

MODERN-DAY MIRACLES?

DO MIRACLES, TONGUE SPEAKING, & HOLY-SPIRIT BAPTISM OCCUR TODAY?



DAVE MILLER

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DEDICATION

To Deb—
whose positive influence on
my life has been inestimable,
profound, and eternal.

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

Numerous religious groups commonly claim the assistance of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Famed religious television personalities boldly announce the active influence of the Holy Spirit even as they speak. Supposedly, the Holy Spirit talks to them personally, heals viewers instantaneously, and enables them to babble uncontrollably in an “unknown tongue.” All of this is claimed to be “proof positive” of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. But do miracles still happen? Can people speak in tongues today? Does God, in the 21st century, supernaturally countermand the laws of nature and instantaneously heal people miraculously?

“Come now, and let us reason together” (Isaiah 1:18). It is absolutely imperative that we examine **Scripture**—not our feelings, not what someone else says happened to them, and not our own subjective experience.¹ The only sure and certain approach is to ask: What does the Bible teach? The reader must ask: “Do I honestly believe the Bible to be the Word of God?” Answers to critical questions of human existence require that a person be willing to spend time in the Word, “rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). One must “search the scriptures” (Acts 17:11). One must be honest and willing to go where the evidence takes him. If you had to choose between what you genuinely think you have experienced or seen firsthand and what the Bible actually says, which would you choose? You must ask yourself: “Will I honestly accept God’s written Word on the matter of miracles?” If you will, I invite you to join me in an examination of what the Bible teaches pertaining to miracles.

CHAPTER I: REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. According to Isaiah, what is needed to arrive at God's truth? Cite the chapter and verse.
2. In the examination of Scripture to arrive at truth, what three things are **not** needed?
3. What is the only sure and certain approach to arriving at the truth?
4. Before the truth can be ascertained, what must a person ask himself?
5. Give two Bible verses that enjoin proper handling of Scripture.
6. Which choice should every person make when facing a conflict between (1) what a person genuinely thinks he has experienced or seen firsthand and (2) what the Bible actually says?

CHAPTER 2 THE DEFINITION OF MIRACLES

What, exactly, is a “miracle”? How does the Bible use the word? The three central terms used in the Bible to designate a supernatural (as contrasted with a natural) manifestation are: (1) “miracle” (*dunamis*); (2) “sign” (*semeion*); and (3) “wonder” (*teras*). All three terms occur together in Acts 2:22, 2 Corinthians 12:12, and Hebrews 2:4. Related terms include “work” (*ergon*)² and “mighty deeds” (*kratos*—Luke 1:51, NASB). The occurrence of a miracle in the Bible meant that God worked **outside** the laws of nature. W.E. Vine, whose Greek scholarship, according to F.F. Bruce, was “wide, accurate and up-to-date,”³ stated that “miracle” (*dunamis*) is used in the New Testament of “works of a **supernatural** origin and character, such as could not be produced by **natural** agents and means.”⁴ Otfried Hofius noted that a “sign” (*semeion*) “contradicts the **natural** course of things”⁵ and, similarly, “wonder” (*teras*) referred to events that “contradict the ordered unity of **nature**.”⁶ Thus a miracle in the Bible was not merely an event that was astonishing, incredible, extraordinary, or unusual—like the birth of a baby, or the beauty of a flower, or the narrow avoidance of an accident. A miracle in the Bible was a **supernatural** act. It was an event that was contrary to the usual course of nature.⁷ The miraculous is not to be confused with the **providential**, where God operates **within** the usual course of nature.

Several miraculous abilities are alluded to in the New Testament that were bestowed by the Holy Spirit as gifts to individual Christians (see the chart on p. 4). 1 Corinthians 12-13 provides listings of these gifts that merit comment. A “word of wisdom” was, no doubt, an inspired

Listing of First Century Miracles

(Gleaned from 1 Corinthians 12-13)

Word of wisdom
Word of knowledge
Faith
Healings
Working of miracles
Prophecy
Discerning of spirits
Tongue-speaking
Interpretation of tongues
Inspired psalms
Inspired teaching

insight that was given directly to an individual at a moment when that insight was needed to further Christ's cause. A "word of knowledge" was simply inspired information given to the individual whose circumstances merited the information. While similar to the gift of prophecy, the recipient was not technically a prophet, but rather simply received a bit of information that suited the specific occasion that called forth the need for the knowledge. "Faith" as a miraculous gift would not have entailed the initial saving faith that is required of everyone in order to become a Christian (cf. Mark 16:16; Luke 8:24; Romans 1:5; 16:26). Rather, the gift was intended for Christians (who were already "justified by faith"—Romans 5:1), but who were given an increased amount of faith to enable them to achieve whatever task was given to them by the Holy Spirit.

The term "miracles" in the phrase "working of miracles" (1 Corinthians 12:10) is no doubt a "catch-all" term that refers to every manner of miracle that might be performed, including raising the dead, restoring sight to the blind, enabling the lame to walk, etc. "Prophecy" refers to the

ability of the recipient to speak inspired information for the purpose of instruction. The Bible definition of prophecy can include the ability to predict the future, but the central business of the prophet was to declare God's message as revealed directly to him by the Holy Spirit. Keep in mind that the New Testament had not yet been fully revealed, let alone committed to writing. Hence, the need for individuals within the church who could instruct and convey the precepts of Christianity prior to the general availability of the completed New Testament. Read 1 Corinthians 14:1-5. The "discerning of spirits" was likely a "companion" gift to the gift of prophecy. It enabled the possessor to distinguish between authentic and counterfeit prophecy. See 1 John 4:1.

"Tongues" refers to the miraculous ability to speak a known human language without ever having learned that language. The "interpretation of tongues" consisted of the ability to translate (orally) the words of a tongue speaker into the language of the hearers, again, without having mastered the language that he would translate. "Having a psalm" entailed an individual having the inspired ability to produce a psalm (like those in the Old Testament) which, in turn, could be read or studied, recited orally, or sung by the congregation.⁸ Inspired "teaching" consisted of the individual's ability to impart information from God prior to the general availability of that information in written form. It could also include the teaching of previous revelation (from the Old Testament) which the teacher would have been able to present perfectly, conveying accurate meanings.

All of these miraculous gifts created an atmosphere in the local church which was conducive to members (and visitors) being "edified" (1 Corinthians 14:17), i.e., built

up—“for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” which “causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love” (Ephesians 4:12,16). Growth, edification, and equipping can only occur via access to the Word of God. Hence, these critical, indispensable benefits subsume themselves beneath the central purpose of miracles, as discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What three central terms are used to refer to a supernatural manifestation?
2. Cite one of the three verses in the New Testament where all three terms are used.
3. What two other terms are also used?
4. What was God doing when He performed a miracle?
5. Give an example of what many people would call a “miracle.”
6. As a supernatural act, to what was a miracle in the Bible contrary?
7. What term do we typically use to refer to God’s operations **within** the usual course of nature?
8. Name three examples from the listing of 1st-century miracles.
9. Which gift was likely a “companion” gift to the gift of prophecy?
10. Which gift enabled the possessor to distinguish between authentic and counterfeit prophecy?
11. What kind of language is intended by the term “tongue”?
12. Spiritual growth and edification can only occur via what medium?

CHAPTER 3 THE DESIGN OF MIRACLES

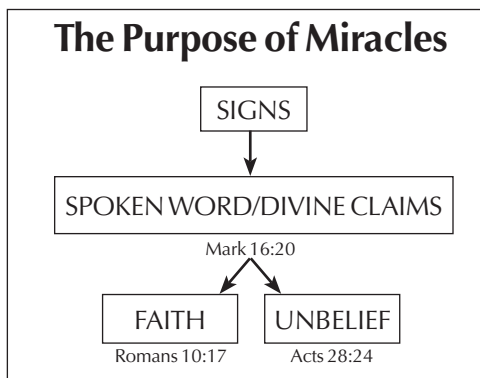
It is absolutely imperative that one recognize the **purpose** of the miraculous. Imagine living in the 1st century and being inundated with individuals claiming to be speaking the truth—even truths from God. How could one determine who was giving information actually from God? Miracles in the New Testament served the fundamental function of **confirmation**. When an inspired speaker stepped forward to declare God’s Word, God **validated** or **endorsed** the speaker’s oral remarks by empowering the speaker to perform a miracle. Many New Testament passages specify this fact quite plainly. For example, the apostles “went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and **confirming the word by the signs** that followed” (Mark 16:20). The Hebrews writer asked:

[H]ow shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be **spoken** by the Lord, and was **confirmed** to us by those who heard Him, God also **bearing witness** both with **signs and wonders**, with various **miracles**, and gifts of the Holy Spirit? (Hebrews 2:3-4).

Referring to the initial proclamation of the Gospel to the Samaritans, Luke stated: “And the multitudes with one accord heeded **the things spoken** by Philip, hearing and seeing the **miracles** which he did” (Acts 8:6). The apostles prayed to God: “[G]rant to Your servants that with all boldness they may **speak Your word**, *by* stretching out Your hand to **heal**, and that **signs and wonders** may be done” (Acts 4:29-30).

