Hebrew word for "heart" is **לֵב** (pronounced leb), relating to the seat of emotions and passions. If part of Jesus' mission was to heal the brokenhearted, it stands to reason that we would feel something from God. We read of the joy of the Lord in **Zephaniah 3 (KJV):17** The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.

And in **Nehemiah 8 (KJV):10** Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our LORD: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength.

And we read in **Philippians 4 (KJV):4** Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.

His word brings freedom to us as we read in **John 8 (KJV):31** Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

He sets us free to be who we really are, and not who we have pretended to be. His joy makes us abound. He has come that we may really live as we read in **John 10 (KJV):10** The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

And Jesus not only preached deliverance to the captives, but He set at liberty them that are bruised. This involved the casting out of demons.

The recovering of sight to the blind involved healing the blind. And to preach the acceptable year of the Lord relates to the time God appointed for this to come to pass.

His mission is again stated in **Acts 10 (KJV):38** How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

Jesus healed all that were oppressed of the devil. And Jesus said that the works that He did, believers would do in **John 14 (KJV):12** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. 13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

Jesus said this of the one who believes in Him. If Jesus' mission was to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord, and to heal all that were oppressed of the devil, then this is our mission also, for the Spirit of the Lord is upon us also.

The believers at the house of Cornelius received the same Spirit of the Lord as the apostles and disciples in the upper room as Peter reveals in **Acts 10 (KJV):45** And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

This was the same baptism that Jesus promised the disciples in **Acts 1 (KJV):5** For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

And in **Acts 1 (KJV):8** But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

The 120 disciples in the upper room, and the disciples at the house of Cornelius all received the same Holy Spirit and power that Jesus promised in Acts 1:5 and Acts 1:8.

In every instance where believers were baptized with the Holy Spirit, they manifested the gifts of the Spirit. We read in **Acts 2 (KJV)**:1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

And in **Acts 10 (KJV)**:45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Peter said that the experience of those in the house of Cornelius was the same as what he and the other disciples experienced in the upper room. That is, they were all empowered by the Holy Spirit.

And we read in **Acts 19 (KJV)**:4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. 7 And all the men were about twelve.

The reason Paul laid his hands on the twelve men after they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus is because this is the normal way things were to be done, as we read in **Acts 8 (KJV)**:14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: 15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: 16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) 17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. 18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, 19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.

Evidently the believers in Samaria also spoke with tongues and prophesied, for Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given.

We continue to read in **Acts 8 (KJV)**:20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. 21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. 22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. 23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. 24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the LORD for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me. 25 And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

The Apostolic Mission

The apostolic mission was to plant churches. This is what Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV)**:5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? 6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. 8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

The apostle is a wise masterbuilder who lays the foundation for the church he plants, as we continue in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV)**:9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. 10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

The foundation that the apostle lays is Jesus Christ, as we continue in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV)**:11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

That is, the apostle will lay down the truth now in the word of God about Jesus, about salvation, repentance, regeneration, justification, sanctification, adoption, glorification, and the gifts of the Spirit as we read in the epistles of Paul.

After the foundation is laid, others are equipped to minister and build upon the foundation that the apostle lays, as we continue in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):**12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

We are rewarded for what we build on the foundation of Jesus Christ. The whole purpose of God is to build the Church as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):**11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

The New American Standard Bible reads as follows in **Ephesians 4 (NASB):**11 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

The word “perfecting” in the King James Version in verse 12 and “equipping” in the New American Standard Bible is the same Greek word, **καταρτισμός** (pronounced *katartismos*), which comes from the word **καταρτίζω** (pronounced *kataridzo*), meaning to render, i.e. to fit, sound, complete, to fit out, equip, put in order, arrange, adjust.

The idea is that the apostles, and the ministries of Ephesians 4:11, would fit or equip the saints to minister in their own place in the body of Christ. In other words, we are all to be ministers in the measure of our part, as we continue in **Ephesians 4 (KJB):**14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

We must go forward and equip every member in the body of Christ to do their part. It is “the effectual working in the measure of every part” that “maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”

Apostolic Vision

The apostolic vision was that our faith would not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God, as we read in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):**1 And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. 4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: 5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

The word “demonstration” in the Greek is **ἀπόδειξις** (pronounced *apodeixis*), and means a making manifest, showing forth, a demonstration, proof. The whole purpose of spiritual gifts is to show that God is real.

The apostolic vision was for every church to be established in this way as we read in **Romans 1 (KJV):**11 For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established; 12 that is, that I may be encouraged together with you while among you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine.

The words “spiritual gift” in the Greek are **χαρισμα πνευματικον**, meaning literally “gift spiritual”.

The word “established” in the Greek is **στηρίζω** (pronounced stērizō), and means to make stable, place firmly, set fast, fix. The impartation of spiritual gifts could come through prophecy as Paul reveals in **1 Timothy 4 (KJV):14** Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

The word for “gift” here in the Greek is also **χάρισμα** (pronounced charisma), which ultimately comes from **χάρις** (pronounced charis) meaning grace. So, charisma means a favour with which one receives without any merit of his own. It is for our equipment for ministry.

The Roman church began as believers went everywhere preaching the good news, the Gospel. Some went to Rome and preached the Gospel, and so there were believers in Rome. Paul does not mention any bishops or deacons in his epistle to the Romans. In fact, he does not even address them as a church as he does with the Corinthians in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):2** Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

Instead, Paul addresses them as we read in **Romans 1 (KJV):1** Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, 2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) 3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: 5 By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name: 6 Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ: 7 To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. 8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. 9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; 10 Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.