These passages, and many others (e.g., Acts 13:12; 14:3; 15:12; Romans 15:18-19; 1 Corinthians 2:4; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; cf. Exodus 4:30), show that the purpose of

miracles was to **authenticate** the oral/spoken word as God's Word. Miracles **legitimized** and **verified** the teaching of God's messengers, as over against the many false teachers (like Simon in Acts 8:9, or Pharaoh's magicians in Exodus 7:11) who attempted to mislead the people. In the late 19th century, Greek lexicographer Joseph Thayer worded this point well when he noted that "sign" (*semeion*) is used in the New Testament "of miracles and wonders by which **God authenticates** the men sent by him, or by which men prove that the cause they are pleading is God's."⁹ Even the miracles that Jesus performed were designed to back up His claim (i.e., spoken words) to be Deity. Consider two examples: (1) Using the parallel term "works" (a key word, like "sign," in the book of John), Jesus remarked to Philip, "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The **words** that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the **works**. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of **the works** themselves" (John 14:10-11; cf. John 6:26); (2) Nicodemus said to Jesus: "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these **signs** that You do unless God is with him" (John 3:2). This pattern is repeated in the New Testament many times over (e.g., John 2:23; 5:36; 6:14; 7:31; 10:37-38,41-42; 20:30-31; Acts 2:22). In other words, Jesus performed signs and miracles to prove His divine identity and thereby authenticate His message. His message, in turn, generated faith in those who chose to believe His teachings (cf. Romans 10:17). Here is the consistent sequence presented in Scripture: (1) **Signs** confirmed the Word; (2) the **spoken Word** was presented to hearers; and (3) **faith** was created (by the Word) in those who received it.



An excellent demonstration of this process is provided by Luke in his report of the conversion of the Roman proconsul Sergius Paulus. Elymas the sorcerer attempted to thwart Paul's effort to teach Sergius the Gospel. So Paul performed a miracle by striking Elymas blind. Luke next recorded: "Then the proconsul, **when he saw what was done**, believed, being astonished at the **teaching** of the Lord" (Acts 13:12). One might well expect the text to have said that Sergius was astonished at the **miracle** that Paul performed. But Luke was careful to report the situation with precision. The miracle that Paul performed captured Sergius' attention, causing him to recognize the divine origin of Paul's Gospel message. The Gospel message, in turn, generated faith in the proconsul—in harmony with Paul's later affirmation to Christians in Rome that faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Over and over again in the New Testament, a close correlation is seen between the performance of miracles and the preaching of the Word of God (cf. Mark 6:12-13; Luke 9:2,6). [See the chart on pp. 10-11.]

MIRACLES CONFIRM THE WORD			
PASSAGE	MESSAGE	CONFIRMATION	RESPONSE
Mark 16:15-20	"preach the gospel... they went out and preached...the word"	"the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs"	"he who believes and is baptized will be saved"
Mark 6:12-13	"They went out and preached"	"they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them"	"that people should repent"
Matthew 9:6; Luke 5:24-26	"But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"	"He said to the man who was paralyzed, 'I say to you, arise, take up your bed'"	"Immediately he rose up before them... and departed... glorifying God"
Luke 9:2,6	"to preach the kingdom of God... preaching the gospel"	"and to heal the sick... healing everywhere"	
Luke 9:11	"spoke to them about the kingdom of God"	"healed those who had need of healing"	
John 2:22	"the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said"	"when he had risen from the dead"	"they believed"
John 2:23	"in His name"	"they saw the signs which He did"	"many believed"
John 3:2-3	"unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom"	"these signs that you do"	"You are a teacher come from God"
John 11:42; 12:10-11	"I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me."	"might see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead"	"many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus"
Acts 4:29-32	"Speak Your Word with all boldness"	"by stretching out Your hand to heal and that signs and wonders may be done"	"those who believed were of one heart and soul"
Acts 8:5-12	"the things spoken by Philip;" "Philip... preached Christ"	"hearing and seeing the miracles which he did"	"they believed Philip...and were baptized"
Acts 13:7-12	"sought to hear the word of God"	"You shall be blind, not seeing"	"the proconsul believed...being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord"
Acts 14:2-3	"speaking boldly in the Lord"	"The Lord...was bearing witness to the word...granting signs/wonders to be done"	"a great multitude... believed"

MIRACLES CONFIRM THE WORD			
PASSAGE	MESSAGE	CONFIRMATION	RESPONSE
Acts 15:7,12	"the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel"	"many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles"	"purifying their hearts by faith"
Romans 15:18-19	"I have fully preached the gospel of Christ"	"in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God"	"to make the Gentiles obedient"
1 Corinthians 2:4-5	"my speech and my preaching"	"in demonstration of the Spirit and of power"	"that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God"
1 Thessalonians 1:5-6	"our gospel did not come to you in word only"	"but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance"	"you became followers of us and the Lord, having received the word"
Hebrews 2:1-4	"so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord"	"God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit"	"give the more earnest heed"
Exodus 4:8,15,17	"I will be with your mouth...and I will teach you what you shall do"	"take this rod in your hand, with which you shall do the signs"	"that they may believe"
Judges 6:14,36-40	"you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites"	dew on fleece, dry ground; dew on ground, dry fleece	"You will save Israel by my hand as You have said"
1 Kings 17:16,22,24	"the word of the LORD which He spoke by Elijah"	"the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived"	"by this I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is the truth"
1 Kings 18:21,38-39	"If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him"	"Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice"	"when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, 'The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!'"
Isaiah 7:9,14,16	"the land that you dread will be forsaken by her kings"	"the Lord Himself will give you a sign"	"If you will not believe, surely you shall not be established"

Other Purposes: Super-Spiritual?

But some maintain that there are other reasons for divine healing and tongue-speaking. Some say tongue-speaking is a sign that the tongue-speaker is “super-spiritual.” Others say miraculous healing serves the purpose of making the believer well—a mere act of mercy to relieve his pain and suffering. They say God does not want us to suffer, and so He will heal us just to ease our pain in this life because we are His children.

Regarding the first claim, in Paul’s admonitions directed to the church of Christ at Corinth, he insisted that the person who possessed the ability to speak in tongues was not spiritually superior to the one who had no such ability. The tongue-speaker had a responsibility to utilize his gift appropriately, i.e., to aid others in recognizing that his miraculous ability served to authenticate the divine message he communicated (1 Corinthians 14:6,9,12,19). His gift no more placed him in a spiritually superior position than did any other gift possessed by any other member—whether the ability was miraculous or non-miraculous (1 Corinthians 12:11-27). Tongue-speaking was simply one miraculous capability among many bestowed by God without regard to a member’s spiritual status, let alone his spiritual **superiority** over another member (1 Corinthians 12:7-11,28-30).

Other Purposes: To Make Well?

Regarding the second claim, certainly, the compassion of God was evident when people received miraculous healing in New Testament times. And, surely, relief from suffering would have been a side effect/benefit of being healed. But the Bible teaches that **relieving suffering was not the purpose of miracles**. Such a purpose would con-

tradict—even thwart—the divine intent of this created Earth as a place where hardship exists to prepare us for eternity.¹⁰ Death and sin entered the world due to human choice, and God allows the circumstances caused by human decisions to take their course. God is not going to interfere with the natural order of things to show partiality to some over others. The Christian is subject to the same diseases, the same tragedies, and the same physical death that befall non-Christians: “for dust you are, and to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:19). The Bible, in fact, warns Christians that they can **expect** to be the recipients of all sorts of hardship, opposition, temptation, and suffering (e.g., 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 4:12-17). Commenting on the purpose of miracles, J.W. McGarvey wrote:

[T]o say that they were wrought for the single purpose of showing divine compassion toward the sick, and those oppressed by the devil, would be to ignore a purpose which is easily discerned, which is openly avowed by Christ himself, and which is of much greater importance.¹¹

That purpose was “to support his proclamation...a necessary proof of the claim of Jesus.”¹²

If God’s intention was to exempt Christians from sickness and disease, He certainly has fallen down on the job, since the vast majority of Christians throughout the last 2,000 years have experienced the exact same afflictions suffered by unbelievers. If miracles in the first century had as their object to improve the health or physical well-being of the recipient, then Jesus and the apostles were failures, because they left untouched a lot of sick and dying folk! Jesus healed a minority of the sick people of Palestine, and healed **none** outside of that tiny geographical region (with the exception of the Canaanite woman’s daughter). In fact,

one would be forced to conclude that God's compassion did not extend to **everybody**. But the Bible affirms that **God loves the entire world of humanity** (John 3:16; Romans 5:8). Hence, miracles did not have as their central purpose to demonstrate God's compassion, nor to ease pain, sickness, and suffering. Writing in 1898, McGarvey made the following observations:

[U]nlike these modern advocates of "divine healing," the apostles were never known to go about exhorting people to come forward for the healing of the body. They effected miraculous cures in a few instances, "as a sign to the unbelievers," but they never proclaimed, either to saints or sinners, that the healing of all diseases was a part of the gospel which they were sent to preach. These so-called faith-cure churches, therefore, and the preachers who officiate in them as "divine healers," or what not, are not modeled after the apostolic type, but are misleading the people by humbuggery.¹³

Insufficient Faith?

The usual rebuttal to these observations is that the reason some people do not receive a miracle is that "they do not have sufficient faith." But this objection is likewise unscriptural. It is true that some individuals in the New Testament were commended for the faith that they possessed **prior** to being the recipient of a miracle (e.g., Mark 5:34). It does not automatically follow, however, that faith was a **necessary** prerequisite to miraculous reception. Many people were **not** required to have faith as a prerequisite. For example, all individuals who were raised from the dead obviously were not in a position to "have faith" (e.g., John 11:44). Nor did those possessed by demons have faith before being healed, since they were not in their right mind (e.g., Luke 9:42; 11:14). The man who was blind from birth actually showed **uncertainty** regarding the identity

of Jesus (John 9:11-12,17,25,35-36). The man who was healed by Jesus as he laid beside a pool of water, in fact, **did not even know** who healed him (John 5:13). On one occasion, Jesus healed a paralytic after observing, not **his** faith, but the faith of **his companions** (Mark 2:5). Additional texts indicate that many who received the benefits of miracles were not required to have faith (Luke 13:12; 14:4; Acts 3:1-10).