Their faith was spoken of throughout the whole world. But Paul did not address them as a church. Now it is estimated that the epistle to the Romans was written by Paul on his third missionary journey some time between 54 and 58 A.D. This would have been over 20 years after the death of Jesus on the cross, and His resurrection. Yet Paul wanted them to be established with the impartation of a spiritual gift. He does not mention spiritual gifts in the rest of his 16 chapters of his epistle to the Romans. Instead, he grounds them with a foundation of an explanation of their salvation, and promises to visit them by any means that God would make available to him.

Apparently, the apostolic vision for a church to be established was for it to be operational in spiritual gifts. This vision would include an operation of spiritual gifts decently and in order as Paul taught the Corinthians in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):40** Let all things be done decently and in order.

That a church should be operational in spiritual gifts was not only Paul’s vision but that of James as we read in **James 5 (KJV):14** Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

The whole tenor of 1 Corinthians, chapter 12, is for body ministry. We read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):14** For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? 18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. 19 And if they were all one member, where were the body? 20 But now are they many members, yet but one body.

Paul says that the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):7** But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; 9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the

interpretation of tongues: 11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

It is the effectual working in the measure of every part that makes increase of the body. The reformation brought a return of lost doctrine to the Church. Justification by faith, and salvation by grace, and using only scripture for our doctrine, are some of the key benefits of the reformation. But there is still a clergy-laity structure in the church that must be dealt with. In many churches, it is the job of the laity to pay their tithes. The pastor, or the minister, does all of the ministry. But the apostolic vision is for every member to do their part, for the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. We need to equip the members of the body of Christ to do their part. Everyone has a purpose in His body.

The vision of the apostles was that the members of the body of Christ would become spiritual men and women, as we see in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):1** And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? 4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? 5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

So what does it mean to be spiritual? Paul explains as we read in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):6** Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: 8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

The word “perfect” in verse 1 in the Greek is **τέλειος** (pronounced teleios), and means full grown, adult, of full age, mature.

We continue to read in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):10** But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. 16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

When Tongues Shall Cease

Tongues shall cease as in **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):8** Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

The question is, when will this take place? The answer is in the Scripture. We continue in **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):9** For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. 11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. 13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

So when the perfect comes, then that which is in part shall be done away. Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

Some say that the perfect has come. They say that when the word of God was completed with the New Testament, we have the perfect. But that is not what the Scripture says. The Scripture says we shall see face to

face when He comes for us, as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV)**:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

When we see him we will be like him, for we shall see him as he is. That is, when we are glorified at the resurrection, the perfect will have come, and that which is in part shall be done away. Then I will see face to face. Then I shall I know even as also I am known, and not before.

The Most Excellent Way

Some say that the most excellent way is love without the gifts. They are referring to **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV)**:1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. 4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; 6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; 7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

If I have not charity, or love, I am nothing. Even if I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it doesn't profit me anything. Paul is not saying that we should not give to the poor, just as he is not saying that we should not prophesy, or suffer persecution.

Paul does say that we should covet the best gifts as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV)**:31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

Paul then describes charity, or love, above in 1 Corinthians 13, and in chapter 14 he says as in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV)**:1 Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.

We are to follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts. Spiritual gifts are not just to confirm the word. They are for the building up of the body of Christ, as in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV)**:26 How is it then, brethren? When ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.

We are to covet to prophesy. We are not to forbid to speak with tongues as we continue in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV)**:39 Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. 40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

Is there any confusion about this? Paul settles the matter in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV)**:37 If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. 38 But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.

The Historic Position of the Church

The foundation of the Church was laid by the first apostles and prophets who had a more sure word of prophecy. How closely the Church has followed in that foundation is not something we can rely upon as history has proven. We have only to look at the reasons for the Reformation to see that the word of God is our only source of Biblical truth or doctrine.

However, the history of the Church was actually foretold by the apostle John in Revelation 2:1 to 3:22. The messages to the seven churches mentioned were to actual churches present in the time of the apostle John. But the Lord knows the end from the beginning as we read in **Acts 15 (KJV):18** Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

Because the Lord knows the end from the beginning, we know that these messages were also prophetic of the historic periods of the Church.

Now Clarence Larkin was a Mechanical Engineer and Architect before he entered the ministry at the age of 34 as an American Baptist pastor. The following numbered outline, with some slight changes, is derived from **The Book of Revelation, by Clarence Larkin, pages 20 through 29.**

I. THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS (A Backslidden Church) Revelation 2:1-7 (from about 70 to 170 A.D.)

1. **THE SALUTATION—Revelation 2 (KJV):1** Unto the Angel of the Church of Ephesus write; these things saith He that holdeth the Seven Stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the Seven Golden Candlesticks;

2. **THE COMMENDATION— Revelation 2 (KJV):2** I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil; and thou hast tried them which say they are Apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars; 3 and hast borne, and hast patience, and for My Name's Sake hast labored, and hast not fainted.

3. **THE COMPLAINT— Revelation 2 (KJV):4** Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou Hast Left Thy First Love.

4. **THE WARNING— Revelation 2 (KJV):5** Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

5. **PRAISE— Revelation 2 (KJV):6** But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.

6. **THE PROMISE— Revelation 2 (KJV):7** He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the Churches: To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.

Paul probably left Ephesus in the summer of 57 A.D. Before he left he spoke as we read in **Acts 20 (KJV):25** And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. 26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. 27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. 28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. 31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. 32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

Paul left this Church with all the counsel of God. Yet he knew that grievous wolves would enter and not spare the flock. So it took some time after Paul had left for these things to have taken place. And this is why we

read of this message to the Church in Ephesus, **Revelation 2 (KJV):4** Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou “hast left thy first love”.

The Ephesians were commended for hating the deeds of the Nicolaitanes in **Revelation 2 (KJV):6** But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.

The word translated “Nicolaitanes” is the Greek word “**Νικολαῖτης**” (Nikolaîtēs pronounced Nikolaïtes) which comes from two Greek words, **νίκος** (pronounced neekos) meaning victory, and **Λαοδικεός** (pronounced laodikoos) meaning a Laodicean, an inhabitant of Laodicea. Thus the meaning of **Νικολαῖτης** is “victorious over the people”.

The elevation of the bishops was starting to take place. The bishops began to take the place of the apostles, although they did not have apostolic gifting.

II. THE CHURCH AT SMYRNA (A Persecuted Church) Revelation 2:8-11 (from A.D. 170 to Constantine in 312 A.D.)

1. **THE SALUTATION-- Revelation 2 (KJV):8** And unto the Angel of the Church in Smyrna write; These things saith the First and the Last, who was dead, and is alive.

2. **THE PERSECUTION-- Revelation 2 (KJV):9** I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich), and I know the blasphemy of them which say, they are Jews, and are not, but are the Synagogue of Satan.

3. **THE EXHORTATION-- Revelation 2 (KJV):10** Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold the Devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

4. **THE PROMISE-- Revelation 2 (KJV):11** He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches: He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

There is no complaint against this church. The Lord knows the end from the beginning, and He warned the church at Smyrna through a word of wisdom of the persecutions that would take place in verse 10, “and ye shall have tribulation ten days”. This was in order that they “may be tried”. God knows what He is doing. He is building His Church. The ten persecutions recorded by history are as follows:

1. Under Nero in 67 A.D.
2. Under Domitian in 81 A.D.
3. Under Trajan in 108 A.D.
4. Under Marcus Aurelius in 162 A.D.
5. Under Septimius Severus in 192 A.D.
6. Under Maximinus in 235 A.D.
7. Under Decius in 249 A.D.
8. Under Valerian in 257 A.D.
9. Under Aurelian in 274 A.D.
10. Under Diocletian in 303 A.D.

Coming under persecution like this, is it any wonder why the Church would lose all of the teaching of the apostles. They still had the epistles and gospels that were written by the apostles. But they were not all in agreement as to which were to be kept that would form the New Testament. For most, this would not happen in a definitive way until the Easter letter of Athanasius in 367 A.D. This is not to say that some did not have the true Gospel. But their doctrine was not all good.

III. THE CHURCH AT PERGAMOS (A Licentious Church) Revelation 2:12-17 (from Constantine in 312 A.D. to 606 A.D. when Boniface III was crowned “Universal Bishop”)

1. **THE SALUTATION-- Revelation 2 (KJV):12** And to the Angel of the Church in Pergamos write: These things saith He which hath the Sharp Sword with two edges.

2. **THE COMMENDATION-- Revelation 2 (KJV):13** I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast My Name, and hast not denied My Faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

3. **THE COMPLAINT-- Revelation 2 (KJV):14** But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the Children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. 15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.

4. **THE WARNING-- Revelation 2 (KJV):16** Repent! or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

5. **THE PROMISE-- Revelation 2 (KJV):17** He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

We now see two false doctrines that had been introduced in the Church, the doctrine of Balaam, which involved eating things sacrificed to idols, and committing fornication, and the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which involved having dominion over the Church. This is what Peter warned against in **1 Peter 5 (KJV):1** The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

We are not to be “lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock”, as in veres 3 above. This is because salvation is not a corporate thing. We are not saved because we belong to a particular church, but because we believe in Jesus, that God raised Him from the dead, and that we individually confess Him as our Lord. Salvation is about an individual's faith in Jesus.

The word Pergamos in the Greek is Πέργαμος (pronounced Pergamos), and comes from the Greek word πύργος (pronounced purgos), a tower, a fortified structure rising to a considerable height, to repel a hostile attack or to enable a watchman to see in every direction.

Mr. Larkin comments:

“In this Message Pergamos is spoken of as “Satan's Seat.” When Attalus III, the Priest-King of the Chaldean Hierarchy, fled before the conquering Persians to Pergamos, and settled there, Satan shifted his capital from Babylon to Pergamos. At first he persecuted the followers of Christ, and Antipas was one of the martyrs. But soon he changed his tactics and began to exalt the Church, and through Constantine united the Church and State, and offered all kinds of inducements for worldly people to come into the Church. Constantine's motive was more political than religious. He wished to weld his Christian and Pagan subjects into one people, and so consolidate his Empire. The result of this union was that two false and pernicious doctrines crept into the Church. The first was the “Doctrine of Balaam,” and the second the “Doctrine of the Nicolaitanes.” The latter we have already considered under the Message to the Church at Ephesus. And the foothold it had secured in the Church was seen in the First Great Council of the Church held at Nicaea, in A. D. 325. The Council was composed of about 1500 delegates, the laymen out-numbering the Bishops 5 to 1. It was a stormy council, full of intrigue and political methods, and from the supremacy of the “Clergy” over the “Laity” it was evident that the “Doctrine of the Nicolaitanes” had secured a strong and permanent foothold.”