The opposite was true as well. There were individuals who possessed faith, and yet were not healed of their ailments. The apostle Paul obviously had plenty of faith. He had an “infirmity” that was so painful that he called it “a thorn in the flesh” and “a messenger of Satan” (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). Yet his earnest prayers to God for relief did not result in his being healed. Timothy was a faithful and effective servant of the Lord. He had “frequent illnesses” and stomach trouble of such severity as to warrant Paul referring to it by inspiration. But rather than simply healing him, or telling him to “pray for healing,” Paul advised him to use a little wine as a tonic (1 Timothy 5:23).¹⁴ Another Christian worker and companion of Paul in his evangelistic travels, Trophimus (Acts 20:4: 21:29), had to be left at Miletus due to his sickness (2 Timothy 4:20). Epaphroditus was an extremely valuable worker in the kingdom of Christ, so much so that Paul referred to him as “my brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier...and minister to my need” (Philippians 2:25). When he became sick “almost unto death” (Philippians 2:27,30)—likely due to his exhausting kingdom activity and service to Paul—Paul did not heal him. These examples demonstrate that personal faith was not prerequisite to the reception of a miracle in the first century. Instead,

miracles were inextricably bound to the authentication of the spoken Word of God.

But what about those verses that seem to indicate that faith **did** have something to do with whether a miracle would be forthcoming? For instance, what of Matthew's observation that when Jesus went to His own country, He "did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief" (Matthew 13:58)? Notice that the text cannot be correlating the presence of the miraculous with the presence of belief. After all, "not many" implies that **some** miracles were performed—even though unbelief was rampant. The point that Matthew was making, therefore, was that when Jesus performed a few miracles to authenticate His oral claim to deity, the evidence was rejected, making it superfluous for Christ to offer any further miraculous confirmations. Albert Barnes explained this matter succinctly:

We are not to suppose that his [Jesus'—DM] **power** was limited by the belief or unbelief of men; but they were so **prejudiced**, so set against him, that they were not in a condition to **judge of evidence** and to be convinced.... It would have been of no use, therefore, in **proving to them** that he was from God, to have worked miracles.... He gave sufficient proof of his mission, and left them in their chosen unbelief without excuse.¹⁵

Jesus was simply doing what He instructed the Twelve to do: "whoever will not receive you, nor hear you, ...shake off the dust under your feet" (Mark 6:11). He added, "nor cast your pearls before swine" (Matthew 7:6). If further confirmation of His Word (via additional miracles) would have stimulated faith in His hearers, Jesus would have performed them.

John actually settled this question for the unbiased searcher. He worded the thematic statement of his Gospel record in the following words: “And truly Jesus did many other **signs** in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written **that you may believe** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,¹⁶ and that believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:30-31). John said that belief occurs **after** the miracle—not before, in order to receive a miracle. The New Testament teaches the very opposite of those who claim that miracles occur today. They say a person must have faith **before** he or she can receive a miracle. The New Testament teaches that miracles were performed to authenticate the divine origin of the speaker’s message and/or identity. The message, in turn, generated faith in the hearer (cf. Romans 10:17). Hence, **miracles preceded faith**. Even tongue-speaking was designed to convince the **unbeliever** to give heed to the message (1 Corinthians 14:22).

What About the Elders?

Some have suggested that James 5:14-15 indicates that elders can heal people today. But James simply refers to the first century phenomenon of supernatural healing that is mentioned as one of the gifts available to the first century church (1 Corinthians 12:9,30; see also Mark 6:13). Yet, as explained beginning on p. 21, all such miraculous gifts have ceased. Elders in the first century churches would have acquired the ability to heal by receiving the laying on of the apostles’ hands (see pp. 50ff.). The olive oil, though used medicinally in the first century, was merely a symbol of Christ’s power to heal, which the elders would have applied to the sick person as they prayed for God to heal the individual. The miraculous healing was not

imparted by either the oil or the elders' hands, but by "the prayer of faith" (vs. 15). Such miraculous intervention on God's part would have been immediate with complete and full recovery. Those who believe these verses apply today are inevitably stymied when the sick individual is not instantaneously healed, and then must resort to excuses and unscriptural explanations. It is obvious from the text that the illness referred to is a **life-threatening one**, since "save" in verse 15 refers, not to spiritual salvation, but to physical salvation, i.e., he will be made well (cf. "the Lord will raise him up"). In our day, when elders pray over a person who has been diagnosed with terminal cancer, does he recover? What if the elders pray over and anoint a person who lost his hand or arm in an accident? Will his arm be restored? Again, the desire to have miraculous healing in the church today fails completely to grasp why healing occurred in Bible times: not merely to make people well, but to spotlight the validity of God's Word as conveyed by His emissaries—an objective accomplished long ago.

Summary

A good summary passage that pinpoints precisely the purpose of miracles throughout the Bible is seen in the incident concerning the widow of Zarephath to whom Elijah was sent for assistance in surviving the famine during the reign of King Ahab. When her son's serious illness culminated in his death, Elijah brought the boy back to life, raising him from the dead. Her subsequent verbal observation summarizes succinctly **the function of the miraculous**: "Now by this [miracle] I know that you are a man of God, and that **the word of the LORD in your mouth** is the truth" (1 Kings 17:24). The miracle fulfilled its intended

purpose: to verify that, as a genuine emissary of the one true God, Elijah was a communicator of God's Word. The restoration of the life of her son—though magnificent and thrilling in itself—was secondary to the verified realization that Elijah was a legitimate communicator of the Word of the one true God.

CHAPTER 3: REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What singular function did miracles serve in the Bible?
2. What did empowering a speaker to perform a miracle enable God to do?
3. Cite three passages that show that the purpose of miracles was to authenticate a speaker's oral remarks as God's Word.
4. What terms describe what miracles did for the teaching of **God's** messengers?
5. To what did Nicodemus attribute his certainty that Jesus' claim to be from God was true? Cite the verse.
6. State the sequence that clarifies the purpose of miracles as they relate to both the Word and faith.
7. Explain how this sequence functioned for the Roman proconsul Sergius Paulus, and cite the verse.

Other Purposes: Super-Spiritual?

8. Cite two additional passages from the chart that illustrate how miracles confirm the Word.
9. What did the ability to speak in tongues imply about the tongue speaker's spiritual status?

Other Purposes: To Make Well?

10. In light of the Bible's stated purpose of miracles, as well as the Bible's stated purpose of the created Earth, what were miracles **not** intended to do?
11. What does the Bible warn Christians they can **expect** to receive? Cite a verse.

12. If the purpose of miracles was to exempt Christians from sickness, disease, and suffering, what has been the result?
13. What percentage of people living in Palestine was healed by Jesus?
14. What conclusion follows from the fact that (1) God loves everybody, but (2) God did not heal everybody?

Insufficient Faith?

15. What were many people **not** required to possess in order to receive a miracle?
16. Name two individuals in the New Testament who could not have possessed faith before receiving a miracle.
17. What individual showed uncertainty regarding Jesus' identity and yet was healed? Cite the chapter.
18. Identify two faithful Christians who needed to be healed of their infirmities, yet did not receive miraculous healing.
19. These examples show that personal faith was not mandatory to receive what gift?
20. Once Jesus confirmed His oral message by performing a miracle, if those who saw the miracle refused to accept His confirmed message, what additional activity would be superfluous?
21. What two verses in John prove that signs/miracles **preceded** faith?
22. Tongue-speaking was designed to convince who to give heed to the message?

What About the Elders?

23. How were first century elders enabled to heal others?
24. To what does the term "save" refer in James 5:15?

Summary

25. What conclusion did the widow of Zarephath reach when Elijah restored her son's life?

CHAPTER 4 THE DURATION OF MIRACLES

These observations bring us to a third extremely critical realization: once God revealed the entirety of the information that He wished to make available to mankind (later contained in what we call the New Testament), the need for miraculous confirmation of the oral Word came to an end. Now, people can sit down with a New Testament, the written Word of God, and, with honest and diligent study, conclude that it is God's Word based upon its internal attributes of inspiration.¹⁷ Many preachers and teachers today have failed to acknowledge this crucial biblical factor. They fail to face the fact that we have absolutely no need for the miraculous. Since the purpose of miracles has been achieved, the miracles, themselves, have ceased. I repeat: the Bible teaches that **miracles are no longer necessary**. We have everything we need to function in this life, to be pleasing to God, and to survive spiritually (2 Peter 1:3). Spiritual maturity is now within the grasp of every single individual who chooses to access the means to maturity: the written Word of God. To insist that we have need for the miraculous today is to undermine, and to cast aspersions upon, the **all-sufficiency** of God's written Word (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:22; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

The Church in Corinth

The most detailed treatment of the phenomena of miracles in the New Testament, including tongue-speaking, healing, and prophecy, is 1 Corinthians 12, 13, and 14. These three chapters were written to Christians in Corinth because miracles were being abused and misused. Chapter 12 defines the miracles. Chapter 13 indicates their duration. Chapter 14 explains their disposition. In 1 Corinthians

12, Paul argued that the body (the church) should function harmoniously by using miraculous gifts properly. In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul argued that love is a more excellent attribute than miraculous gifts. After all, miraculous gifts (i.e., prophecy, tongue-speaking, supernatural knowledge, etc.) were going to fail, cease, vanish away, and be done away.¹⁸ These miraculous gifts are identified in the text with the expression “in part” (13:9-10,12). The “in part,” or miraculous, would cease and be done away when the “perfect” had come. But to what does the “perfect” refer?

The Greek word translated “perfect” is *teleios*. The term does not refer to “perfect” in the sense typically understood by the average modern English reader, i.e., to be sinless. Following this faulty notion, some have concluded that the “perfect” refers to Jesus—since He has been the only perfect, i.e., sinless, person. Other interpretations apply “perfect” to heaven (the only perfect place that will be free of sin and imperfection), or Christian maturity and perfect love (the perfect spiritual condition or quality). But, in context, Paul was not contrasting qualities or places. “Perfect” is placed, not in contradistinction to sinful or moral imperfection, but with that which is “in part,” i.e., partial or incomplete.¹⁹ He was contrasting quantities, i.e., those things that were incomplete and partial (specifically identified as miraculous gifts) with that which would be total and complete (the fully revealed Word of God).

The inaccuracy of these interpretations is seen further in the Greek definition of *teleios*. The word refers, not to moral perfection or sinlessness, but to “totality,” “whole,” “complete,” “that from which nothing is missing,” “brought to its end, finished, and lacking nothing necessary to completeness.”²⁰ When referring to persons or animals, *teleios* refers to being full-grown, adult, and

mature (e.g., 1 Corinthians 14:20).²¹ Used in its neuter form,²² Paul was referring to a thing, not a person, something that, when completed or finished, would replace the incomplete or partial, i.e., the miraculous gifts—which clearly had only **temporary** significance. Commenting on the abolition of the miraculous gifts of prophecy and supernatural knowledge (mentioned in vss. 8 and 9), Greek scholar W.R. Nicoll observed that “these charisms are **partial** in scope, and therefore temporary: the **fragmentary** gives place to the **complete**.”²³ Kenneth Wuest agreed: “In I Corinthians 13:10, the word means ‘complete,’ and is contrasted to that which is incomplete.”²⁴ Whereas James used the term *teleios* to refer to the all-sufficiency of God’s Word in its ability to achieve everything it was intended to do (James 1:25), the exegete is forced to conclude that Paul’s use of “perfect” referred to the completed revelation or totally revealed New Testament Scriptures.²⁵ The revelation of God’s will through inspired spokesmen was completed in its entirety when the final book of the New Testament, Revelation, was written by John prior to A.D. 100.

Paul offered a useful illustration to clarify his point. When the church possessed only bits and pieces of God’s will, as revealed through scattered miraculous gifts and the gradual production and circulation of the written documents from the inspired writers of the New Testament between approximately A.D. 57 and A.D. 95, it could not achieve full spiritual maturity. It therefore was like a child (13:11). It lacked the necessary constituent elements to reach spiritual adulthood. However, when the totality of God’s will, which became the New Testament, had been revealed, the church then had the means available to become “a man” (13:11). Once the church had access to all of God’s written Word, the means by which the Word

was given (i.e., miraculous gifts) would be obsolete, useless, and therefore “put away” (13:11). Notice that in this illustration, Paul likened miracles to “childish things” (13:11). In other words, miracles were the spiritual equivalents of pacifiers that were necessary while the church was in a state of infancy. Now that the church has access to “all truth” (John 16:13), the use of tongue-speaking and other miraculous enhancements in the church today is comparable to an adult man or woman **sucking on a pacifier!**

Paul then further illustrated his point by making a contrast between the initial necessity of miracles to reveal and confirm God’s Word, and the idea of looking through a clouded mirror.²⁶ Once the entire contents of the New Testament had been revealed, the miraculous gifts no longer would be necessary. Having all of God’s revealed Word would enable one to be face to face with that Word rather than “looking through a clouded mirror,” i.e., having partial access. Paul wrote (13:11): “Now I know in part [i.e., my knowledge of God’s revelation is incomplete and partial due to limited access via the miraculous element—DM], but then [i.e., when all of God’s Word is revealed—DM] shall I know fully even as also I was fully known” [i.e., I shall be made to know or taught thoroughly—DM.]²⁷

The Church in Ephesus

Paul made essentially the same point to the Ephesians that he made to the Corinthians. Miracles—the “gifts” given by Christ (Ephesians 4:8)—were to last “**till...the** unity of **the** faith and of **the** knowledge of the Son of God” (Ephesians 4:13) was completely revealed. Two significant observations emerge from this latter verse. First, the word translated “till” (Middle English for “until”) is *mechri*, and was used as a conjunction to indicate

the *terminus ad quem* [finishing point] of the miraculous offices (mentioned in vs. 11) bestowed as gifts by Christ.²⁸ Nicoll observed: “The statement of the great object of Christ’s gifts and the provision made by Him for its fulfillment is now followed by a statement of the **time** this provision and the consequent service are to last.”²⁹ Paul was “[s]pecifying the **time** up to which this ministry and impartation of gifts are to last.”³⁰

Second, the phrase “the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God” often is misunderstood to refer to the eventual **unifying** of all believers in Christ (in doctrine, belief, or practice). But this conclusion cannot be correct. Both Scripture and common sense dispel such a notion. Complete unity within Christendom will never occur. Those who profess affiliation with Christianity are in a hopeless state of disunity. Catholicism and Protestant denominationalism are fractured into a plethora of factions and splinter groups—literally thousands of divisions and disagreements. Besides, Protestant denominationalism did not exist in the New Testament era, and the New Testament neither countenances nor legitimizes any such “manifestation” of Christianity. Nor will unity ever be achieved even within churches of Christ. The first-century congregations did not attain complete internal unity. Nor have the post first-century congregations achieved unity within. Even at the Second Coming and the Judgment, the world and the church will stand in a state of division.

In contrast with this interpretation, notice the use of the articles in the phrases: “**the** faith” and “**the** knowledge.” Contextually, Paul was referring to **the system of faith** alluded to so often in the New Testament. Jude urged his readers to “contend earnestly for **the** faith” (Jude 3). Paul referred to himself when he quoted others as saying, “He who for-

merly persecuted us now preaches **the** faith which he once tried to destroy” (Galatians 1:23). Luke reported that “a great company of the priests were obedient to **the** faith” (Acts 6:7). Elymas sought to “turn aside the proconsul from **the** faith” (Acts 13:8). The early disciples were exhorted to “continue in **the** faith” (Acts 14:22). Due to Paul’s repeat visits in Lycaonia, “the churches were strengthened in **the** faith” (Acts 16:5).

So “the faith” and “the knowledge” refer to the **completed body of information** that constitutes the Christian religion. Indeed, eight verses earlier (Ephesians 4:5), Paul already had referred to the “one faith” as the summation and totality of Christian doctrine—now situated in the repository of the New Testament. An honest exegete is driven to conclude that once the precepts of New Testament Christianity were revealed on Earth, the miraculous element no longer was necessary. Miracles lasted until “the faith” was completely revealed. They had served their purpose, in the same way that scaffolding is useful while a building is under construction. However, once construction is complete, the scaffolding is removed and discarded as unnecessary and superfluous paraphernalia. The chart on the next page shows that Paul emphasized the temporary nature of miracles to the Ephesian church just like he did to the Corinthian church.

THE TEMPORARY NATURE OF MIRACLES IN CORINTH AND EPHESUS	
1 Corinthians 12-14	Ephesians 4
"Gifts" (12:4,9, 28,30,31)	"Gifts" (4:7-8)
"no schism in the body" (12:25)	"joined and knit together" (4:16)
"one body, many members" (12:12,14,18-20,27)	"whole body, every part" (4:16)
"apostles, prophets, teachers" (12:29)	"apostles, prophets, pastor-teachers" (4:11)
"prophecies, knowledge" (13:8)	"prophets, evangelists, pastor-teachers" (4:11)
"fail, cease, vanish, done away" (13:8-10)	"till we all come to the unity of the faith" (4:13)
"when perfect comes" (13:10)	"the knowledge/the fullness of Christ" (4:13)
"shall know" (13:12)	"the knowledge/the fullness of Christ" (4:13)
"child" (13:11)	"children" (4:14)
"man" (13:11)	"man" (4:13)
"put away childish things" (13:11)	"grow up" (4:15)
"love" (13:1-8)	"love" (4:15-16)
"edification of the church" (14:3-5,12,17)	"edifying the body of Christ" (4:12)

CHAPTER 4: REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What precipitated the termination of the need for miraculous confirmation of the oral Word?
2. What do Christians and the Church now have absolutely no need of?
3. Cite a verse that indicates that we have everything we need to survive spiritually.
4. What is the one and only means to spiritual maturity?
5. What attribute of God's Word is undermined when someone insists that we have need for the miraculous today? Cite a passage.

The Church in Corinth

6. What four terms/expressions are used (in the NKJV) to anticipate the destiny of miraculous gifts? Cite the verse.
7. What expression is used to describe the status of miraculous gifts?

8. What would arrive that would trigger the cessation of the miraculous?
9. Name three things that the term “perfect” does **not** refer to.
10. What does Paul identify as partial and incomplete?
11. What does Paul identify as complete?
12. Define “*teleios*.”
13. To what does Paul compare the Church during the age of miracles?
14. To what does Paul compare the Church once all of God’s Word was revealed?
15. To what does Paul liken miracles in 1 Corinthians 13:11?
16. What additional comparison/illustration does Paul offer to contrast the age of the miraculous with the termination of miracles?