Mr. Larkin continues, “The “Doctrine of Balaam” is disclosed in the story of Balaam found in the Book of Numbers, chapters 22 to 25 inclusive. When the Children of Israel on their way to Canaan had reached the land of Moab, Balak the king of Moab sent for Balaam the Son of Beor, who lived at Pethor on the river Euphrates, to come and curse them. When the Lord would not permit Balaam to curse Israel, he suggested to Balak that he invite them to the licentious feasts of “Baal-Peor,” and thus cause Israel to fall into a snare that would so anger the Lord that he would Himself destroy them. This Balak did, and the result was that when the

men of Israel went to those sensual feasts and saw the “daughters of Moab” they committed whoredoms with them, which so kindled God's anger that He sent a plague that destroyed 42,000 of them. Now the word “Pergamos” means “Marriage,” and when the Church entered into a union with the State it was guilty of “Spiritual Fornication” or “Balaamism.””

Mr. Larking continues. “The “Balaam Method” that Constantine employed was to give to the Bishops of the Church a number of imposing buildings called Basilicas for conversion into churches, for whose decoration he was lavish in the gift of money. He also supplied superb vestments for the clergy, and soon the Bishop found himself clad in costly vestments, seated on a lofty throne in the apse of the Basilica, with a marble altar, adorned with gold and gems, on a lower level in front of him. A sensuous form of worship was introduced, the character of the preaching was changed, and the great “Pagan Festivals” were adopted, with but little alteration, to please the Pagan members of the church, and attract Pagans to the church. For illustration, as the Winter Solstice falls on the 21st day of December, which is the shortest day in the year, and it is not until the 25th that the day begins to lengthen, which day was regarded throughout the Heathen world as the “birthday” of the “Sun-God,” and was a high festival, which was celebrated at Rome by the “Great Games” of the Circus, it was found advisable to change the Birthday of the Son of God, from April, at which time He was probably born, to December 25th, because as He was the “Sun of Righteousness,” what more appropriate birth-day could He have than the birthday of the Pagan “Sun-God?”” **The Book of Revelation, Clarence Larkin, page 22-23.**

The reason Mr. Larkin says that the word “Pergamos” means “Marriage” above is because of the Greek word γάμος (pronounced gamos), meaning marriage. This Greek word is found in **Matthew 22 (KJV):2** The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son...

IV. THE CHURCH AT THYATIRA (A Lax Church) Revelation 2:18-29 (from 606 A.D. to the Reformation in 1520 A.D.)

1. **THE SALUTATION-- Revelation 2 (KJV):18** And unto the Angel of the Church in Thyatira write: These things saith the Son of God, who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet are like fine brass.

2. **THE COMMENDATION-- Revelation 2 (KJV):19** I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

3. **THE COMPLAINT-- Revelation 2 (KJV):20** Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a Prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. 21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication: and she repented not. 22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. 23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

4. **THE PROMISE-- Revelation 2 (KJV):24** But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. 25 But that which ye have already, hold fast till I come. 26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: 27 and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of My Father. 28 And I will give him the morning star. 29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.

We see the progression of decline here in the Church, for though there was faith, and charity, and service, and patience, there was also an acceptance of those who would teach and seduce the servants of the Lord to “commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols” in verse 20.

Jezebel in the Old Testament was the wife of Ahab, king of Israel while Asa was king of Judah, as we read in **1 Kings 16 (KJV):29** And in the thirty and eighth year of Asa king of Judah began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel: and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty and two years.

30 And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him. 31 And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him. 32 And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. 33 And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.

Jezebel was an idolatrous queen who worshipped Baal and Astarte. She enticed Ahab to help her in her idolatry, and she killed as many prophets of the Lord as she could find as we read in **1 Kings 18 (KJV):3** And Ahab called Obadiah, which was the governor of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly: 4 For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.)

So Jezebel in Revelation 2:20 is symbolic of a group within the Church that is teaching and seducing the servants of the Lord to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. She is not in authority at this time, but is like a wife to her husband. The Church still has authority to put her out, but is relaxed in its discipline. This group will not repent, and will go through the tribulation period after the true Church has been raptured.

V. THE CHURCH AT SARDIS (A Dead Church) Revelation 3:1-6 (from 1520 A.D. to about 1750 A.D.)

1. **THE SALUTATION-- Revelation 3 (KJV):1** And unto the Angel of the Church in Sardis write: these things saith He that hath the Seven Spirits of God, and the Seven Stars...

2. **THE CONDEMNATION-- Revelation 3 (KJV):1**...I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

3. **THE COUNSEL-- Revelation 3 (KJV):2** Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. 3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent...

4. **THE WARNING-- Revelation 3 (KJV):3**...If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

5. **THE PROMISE-- Revelation 3 (KJV):4** Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. 5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels. 6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.

This was a transitional period in the history of the Church. The church is going through the Reformation period and is escaping from all of the false teaching and traditions that have built up over time in the Church.