The Church in Ephesus

17. What is the significance of “till” in Ephesians 4:13?
18. To what do “the faith” and “the knowledge” **not** refer in Ephesians 4:13?
19. To what do “the faith” and “the knowledge” refer in Ephesians 4:13? Cite two corroborating verses.
20. To what does the “one faith” of Ephesians 4:5 refer?

CHAPTER 5 THE DISPLAY OF MIRACLES

The actual exercise of miraculous gifts by 1st-century Christians is addressed in 1 Corinthians 14. In this context, Paul used the term “gifts” (*charismata*, from *charisma*) in a technical sense (like *pneumatika*) to refer to miraculous abilities, designated by Thayer “**extraordinary** powers... by the Holy Spirit.”³¹ Hans Conzelmann stated that the term indicated that “[t]he operations are **supernatural**” and of “**supernatural** potency.”³² The word is so used in the Pauline corpus in 10 of its 16 occurrences (Romans 1:11; 12:6; 1 Corinthians 1:7; 12:4,9,28,30,31; 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6). The only other occurrence of the word in the New Testament is Peter’s comparable use, i.e., to refer to supernatural ability (1 Peter 4:10).³³ In the Corinthian context of chapter 14, special attention was given by Paul to two of the miraculous gifts in particular: prophecy and tongue-speaking. Several relevant points occur with regard to the gift of tongue-speaking that help one to understand both the temporary nature of miracles as well as their irrelevance to a current-day pursuit and practice of New Testament Christianity.

Tongue-Speaking

First, in 1 Corinthians 14, the term “unknown” (in regard to tongues) was italicized in the KJV because it does not appear in the original Greek text (14:2,4,13-14,19,27). By inserting this word into their translation, the translators were attempting to aid the English reader. They undoubtedly were hoping to convey the idea that the languages to which Paul referred were unknown **to the speaker**, i.e., the speaker had no prior training by which to learn or know the language. He spoke the language strictly by

God's miraculous empowerment. "Unknown" certainly was not intended to convey the idea that the tongues were unknown **to all humans** and, as such, were non-earthly, non-human languages.

Second, the events reported at the very beginning of the Christian religion (Acts 2) set the precedent for understanding the nature of tongue-speaking. First century tongue-speaking entailed no more than the ability to speak a foreign human language—which the speaker had not studied or learned. The necessity of this form of divine confirmation via the miraculous is self-evident from the fact that the audience on that occasion consisted of individuals from no fewer than 15 countries or geographical regions (vs. 9-11). Realizing that the apostles were Galileans, they were astounded by their ability to speak such foreign languages. "And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?" (vs. 8). Indeed, Luke uses the following terms to describe the crowd's wonder: "confounded," "amazed," "marveled," and "perplexed" (vss. 6,7,12). They would not have been amazed by nonsensical, meaningless babbling. They marveled because they recognized that these uneducated Galileans had the miraculous ability to speak foreign human languages. Nineteenth-century British theologian, textual critic, and scholar, Henry Alford, well summarized the facts:

There can be no question in any unprejudiced mind, that the fact which this narrative sets before us is, that the disciples began to speak in various languages, viz. the languages of the nations below enumerated, and perhaps others. All attempts to evade this are connected with some forcing of the text, or some far-fetched and indefensible exegesis.³⁴

The unbiased student must conclude that what is described in detail in Acts 2 is the same phenomenon alluded to in

1 Corinthians 14. All tongue-speaking in the Bible consisted of **known human languages** (known to the very audience being addressed) that were unknown (i.e., unstudied, unlearned) by the one who was speaking the language.

Third, there is simply no such thing as an “ecstatic utterance” in the New Testament. The tongue-speaking of 1 Corinthians 14 entailed human language—not incoherent gibberish. A simple reading of the chapter demonstrates that known human languages are under consideration. For example, Paul paralleled tongue-speaking with the use of the trumpet in warfare (vs. 8). If the bugler sounded meaningless noise, the military would be thrown into confusion. It was imperative for the bugler to blow the proper notes and tones, i.e., meaningful musical “language,” so that the army would understand what was being communicated (whether to charge, engage, or retreat).³⁵ Sound without sense fails to achieve the very purpose of tongue-speaking. Paul then stated:

So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air. There are, it may be, so many kinds of languages **in the world**, and none of them is without significance. Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to him who speaks, and he who speaks will be a foreigner to me (1 Corinthians 14:9-11).

Obviously, Paul was referring to human languages—those that exist “in the world.” He envisioned a scenario where two individuals, who spoke different languages, attempt to communicate with each other. If one speaks in Spanish and the other in German, as they attempt to speak to one another, each would be a “foreigner” to the other. Neither would understand what the other was attempting to say.

Hence the need for tongue-speaking, i.e., the ability to speak human language unknown to the speaker but known to the recipient.

Later in the chapter, Paul quoted Isaiah 28:11-12 where God threatened the Israelites with the fact that their failure to listen to Him (by means of the words spoken by His prophets) meant that He soon would be communicating to them through the language of their Assyrian conquerors—conquerors whom God would send against them. This powerful illustration presupposes the fact that in both Isaiah and 1 Corinthians, human languages are under consideration. After quoting Isaiah, Paul drew the conclusion that tongue-speaking was intended by God to be directed to **un**believers. Why? Because it would prove to the unbeliever that the tongue-speaker, who did not possess the natural ability to speak that language, was being empowered by God to speak in the language spoken by the unbeliever. The unbeliever would recognize the divine origin of the tongue-speaker's ability, and thereby be willing to consider the words being spoken as the instructions of God. As previously demonstrated, the miraculous serves the purpose of confirmation of the Word. Again, an examination of 1 Corinthians 14 yields the result that no contextual justification exists for drawing the conclusion that the Bible refers to, let alone endorses, the notion of "ecstatic" speech.

Tongues of Angels?

But what about Paul's passing reference to the "tongues of angels" in 1 Corinthians 13:1?

Though I speak with the tongues of men **and of angels**, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

Would not this reference prove that tongue-speaking could involve languages beyond those spoken by humans? First, consider the role, purpose, and activity of angels described in the Bible. The word “angel” (Greek—*angelos*; Hebrew—*malak*) simply means “messenger”—one who “speaks and acts in the place of the one who has sent him.”³⁶ It does not mean merely “to send,” but rather “to send a messenger/message.”³⁷ It is true that angels in both the Old and New Testaments carried out a wide range of activities beyond message-bearing, including: worshiping God (Revelation 5:11-12); comforting, aiding, and protecting (Daniel 6:22; Matthew 4:11; Luke 22:43; Acts 5:19; Hebrews 1:14); and executing judgment and inflicting punishment and death (e.g., Matthew 13:49; Acts 12:23). But it still remains true to say that the meaning of the term “angel” is a messenger—one who communicates a spoken message. Therefore, their principal role in God’s scheme of things was to function as messengers **to humans**.³⁸ Consequently, angels always are represented in Scripture as communicating in **human** language.

In the second place, what logical reason exists for humans to speak in an alleged “angelic” language that is different from human language? What would be the spiritual benefit? The Bible certainly makes no provision for humans to communicate with angels in such a language, nor would there be any need for an angel to communicate to a human in a non-earthly language. The whole point of 1 Corinthians 12-13 was to stress the need to function in the church in ways that were meaningful and understandable. Since God, by His very nature, never would do anything that is superfluous, unnecessary, or frivolous, it follows that He would not bestow upon a human being the ability to speak in a non-human language. The ability would serve no pur-

pose. The Bible simply offers no rationale or justification for identifying the “tongues of angels” in 1 Corinthians 13:1 with some heavenly, otherworldly, non-earthly languages.

In the third place, if, in fact, the “tongues of angels” refers to known human languages, what was Paul’s point? Since angels were God’s appointed spokesmen, they naturally would perform their assignment in such a way that God would be represented as He would want to be. God’s own angelic emissaries would have complied with their responsibility in such a way and manner that they would have God’s approval. In other words, angels would naturally articulate God’s message **as well as it could be expressed** (i.e., perfectly). When God inspired mere humans to communicate His will, He integrated their own educational background, stylistic idiosyncrasies, and vocabulary into their oral and literary productions. No such need would have existed for angels. Their communications would have been unfiltered through human agency. Their announcements would have been the epitome and pinnacle of eloquence and oratorical skill.

Perhaps, then, Paul was not drawing a contrast between human and nonhuman languages at all. Before referring to the “tongues of angels,” he referred to “the tongues of men.” Why would Paul say, “Though I speak with the tongues of men”? After all, isn’t that precisely what all adult humans do? We humans speak at least one human language. Paul must have been referring, then, not to the ability to speak a human language, but to the ability to speak **all** human languages. No tongue-speaker in the first-century church had the ability to speak all human languages. In fact, the textual evidence indicates that most tongue-speakers probably had the ability to speak only one human language—which the speaker, himself, did not understand—

thus necessitating the need for an inspired interpreter (1 Corinthians 12:30; 14:26-28). Paul could apparently speak more languages than any of the others (1 Corinthians 14:18). If the “tongues of men” referred to the number of human languages (rather than referring to the ability to speak a human language), then the “tongues of angels” would refer—not to the ability to speak an angelic language—but to the ability to speak human languages **the way angels do**.

Here, then, would have been Paul’s point: even if a tongue-speaker could speak every human language known to man (like the angels), and even if that tongue-speaker could speak those human languages with the efficiency, skill, and perfection that God’s angelic messengers have spoken them in history—without love, the ability would be wasted. With this understanding of the text, Paul was not contrasting human with nonhuman language. He was encompassing both the **quantity** (if I could speak **all** human languages) and the **quality** (if I could speak them **perfectly**) of speaking human language.

One final point on the matter of the “tongues of angels” merits mention. Even if the expression actually refers to angelic tongues that are nonhuman, it still is likely that tongue-speakers were incapable of speaking such languages. Why? Paul was speaking hypothetically and hyperbolically. No human being (with the exception of perhaps Jesus) has ever been able to speak in all human languages. For Paul to suggest the possibility was to pose a hypothetical situation. It was to exaggerate the facts. So Paul’s meaning was: “even if I were capable of speaking all human languages—which I’m not.” Likewise, no human being has ever been able to speak the tongues of angels. So Paul’s meaning was: “even if I were capable of speaking

the languages of angels—which I’m not.” This conclusion is supported further by the verse that follows the reference to the “tongues of angels.” There, Paul used two additional hypothetical events when he said, “if I...know all mysteries and all knowledge” and “if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains” (1 Corinthians 13:2). But no one on the planet (with the exception of deity) has understood all mysteries and all knowledge, nor has had faith that could literally remove mountains. Again, Paul was merely saying, “even if I could do such things—which I can’t.”

Fourth, Paul stated very clearly that tongue-speaking was a sign to **un**believers—not believers (14:22). Tongue-speaking was to be done in **their** presence, to convince **them** of the truth being spoken, i.e., to confirm the Word. The tongue-speaking being practiced today is done in the presence of those who **already believe** that tongue-speaking is occurring and, when an unbeliever, who is skeptical of the genuineness of the activity, makes an appearance in such an assembly, the claim often is made that tongue-speaking cannot occur because of the presence of unbelief. Once again, the New Testament teaches the very opposite of those who claim the ability to speak in tongues today.

Fifth, the recipient of a miraculous gift in the New Testament could control himself (14:32). He was not overwhelmed by the Holy Spirit so that he began to babble or flail about. Tongue-speaking today is frequently practiced in a setting where the individuals who claim to be exercising the gift are speaking uncontrollably at the very time that others are either doing the same thing or engaging in some other action. This overlapping activity is in direct violation of three of Paul’s commands: (1) that each individual take his turn one at a time; (2) that no more than three tongue-speakers speak per service;

and (3) that tongue-speakers remain silent if no interpreter is present (14:27-28).

The claim by many today to be able to speak in tongues is simply out of harmony with New Testament teaching. Anyone can babble, make up sounds, and claim he or she is speaking in tongues. But such conduct is no **sign** today. It is precisely the same phenomenon that pagan religions have practiced through the centuries. In the New Testament, however, no one questioned the authenticity of tongue-speaking. Why? The speaker was speaking a known human language that could be understood by those present who knew that language and knew that that particular speaker did not know that language beforehand. As McGarvey observed about Acts 2: "Not only did the apostles speak in foreign languages that were understood by the hearers, some understanding one and some another, but the fact that this was done by Galileans, who knew only their mother tongue, was the one significant fact that gave to Peter's speech which followed all of its power over the multitude."³⁹ If and when self-proclaimed tongue-speakers today demonstrate **that** genuine New Testament gift, their message could be accepted as being from God. But no one today has demonstrated that genuine New Testament gift.

CHAPTER 5: REVIEW QUESTIONS

Tongue-Speaking

1. What is the meaning of an “unknown” language as used in the KJV in 1 Corinthians 14?
2. In what chapter of the New Testament do we find tongue-speaking described in detail?
3. All tongue-speaking in the Bible consisted of what kinds of languages?
4. To what does Paul compare the speaking of a human language that the hearer cannot understand?
5. What three words did Paul use in 1 Corinthians 14:10 that demonstrate that tongue-speaking involves **human** languages as opposed to “ecstatic utterances”?
6. What Old Testament passage did Paul quote that presupposes the fact that human languages are under consideration?
7. Why was tongue-speaking intended by God to be directed to unbelievers?

Tongues of Angels?

8. To whom did God intend angels to communicate and in what language?
9. To suggest that tongue-speaking cannot be done in the presence of unbelief contradicts Paul’s claim that tongue-speaking was intended for whom?
10. What three directives were given by Paul that expose the illegitimacy of modern-day tongue-speaking?

CHAPTER 6 THE DISPOSITION OF MIRACLES

Holy Spirit Baptism

Where does the baptism of the Holy Spirit fit into this discussion? Today's alleged practitioners typically associate the expression "Holy Spirit baptism" with the phenomenon that enables the believer to speak in tongues, heal someone, or work other miracles. In other words, Holy Spirit baptism is simply a generic reference to miraculous empowerment. Anyone who can speak in a tongue or perform any other miraculous action is said to have been baptized in the Holy Spirit. He is said to be "Spirit-filled." However, it might surprise the reader to find that the Bible alludes to Holy Spirit baptism in a very limited, specialized, even technical sense. Just because a person could speak in tongues or work miracles did not necessarily mean he had been baptized in the Holy Spirit.

The very first allusion to Holy Spirit baptism in the New Testament is John's statement: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me... will **baptize you with the Holy Spirit**" (Matthew 3:11). From this statement alone, one might be tempted to assume that Christians **in general** would be baptized in the Holy Spirit. But this assumption would be a premature conclusion. John was not addressing a Christian audience. He was speaking to Jews. Nothing in the context allows the interpreter to distinguish John's intended recipients of the promise of Holy Spirit baptism—whether all humans, all Jews, all Christians, or merely some of those in one or more of these categories. Likewise, the exact recipients of the baptism of fire (i.e., hell—Luke 3:16-17) are not speci-

fied. However, as is often the case in the Bible, the specific recipients of this promise are clarified in later passages.

Just before His ascension, Jesus told the apostles to wait in Jerusalem until “endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). In John chapters 14-16, Jesus made several specific promises to the apostles concerning the coming of the Spirit—the “Comforter” or “Helper” (*parakletos*)—upon them, to empower them to do the peculiar work of an apostle (i.e., to recall the words Jesus had spoken to them, to speak [and write] by inspiration, and to launch the Christian religion). If these verses apply to all Christians, then all Christians ought to have been personally guided “into all truth” (John 16:13), and thus would have absolutely no need of written Scripture (John 14:26). However, in context, these verses clearly refer to **the apostolic office**.

Jesus further clarified the application of Holy Spirit baptism when He told the apostles that the earlier statement made in Luke 24:49 applied to **them**, and would come to pass “not many days from now” (Acts 1:4-5). Jesus also stated that the “power” that they would receive would be from the Holy Spirit, which would enable them to witness to the world what they had experienced by being with Jesus (Acts 1:8). Notice very carefully that on this occasion Jesus made an explicit reference to the very statement that John had uttered previously in Matthew 3: “for John truly baptized with water, but **you** [apostles—DM] shall be **baptized with the Holy Spirit** not many days from now” (Acts 1:5). Jesus specifically and explicitly identified the Holy Spirit baptism that He would administer (in keeping with John’s prediction) would take place within a few days, and would be **confined to the apostles**.

All one need do is turn the page to see the promise of Holy Spirit baptism achieve dramatic and climactic fulfillment in Acts 2 when the Spirit was poured out only upon the apostles. The antecedent of “they” in Acts 2:4 is “the apostles” in Acts 1:26. The apostles were the ones who spoke in tongues and taught the people. **They** were the recipients of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, as is evident from the following contextual indicators: (1) “are not all these who speak **Galileans?**” (2:7); (2) “Peter, standing up with **the eleven**” (2:14); (3) “they...said to Peter and the rest of **the apostles**” (2:37); (4) Peter quoted Joel 2:28-32 and applied it to that occasion as proof that **the apostles** were not intoxicated; and (5) the text even states explicitly that the signs and wonders were “done through **the apostles**” (2:43). This pattern continues in the book of Acts: “And through the hands of **the apostles** many signs and wonders were done among the people” (5:12); “the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by **their hands**” (14:3); “how many miracles and wonders God had worked... through **them**” (15:12).

The next direct reference to Holy Spirit baptism consisted of Peter describing the experience of the Gentiles in Acts 10. Referring to their empowerment to speak in tongues, Peter explicitly identified it as being comparable to the experience of the apostles in Acts 2. Note his explanation: “And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon **us** [apostles—DM] at the **beginning** [in Acts 2—DM]. Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, ‘John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit. If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave to **us** [apostles—DM]....’ (Acts 11:15-17). Peter unmistakably linked the baptism of

the Holy Spirit predicted by John in Matthew 3:11, and applied by Jesus to the apostles in Acts 1:5, with the unique and exclusive bestowal of the same on the first Gentile candidates of salvation. If the baptism of the Holy Spirit had occurred between Acts 2 and Acts 10, why did Peter compare the Gentiles' experience with the experience of the **apostles**—rather than comparing it with many other Christians who allegedly would have received it during the intervening years? The answer lies in the fact that the baptism of the Holy Spirit did not occur during the intervening years. Baptism of the Holy Spirit was a unique and infrequent occurrence that came directly from deity.

This understanding harmonizes with additional facts. The great prophecy of the Old Testament, which made special reference to the coming New Testament era as the dispensation of the Spirit, incorporated a most noteworthy expression. God declared, "I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh" (Joel 2:28). Peter repeated it on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17). What did God mean by the expression "**all flesh**"? Members of the charismatic community insist that "all flesh" means "all **Christians**." They maintain that every Christian can receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They claim that to narrow the application of the promise of Holy Spirit baptism to a select group of individuals would deprive all other Christians of the opportunity to receive miraculous power. However, upon what biblical basis may such a claim be made?