VI. THE CHURCH AT PHILADELPHIA (A Favored Church) Revelation 3:7-13 (from 1750 A.D. to the present)

1. **THE SALUTATION-- Revelation 3 (KJV):7** And to the Angel of the Church in Philadelphia write: These things saith He that is Holy, He that is True, He that hath the Key of David, He that openeth; and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth.

2. **COMMENDATION-- Revelation 3 (KJV):8** I know thy works: behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name.

3. **THE PROMISE-- Revelation 3 (KJV):9** Behold, I will make them of the Synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. 10 Because thou hast kept the word of My Patience, I also will keep thee

from the hour of tribulation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. 11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. 12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the Temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of Heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My new name. 13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.

This church has no complaint against it. It is the true church which will be raptured before the great tribulation “which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth”. This is the time in which we live. Let us keep the word of His Patience, and hold fast what we have that no man take our crowns.

VII. THE CHURCH AT LAODICEA (A Lukewarm Church) Revelation 3:14-22 (from 1870 A.D. to the present)

1. **THE SALUTATION-- Revelation 3 (KJV):**14 And unto the Angel of the Church of the Laodiceans write: These things saith the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the beginning of the creation of God.

2. **THE COMPLAINT-- Revelation 3 (KJV):**15 I know thy works, that thou art neither hot nor cold: I would thou wert cold or hot. 16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold or hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. 17 Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

3. **THE COUNSEL-- Revelation 3 (KJV):**18 I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

4. **THE CHASTENING-- Revelation 3 (KJV):**19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

5. **THE PROMISE-- Revelation 3 (KJV):**20 Behold I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. 21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in My Throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His Throne. 22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.

This church is not a true church because Christ is not in it. Christ stands outside of this church and knocks on the door. If any individual opens the door, He will come in to him. There is no saving message of salvation in this church. That is why Christ stands outside of this church and knocks on the door of this church. This church will go through the great tribulation, for it will be “left behind”. But individuals in this church who open the door to Christ will be raptured.

Clarence Larkin concludes as he asks, “What do these “Messages to the Churches” teach us? They clearly teach the **DECLINE OF THE CHURCH**. That the professing Church instead of increasing in spiritual and world converting power will become lukewarm, faithless, and **CHRISTLESS.**” **The Book of Revelation, Clarence Larkin, page 29.**

I believe that what Mr. Larkin is referring to is the decline of the professing Church, and not the true Church that the Lord is building, and which will be completed when “we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ”, as in Ephesians 4 (KJV):13.

The true Church is spiritual and is still growing. It is true that Augustine and others observed that the gifts of the Spirit had ceased. But this cessation was more due to the loss of good doctrine than because the Holy Spirit had stopped giving the gifts. This loss is very evident when we understand that a sacerdotal, or priestly, order began to take over the ministry of the Church.

Again, Philip Schaff states, “The idea and institution of a special priesthood, distinct from the body of the people, with the accompanying notion of sacrifice and altar, passed imperceptibly from Jewish and heathen reminiscences and analogies into the Christian church. The majority of Jewish converts adhered tenaciously to

the Mosaic institutions and rites, and a considerable part never fully attained to the height of spiritual freedom proclaimed by Paul, or soon fell away from it. He opposed legalistic and ceremonial tendencies in Galatia and Corinth; and although sacerdotalism does not appear among the errors of his Judaizing opponents, the Levitical priesthood, with its three ranks of high priest, priest, and Levite, naturally furnished an analogy for the threefold ministry of bishop, priest, and deacon, and came to be regarded as typical of it. Still less could the Gentile Christians, as a body, at once emancipate themselves from their traditional notions of priesthood, altar, and sacrifice, on which their former religion was based. Whether we regard the change as an apostasy from a higher position attained, or as a reaction of old ideas never fully abandoned, the change is undeniable, and can be traced to the second century. The church could not long occupy the ideal height of the apostolic age, and as the pentecostal illumination passed away with the death of the apostles, the old reminiscences began to reassert themselves.” **History of the Church, Volume II, Clergy and Laity, page 123, Philip Schaff.**

This change is very evident in the writing of Irenaeus as he defends this sacerdotal order vehemently. For a more complete explanation of Irenaeus’ position on this, you can go to

<http://theriskofchrist.com/mainbook/commentary.pdf> and read **Chapter 23: The Priesthood.**

Augustine and others ministered to the Church that existed in their time. The Church had slipped more and more into ritual and tradition as time passed. The word of God was translated into the Latin Vulgate by Jerome in the late 4th century. The Church then made this the official version of the Bible to be read by all. The Church would not allow any other translation to be made, and even burned people at the stake for translating it into English. William Tyndale is probably the most wellknown martyr who died by strangling, and then was burned at the stake in 1536 for translating the Bible into English.

The history of the Church proves one thing. The Church needed a reformation in 1517. Luther was able to begin this reformation by his study of the word of God, and reliance on the Holy Spirit. The history of the Church is not reliable except when it is in agreement with the word of God. The word of God gradually had become a holy thing that was kept on the shelf in the Church, but was not read or studied. It was copied scrupulously because it was a holy book, and thus made for holy surroundings. But in every age there have been those who have been awakened by the truth.

When the word of God is kept hidden in a language that is foreign to the people, faith is kept low, for faith comes by hearing the word as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):17** So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

This is why the Philadelphia period of the Church has progressed. The availability of the word of God has increased, and the Biblical truth of the word of God has been recovered concerning the gifts of the Spirit. We now have an open door that no man can shut.