Those who claim the presence of miraculous gifts are guilty of the very thing they condemn—narrowing the expression "all flesh." Surely no one would take the position that it means all **animal** flesh—since animals are not the recipients of God's spiritual provisions. Nor would anyone contend that it means all **human** flesh—since all

wicked, disobedient, unbelieving people would hardly expect, let alone desire, to receive God's Spirit. Those who agree that the expression "all flesh" must undoubtedly be qualified to exclude the animals and the unbelieving will, nonetheless, inconsistently insist that narrowing the meaning to less than "all Christians" is unjustifiable.

To understand the proper meaning and application of the expression "all flesh," one must examine the **biblical** use of the expression. "All flesh" often is used in the Bible to refer to the bulk of humanity (e.g., Genesis 6:12-13). It also can include all animal flesh (e.g., Genesis 6:17,19). However, with God's special utilization of the descendants of Abraham in His scheme of redemption, "all flesh" often has the more technical meaning of "all **nationalities**." The primary reason for this specialized use of the expression was due to the fact that most of the Old Testament was written against the backdrop of the presence of the nation of Israel. God is certainly "no respecter of persons" (Romans 2:11; Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:25; 1 Peter 1:17; Acts 10:34-35). He does not favor one ethnic group over another (cf. Jonah). However, since His redemptive intention included bringing Jesus into the world for the benefit of all, someone had to be selected through whom Jesus' arrival might be achieved. That man was Abraham (Galatians 3:8,16) and, consequently, his descendants (Romans 9:6ff.).

As a result of this circumstance, the Jewish writers of the Bible frequently divided humanity into **only two** racial groupings, i.e., Jew and non-Jew (Gentile). For example, in what is obviously a strongly Messianic passage, Isaiah (the "Messianic prophet") predicted the coming of John the baptizer who would prepare the way for Jesus. He exclaimed: "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and **all flesh** shall see it together" (40:5). The reference to "all

flesh” was an unmistakable reference to the availability of salvation to both Jew and Gentile in the Christian era, as evinced by Luke’s quotation of the passage (Luke 3:6). The same is true in another prophecy that Isaiah uttered pertaining to the coming Christian era: “**All flesh** shall come to worship before Me” (Isaiah 66:23). The Jews of Isaiah’s day would not have been very pleased with Isaiah’s declarations, since they most certainly would have understood him to be predicting the incorporation of Gentiles into God’s favor—which the Jews felt they alone enjoyed.

Paul cinched the meaning of “all flesh” in his premiere treatise on justification by faith. He drew a clear distinction between the two ethnic categories by first declaring the sins of the Gentiles (Romans 1:18-32) and then declaring the sins of the Jews (Romans 2:1-3:8). Notice carefully his concluding remarks as he brought the first section of the book to its climax: “What then? Are **we** [the Jews—DM] better than **they** [the Gentiles—DM]? Not at all. For we have previously charged **both** Jews and Greeks that they are **all** under sin” (Romans 3:9). He then quoted a series of Old Testament verses, which verified his emphasis upon the two (and only two) categories of human flesh, using two significant terms: “none” and “all.” “None” means neither Jew nor Gentile. “All” means both Jew and Gentile. Then he articulated his grand and climactic conclusion: “because by the works of the law shall **no flesh** be justified” (Romans 3:20). “No flesh” referred to Jew and Gentile. In other words, neither Jew nor Gentile could be justified by law alone.⁴⁰ “No flesh” and “all flesh” were technical allusions to the two **categories** of human flesh, i.e., Jew and non-Jew (cf. John 17:2).

Observe, then, that the first recipients of Holy Spirit baptism, as we have seen, were the **Jewish** apostles on

the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. In establishing the Church, it equipped them to speak and confirm inspired truth. The second recipients of Holy Spirit baptism were the **Gentile** members of the household of Cornelius in Acts 10. By confirming Peter's orally transmitted divine mandate, it convinced Jewish Christians that Gentiles were fit prospects for the reception of the Gospel, and valid candidates for entrance into the kingdom (Acts 10:34-35,45; 11:18). So Joel's statement, that God would pour out His Spirit on "all flesh," applied to the outpouring on **Jews** in Acts 2 and on **Gentiles** in Acts 10. The only other conceivable occurrence of Holy Spirit baptism would have been Paul, who would have received direct miraculous ability from God as well. His reception was obviously unique because (1) he was not an apostle when the Twelve received the Spirit, and (2) he was "one born out of due time" (1 Corinthians 15:8). Holy Spirit baptism, then, filled two unique and exclusive purposes: (1) to prepare the apostles for their apostolic (not Christian) roles, and (2) to provide divine demonstration that Gentiles were to be allowed to become Christians (Acts 10:47).

One additional consideration deserves comment regarding Joel's prophecy. If "all flesh" referred exclusively to the Jewish apostles and the first Gentile converts, why did Joel include "sons, daughters, old men, young men, menservants, and maidservants" in the reception of God's Spirit (Joel 2:28-29)? As was typical of Hebrew prophecy, progressive, sequential, and complete fulfillment would be forthcoming. A prophecy could possess several features that found fulfillment in a variety of circumstances. It is apparent, on the basis of the references already discussed (e.g., Matthew 3:11; Acts 1:5; 11:15-17), that only the **first part** of Joel's prophecy was fulfilled on the day of Pente-

cost. The “last days” (Acts 2:17) referred to the **entire** Christian dispensation from Pentecost to the Judgment. The outpouring of the Spirit, therefore, would include more than just the baptism of the Holy Spirit that was confined to the Jewish apostles on Pentecost and the Gentiles a few years later. Though the peculiar phenomenon of Holy Spirit baptism was limited to those two specific ethnic groups (i.e., the 12 apostles and the household of Cornelius), **additional** activity of the Spirit would include the impartation of miraculous gifts through the laying on of the apostles’ hands (discussed on pp. 50ff.). This conclusion is evident from the fact that no “**daughters**” or “**maidservants**” received Holy Spirit baptism on Pentecost. Nor is there any evidence of the occurrence of “**dreams**” or “**visions**” on Pentecost. With the Holy Spirit’s expanded presence in the instigation of Christianity in the first century came the eventual impartation of miraculous ability separate and apart from Holy Spirit baptism. The broadened fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy (subsequent to Acts 2) is seen in the references to Philip’s **daughters** who prophesied (Acts 21:9) and in the occurrence of **visions** (Acts 9:10; 10:3,10; 16:9). However, these miraculous manifestations, though included in Joel’s prophecy, were not instances of Holy Spirit baptism. The common link in the Holy Spirit’s outpouring on Pentecost and the manifestations of the Spirit thereafter was the baptism of the Holy Spirit on **the apostles**—who were the keys to the further distribution of miraculous power in the early years of Christianity.

I Corinthians 12:13?

But what about Paul’s statement to the Corinthians? He wrote: “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body...and have all been made to drink of one Spirit”

(1 Corinthians 12:13). Some have insisted that this verse teaches that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is imparted to **all Christians**. Careful analysis of the verse, however, demonstrates that Paul was not referring to the baptism of the Holy Spirit that was received only twice in the New Testament (excluding Paul). If the Corinthians had been baptized in the Holy Spirit, Paul likely would have worded the verse: “We were all baptized in one Spirit into one body.” This wording would have made it plain that their baptism was Holy Spirit baptism. However, Paul connected “baptized” with “into one body,” and placed “in one Spirit” **before** both “baptized” and “into one body.” Did he mean to say that their baptism entailed being indwelt with the Spirit, or having the Spirit overwhelm (i.e., immerse) them, or come upon them, i.e., that the Holy Spirit, **Himself**, was what the Corinthians had received or into which they had been baptized?

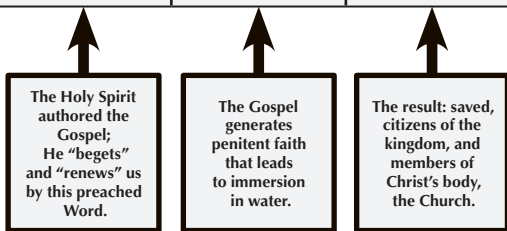
The grammar of the passage provides a decisive and definitive answer. The word “Spirit” is in the instrumental case in Greek, indicating personal agency. The personal agent in the passage who did the baptizing is the Holy Spirit. His baptizing resulted in the placement of the individuals into the one body of Christ. The verb is aorist, showing that Paul was referring to a once-for-all act in the past. New Testament Greek professor and one of the translators of the NASB, Kenneth Wuest, explained: “It is not the baptism **with** the Spirit or **of** the Spirit, in the sense that the Holy Spirit is the element which is applied to us. It is the baptism **by** the Spirit. This baptism does not bring the Spirit to us in the sense that God places the Spirit **upon** or **in** us. Rather, this baptism brings the believer into vital union with Jesus Christ.”⁴¹ The Corinthians were the beneficiaries—not of the Spirit—but of the Spirit’s guid-

ance or assistance. They were baptized **by** the Spirit (cf. KJV, NKJV, NASB, RSV, NIV).