The point is that we cannot rely on the historic position of the Church because it has held various positions at any given point in its history. There is one we can rely on, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ and His word of truth. He does not vary with the times. He does not change His mind about His word. It is still the truth. And He is still the way, the truth, and the life.

Summary

When churches were planted by the apostles, their converts relied on the presence of the apostle, and the teaching they received from him orally. They may or may not have had a copy of the Old Testament. The apostle could not stay in the same place for very long. As the apostles then moved from place to place, they would receive reports from the various churches that they had planted. As the need arose, and as the Lord led them, the apostle Paul for example would write to the church he had planted and give them further instruction, encouragement, and correction. The church then had more light in which to walk. Since the New Testament was not completed yet, they did not have as much light as they would have when the New Testament was finally finished. Gradually, the writings of Paul, Peter, John, James, Matthew, Mark and Luke were gathered by the various churches and the New Testament began to emerge.

Now when we consider the fact that the Revelation of John was not given until 95 A.D. or so, we can more readily understand that the early churches were in a period of growth, and that their doctrinal knowledge was not complete. Each church began with the oral teaching of the apostle who planted them, and then some time later either received an epistle directed to them or one of the other churches that the apostles wrote to. They would have looked on these epistles as an increase of their knowledge, but not a replacement of the oral teaching that they had already received and come to rely on. It was by this process that the early churches valued their oral traditions as much as the written word. We can see this in Irenaeus' writing. It was only after all of the New Testament had been gathered that the churches realized their true value. By this time, there were many other writings by worthy men, but men who did not have the eyewitness authority that the first apostles had. It took time for the churches to sort out these writings from the apostolic writings. It is now recognized that the Easter letter of Athanasius in 367 A.D., which lists all of the books in the canon of the Old and New Testament, was the time that the churches finally acknowledged that the canon was closed.

In addition, the Church had undergone four major persecutions up to the time Irenaeus was writing *Against Heresies*:

1. Under Nero in 67 A.D.
2. Under Domitian in 81 A.D.
3. Under Trajan in 108 A.D.
4. Under Marcus Aurelius 162 A.D.

With this understanding, we can more readily see why the early church developed many traditions that were based on a perception of what was taught rather than what was actually taught by the first apostles.

Some of the aberrant teachings in the Church in the time of Irenaeus were the following, as noted from his writing, *Adversus Heresies* (*Against Heresies*):

1. Baptismal Regeneration: (Book 1: Chapter XXI, paragraph 1, Book 3: Chapter XVII, paragraphs 1 and 2)
2. Apostolic Succession: The bishops have been handed the government of the apostles (Book 3: Chapter III, paragraph 1)
3. Irenaeus pointed to Rome as the preeminent authority (Book 3: Chapter III, paragraph 2)
4. Transubstantiation (the bread and wine become the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly, with the invocation of God (Book 4: Chapter XVIII, paragraph 5)
5. The Eucharist is the body and blood of Christ (Book 5 Chapter II, paragraph 3)
6. Irenaeus believed there was a sacerdotal order, a "priesthood of the Lord", that is, literally, of "the Lord's Levitical substance." (Book 4: Chapter VIII, paragraph 3)
7. Without the observance of the Decalogue there is no salvation (Book 4: Chapter XV, paragraph 1)
8. Tradition and the Word of God are of equal authority because tradition is preserved by the succession of presbyters appointed by the apostles (Book 3: Chapter II. Paragraph 1, 2, 3)

Irenaeus was the Bishop of Lyons in France. He was born in about 120 A.D. and lived to about 202 A.D. He wrote **Adversus Heresies** (Against Heresies) between 177 and 192. This consisted of five volumes which were written primarily against the Gnostic Heresy which was challenging the Church in his time. As Irenaeus forcefully rebukes this heresy, he has given us a telescopic view, in his writing, into the thinking of the early Church.

Because of Irenaeus' assertion that the bishops have received the apostles' place of government, he has given himself the authority of an apostle. Whether he intended this or not, and whether he actually had the apostolic gift, God only knows. He certainly has defended the Church against the Gnostic heresy. But because of his allegiance to the tradition of the Church in his day, and specifically to the tradition of apostolic succession, it is certain that he did not reach the full potential of his gifting. Irenaeus set the Church on a course that will not be corrected until the time of the Reformation in the 1500s. And even in our day, the Church must complete the recovery which the Reformation only started.

But we see the beginnings of the Church through Irenaeus, and the gifts of the Spirit were still being exercised. With the apostles' absence, and the persecutions, it is understandable how there would be setbacks in the growth of the Churches. But it is evident that the apostles never gave instructions to the effect that the gifts of the Spirit would cease. Rather, they gave instructions as to their proper exercise and operation.

Over and over again, the apostles taught and manifested the Spirit's presence among believers. The promise of the Holy Spirit being poured out upon all flesh, and not just the apostles or the disciples of the early Church, has been fulfilled. God worked miracles in Peter's life so that he would understand that the Gospel was for the Gentiles also, and not just the Gospel, but the promise of the Holy Spirit as well. At the house of Cornelius in Acts, chapter 10, it was not just a mini Pentecost, but a manifestation of the Spirit to prove that the same experience of salvation that the apostles and disciples had was for the Gentiles as well. This included the baptism with the Holy Spirit, for the promise is for all that are afar off, as many as the Lord shall call.

There was much need for correction in the operation of the gifts of the Spirit in Paul's time. This did not invalidate the gifts of the Spirit. So, there is also a need for correction in the operation of the gifts of the Spirit in our day. Again, this does not invalidate their exercise. Believers need to be taught to grow in grace and knowledge of the word of God, which must be rightly divided. Let all things be done decently and in order.

Feelings

As to our feeling something from God, He is the one who made us to have feelings. Why would He not want us to feel His presence? Feelings are part of having a relationship with someone. The joy of the Lord is our strength. Is not the joy of the Lord something that can be felt? What about the peace of God?

We read in **Philippians 4 (KJV):6** Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

And it is through the peace of God that we are able to discern the wisdom of God as we read in **James 3 (KJV):17** But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

The heart is the center of our emotions. It is with the heart that we believe as Paul reveals in **Romans 10 (KJV):10** For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

We are to think on things which are true as we read in **Philippians 4 (KJV):8** Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

In this way we will be spiritually minded as in **Romans 8 (KJV):5** For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

The word of God is the truth as we read in **John 17 (KJV):17** Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

As we meditate on the word of God, the Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth as we read in **John 16 (KJV):13** Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

We are not to depend on man for the truth, but on the Holy Spirit as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):27** But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

This does not mean that we do not need teachers. It means that we must trust the Holy Spirit in order to discern what is true in what is being taught. As we have received Christ Jesus as Lord, so we must walk in Him. This means a continual surrender to the word of God, as it is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit. This will bring about a growth in grace and knowledge in our lives, as well as the fruit of the Spirit in love, joy, peace, and so on.

It is by our fruits that we shall be known as in **Matthew 7 (KJV):15** Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

The fruit will grow as we walk in the truth. We will not grow in all the truth of the word of God if we deny the truth of some its verses or chapters. We cannot let ritual and tradition put a mask on the word of God. Let us not be those who have a form of godliness but deny its power as Paul prophesied would happen in the last days, as we read in **2 Timothy 3 (KJV):1** This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

When we make the gifts of the Spirit to cease after the last apostle died, we nullify certain verses, and even chapters of the Scripture. Believers are to be baptized with the Holy Spirit, and they are to be empowered by the Holy Spirit, just as Jesus promised the apostles for it is the same gift that they received. The gifts of the Spirit were not only given for the purpose of establishing the word of the apostles, but for the well being of the members of the body of Christ, and for the winning of lost souls, and the hearts of unlearned in spiritual gifts.

The canon is closed. The completed word of God has been given to us, and it must not be added to. But the secrets of hearts are still being revealed by the Spirit of God through the gifts of the Spirit.

Let us speak the truth in love.

He That Is Spiritual

The apostolic vision was for the saints to become spiritual as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV)**:1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? 4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

The Corinthians were babes in Christ who could not bear the meat of the word of God, but only milk. This state of being a babe in Christ is also mentioned in **Hebrews 5 (KJV)**:11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. 12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. 13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. 14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

The apostle John also speaks of the stages of growth in Christian experience as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV)**:12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. 13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. 14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

When we walk in the light of the word of God, our senses are exercised to discern both good and evil. If we are hearers only, and not doers of the word, our senses will not be exercised to discern both good and evil.

Now it is not that the Corinthians were not saved, for they were sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be saints as Paul acknowledged in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV)**:1 Paul called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, 2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's: 3 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. 4 I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; 5 That in everything ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; 6 Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: 7 So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: 8 Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The testimony of Christ was confirmed in them for they came behind in no gift. The word “gift” in verse 7 above is **χάρισμα** (pronounced charisma), and means a gift of grace; a favor which one receives without any merit of his own. Paul is referring to spiritual gifts for it is the same Greek word used in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV)**:4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

Paul also calls them “brethren” as we continue in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV)**:9 God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. 10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; 15 Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.

Now the reason Paul called the Corinthians carnal, even babes in Christ, was because of their divisions. Paul then speaks of the oneness of ministry as we continue in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV)**:5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? 6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. 8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man

shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. 9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

The Corinthian church was a church that Paul had planted, and he had laid the foundation of Jesus Christ, as we continue in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):10** According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

The apostolic vision was for there to be no divisions in the church. We are not to glory in men as we continue in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):21** Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are your's; 22 Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are your's; 23 And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

Now Paul explains how he began his ministry in Corinth, as we read in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):1** And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. 4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: 5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Paul did not try to convince them with persuasive arguments, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, in order that their faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

The apostle John speaks of the world in **1 John 2 (KJV):16** For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

When our faith stands in the power of God, we have victory over the world for John also says in **1 John 5 (KJV):4** For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. 5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

Now Paul says he speaks wisdom among those who are perfect, as we continue in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):6** Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: 8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

Paul speaks of a hidden wisdom which the world does not know. This hidden wisdom concerns the things God has prepared for those who love Him as we continue in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):10** But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

We who have believed in Jesus Christ, and confessed Him as Lord, have received the Spirit which is of God, as we continue in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):12** Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

When we accept Christ as Savior, we receive His Spirit, the Spirit of God. This Spirit is the life of our spirit as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):1** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

And in **Romans 8 (KJV):16** The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

The Spirit of God is the life of our spirit because we are born of the Spirit as we read in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Our spirit was dead in transgressions and sins as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):1** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.³ Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Having been made alive together with Christ, we have a new nature in our spirit as Peter reveals in **2 Peter 1 (NASB):4** For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

Now our flesh still has the old Adamic sin nature. This is why our flesh is mortal. We read in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):22** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

And in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):53** For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

Now that our flesh still has the old Adamic sin nature, Paul explains in **Romans 7 (KJV):21** I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

We delight in the law of God after the inward man, that is, our spirit, which has been born again of the Spirit of God, and has a new nature. However, the law of sin, that is, the old Adamic sin nature that we inherit from Adam, is still in my members, my flesh. But God has given us the victory as we continue in **Romans 7 (KJV):24** O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Paul further explains that it is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus that has set us free from the law of sin and death in our members as we continue in **Romans 8 (KJV):1** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

That is, it is the new nature we receive from the Spirit of God in our spirit that is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. This has made us free from the law of sin and death, which is still in our flesh. So it is in our spirit that we have eternal life because it is the part of us that is born again of the Spirit of God. This is what the apostle John assures us in **1 John 5 (KJV):12** He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

So we delight in the law of God in the inward man, which is our spirit that has been born again of the Spirit of God, and has a new nature. But my flesh still wants to serve sin. In order to walk after the Spirit, I need to discipline my flesh. We continue to read in **Romans 8 (KJV):3** For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

We must mind the things of the Spirit as we continue in **Romans 8 (KJV):5** For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

The Spirit of God dwells in us after we are born again. He is the life of our inward man, our spirit. He is the “Christ in us” as we continue in **Romans 8 (KJV):10** And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of

sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

We have the victory over our flesh as Paul assures us in **Romans 8 (KJV):12** Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. 13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

If we don't discipline ourselves, God will discipline us as Paul reminds us in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):15** If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

And in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):28** But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

We prove out our sonship as we yield to, or are led by the Spirit as we continue in **Romans 8 (KJV):14** For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

The Spirit of God bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. This witness of the Spirit of God will be manifest in our lives by the fruit of the Spirit in **Galatians 5 (KJV):22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

This will be a witness of the Spirit that can be felt. We will feel the love of God, the joy of the Lord, and the peace of God in our soul which is made up of our heart which is the center of our emotions, our mind, our will, and our conscience. Our spirit is where we connect with God. And it is through our soul that our spirit connects with the physical world. That there is a division between our soul and spirit is revealed in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):12** For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Our mind is a faculty of our soul as we read in **Psalms 139 (KJV):14** I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.

Our will is also a faculty of our soul as we read in **Job 6 (KJV):7** The things that my soul refused to touch are as my sorrowful meat.

And in **Job 7 (KJV):15** So that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life.

Our emotions are in our soul as well as we read in **Job 7 (KJV):11** Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.

Our heart is the center of our emotions in **Isaiah 29 (KJV):13** Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

The word for "heart" in Hebrew is **לֵב** (pronounced leb). Strong says it means, "the heart; also used (figuratively) very widely for the feelings, the will and even the intellect; likewise for the centre of anything:"

Our conscience is the faculty of our soul that determines right from wrong. Before we are saved, our conscience is defiled as we read in **Titus 1 (KJV):15** Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

Now the natural man, being in this state, cannot know the things of the Spirit of God as we continue again in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):14** But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

The natural man only sees what is physical, what is on earth. His vision is only horizontal as it were. But the spiritual man sees what is above as well as in **Colossians 3 (KJV):1** If ye then be risen with Christ, seek

those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

The spiritual man sees what is vertical as well. This is why he is able to judge all things as we continue in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):15** But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. 16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

As we read the word of God, and we are taught the Biblical truths in the word of God, our minds are renewed, as we read in **Romans 12 (KJV):1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

This renewal of our minds will bring a transformation, a change in our lives. We will no longer be conformed to this world in our thinking and in our actions. We will be transformed in this way to be spiritual men and women of God. We will be able to understand the things of the Spirit. This is the essence of what Jesus was teaching in **Matthew 13 (KJV):15** For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. 16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

The one who is spiritual has eyes to see and ears to hear the things of the Spirit. Those who watched Jesus heal and cast out demons, knew that it was by the Spirit of God that those things were done. As we read the word of God, we hear with our ears. As we yield to the truth in the word of God as it is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit, we will grow in grace and knowledge as Peter says in **2 Peter 3 (KJV):18** But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Even though the Corinthians came behind in no gift, that is, they exercised all of the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, Paul could not speak to them about spiritual things because of their carnality. They were as babes in Christ. Their carnality did not nullify their gifts. Paul corrected them as to their operation of spiritual gifts. He told them to covet to prophesy in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):39** Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. 40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

But Paul corrected them so that they would bear fruit and profit not only themselves, but those who heard and saw the manifestations of the Spirit through their ministry. It is the exercise of the gifts of the Spirit without the fruit of the Spirit that makes us unacceptable to others. We must learn to discipline our flesh so that we follow after the Spirit. Then we will manifest the fruit of the Spirit, and as we operate the gifts of the Spirit in the fruit of the Spirit, we will truly be spiritual, and we will be blessed with others who are the fruit of our ministry.

The vision of the apostles was that we would operate the gifts of the Spirit in the fruit of the Spirit. Their desire was that we would grow up into him in all things as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):14** That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Their goal was that we would attain to the measure of the stature of Christ as in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):11** And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

This is what God is building, a united body in faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, a perfect man of the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Let us have this vision so that we build with Him, and so that we don't build our own little kingdoms.