Further grammatical evidence in the context supports this conclusion. Earlier in the chapter, Paul said that no person could say that Jesus is Lord “but in the Holy Spirit” (vs. 3). A person could say Jesus is Lord without being **in** the Spirit or having the Holy Spirit **in** or **on** him. But a person could not say Jesus is Lord if the Holy Spirit had not revealed such information about Jesus—as He did by empowering the apostles to produce written revelation. A few verses later, Paul pinpointed several gifts that were given “through the Spirit,” “through the same Spirit,” and “by the same Spirit” (vss. 8-9). All three phrases are equivalent, and refer to the Holy Spirit’s **action**, not the **state of being** in the Holy Spirit. Paul’s summary of the section verifies that this meaning is intended: “But one and the same Spirit **works** all these things, **distributing to** each one individually as He wills” (vs. 11).⁴²

In view of these contextual details, one is forced to conclude that in verse 13, Paul could be referring to no other baptism than the baptism enjoined by Christ in the Great Commission, i.e., the “one baptism” of Ephesians 4:5, the baptism which Paul, himself, administered to the Corinthians (Acts 18:8): **water** baptism. The Holy Spirit was the agent through Whom Christ enjoined water baptism by means of the preached message. When a person complies with the instruction to be baptized in water, that person is baptized into the one body of Christ. Other verses in the New Testament confirm this understanding.

THE MEANING OF 1 CORINTHIANS 12:13			
1 Corinthians 12:13	Spirit	Baptized	Body
John 3:5	Spirit	Water	Kingdom
Ephesians 5:26	Word	Washing of Water	Cleansed Church
Titus 3:5	Holy Spirit	Washing of Regeneration	Saved



Examine the parallel verses in the above chart.⁴³ Jesus announced: “[U]nless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). Jesus meant what Paul meant: that when one obeys the teaching of the Spirit to be baptized in water, he is granted entrance into the kingdom. Paul reiterated this same teaching on two other occasions. To the Ephesian church, he pointed out that Jesus gave His life for the Church “that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word” (Ephesians 5:26). He meant that an individual is incorporated into the cleansed Church of Christ when he submits to water baptism in accordance with the Holy Spirit’s inspired Word. Likewise, Paul told young Titus

that Jesus “saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5). Again, he meant that one is saved (and hence added to the Body) at the point of water immersion, in which spiritual renewal is extended by the Holy Spirit.

We are forced to conclude that 1 Corinthians 12:13 does not refer to Holy Spirit baptism.⁴⁴ The two instances of Holy Spirit baptism previously discussed (i.e., in Acts 2 and 10) stand unmistakably in stark contrast with the baptism alluded to by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:13. The Corinthian baptism placed the Corinthians into the Body of Christ, i.e., at their conversion. But when the apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, they were **already** saved. When the household of Cornelius was baptized in the Holy Spirit, they were not yet saved and were inducted into the Body of Christ only **after** Peter called for “water” (Acts 10:47-48). Indeed, Holy Spirit baptism in the New Testament had nothing to do with salvation.

Laying on of the Apostles’ Hands

If Acts 2 and Acts 10 are the only instances of Holy Spirit baptism in the New Testament, how then do we account for the fact that many others in the New Testament performed miracles or spoke in tongues? If they were not recipients of Holy Spirit baptism, how did they get the ability? The New Testament dictates only one other way to receive miraculous capability: through the laying on of the apostles’ hands. Only the apostles possessed the ability to transfer miraculous capability to others. This phenomenon is described succinctly by Luke:

Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. And when Simon saw that **through the laying on of**

the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, "Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit." But Peter said to him, "Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God (Acts 8:17-21).

This description establishes two important facts: (1) only **the apostles** are indicated to have had the ability to impart to others the ability to perform miracles, and (2) those other than the apostles who could perform miracles received their ability **indirectly** through the **apostles**—rather than **directly from God via Holy Spirit baptism**.

This fascinating feature of the existence of the miraculous in the first century makes it possible to understand how other individuals received their supernatural powers. For example, Philip, who was not an apostle, possessed the ability to perform miracles (Acts 8:6,13). If he was not an apostle, and so did not receive direct ability from God via baptism of the Holy Spirit, where, then, did he derive his ability? Luke informs us that Philip previously received the laying on of the apostles' hands (Acts 6:5-6). Likewise, the first Christians in Ephesus were enabled to speak in tongues when the apostle Paul laid his hands on them (Acts 19:6). Even Timothy received his gift from the laying on of Paul's hands (2 Timothy 1:6).

Some have challenged the exclusivity of the role of the apostles in their unique ability to impart the miraculous element by calling attention to the admonition given by Paul to Timothy: "Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands **of the presbytery**" (1 Timothy 4:14). Even though Paul plainly insisted that the "gift of God" which

Timothy possessed was conferred “through the laying on of **my** hands” (2 Timothy 1:6), how does one explain the fact that Paul also stated that Timothy’s gift came through the presbytery (i.e., the eldership) as well?

Once again, the grammar of the text provides the answer. In 2 Timothy 1:6, where Paul claimed sole credit for imparting the gift to Timothy, he employed the Greek preposition *dia* with the genitive, which means “through” or “by means of.”⁴⁵ However, in 1 Timothy 4:14, where Paul included the eldership in the action of impartation, he employed a completely different Greek preposition—*meta*. The root meaning of *meta* is “in the midst of.”⁴⁶ It denotes the **attendant circumstances** of something that takes place—the **accompanying** phenomena.⁴⁷ It means “in association with” or “accompanied by.”⁴⁸ In other words, Paul—as an apostle—imparted the miraculous gift to Timothy. It came from God **through** Paul. However, on that occasion, the local eldership of the church was present and participated **with** Paul in the event, lending their simultaneous support and accompanying commendation. After examining the grammatical data on the matter, Nicoll concluded: “[I]t was the imposition of hands by St. Paul that was the instrument used by God in the communication of the charisma to Timothy.”⁴⁹ Consequently, 1 Timothy 4:14 provides no proof that miraculous capability could be received through other means in addition to apostolic imposition of hands and the two clear instances of Holy Spirit baptism.

Are There Modern-Day Apostles?

But do apostles exist today? Do those who claim to be apostles have miraculous abilities? The incredible diversity

of viewpoint that exists in religion today is startling and disconcerting.

The Definition of an Apostle

We must go to the Bible to determine God's will with regard to modern-day apostles. When we do so, we first learn that the word "apostle" comes from the Greek word *apostolos*, which means one sent from or forth, a messenger, envoy, delegate.⁵⁰ The term is used in the New Testament in two distinct senses. It can be used in an informal, **unofficial** sense to refer to an individual who is sent by other humans to accomplish a particular mission or task. The term is so used to refer, for example, to Barnabas (Acts 14:14). He was an "apostle" in the sense that he accompanied Paul on an evangelistic trip. Jesus is said to be our "Apostle" in the sense that He was sent to atone for our sins (Hebrews 3:1).

The term "apostle" also is used in a second sense—what we might call an **official** sense. That is, "apostle" can refer to individuals who were officially and divinely selected to serve as Jesus' original representatives—"ambassadors" (2 Corinthians 5:20). Jesus handpicked the original 12 apostles.⁵¹ Of these original 12, Judas betrayed the Lord as predicted by the Old Testament (Psalm 41:9; John 13:18-19; 18:1-5). Instead of repenting, he cinched his apostasy by committing suicide (Matthew 27:3-5; John 17:12). Consequently, a successor to Judas was selected by divine decree (Acts 1:16-26).

Only one other apostle in the official sense is alluded to in the New Testament: Paul. His appointment to apostleship was unique and unparalleled in that he was chosen for a specific 1st-century task.⁵² Christ selected him to introduce the message of Christianity to the Gentile world.⁵³

Paul was careful to document the fact that his apostleship was by divine appointment.⁵⁴

The Qualifications of an Apostle

When one assembles all the relevant New Testament data, at least three qualifications emerge as prerequisite to one becoming an apostle in the official sense.⁵⁵ First, an apostle had to have seen the Lord and been an eyewitness of Christ's resurrection (Acts 1:22; 22:14; 1 Corinthians 9:1). Second, an apostle had to be specifically selected by the Lord or the Holy Spirit.⁵⁶ Third, an apostle was invested with miraculous power to the extent that he could perform miracles (Romans 15:19; 1 Corinthians 2:4; 2 Corinthians 6:6; 1 Thessalonians 1:5). The power to perform miracles included the capability to confer the ability to work miracles to other individuals through the laying on of his hands.⁵⁷ Jesus referred to His bestowal of miraculous capability upon the apostles when He promised they would be "endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).

The Work of an Apostle

The apostolic office was unquestionably a temporary office for the early church (though apostolic appointment was for life). Its essential purpose was twofold. First, apostles were commissioned by Jesus to launch the Christian religion.⁵⁸ This purpose was achieved by means of the initial presentation of the Gospel to the whole world (Colossians 1:23), and the establishment of the Church of Christ (Acts 2). Second, apostles were largely responsible for making the New Testament available—first in oral form and, more specifically, in written form.⁵⁹

These two central tasks are set forth clearly in the New Testament. In Matthew 16, Jesus declared that He would build His Church after His resurrection from hades (vs. 18).

He then explained that it would be the apostles who would instigate initial entrance into Christ's Church (hence the significance of "keys"—vs. 19). This commencement of the Christian religion and the Church of Christ would be achieved by means of the apostles "binding" and "loosing" the doctrinal tenets and principles of Christianity that Heaven had previously bound or loosed.⁶⁰ Peter and the apostles articulated the terms of entrance into the Kingdom of Christ for the first time on the Pentecost that followed Christ's resurrection (Acts 2:14ff.).

In Ephesians 4, after summarizing Christianity in terms of seven core concepts (vss. 1-6), Paul described the initial sequence of events that recounted the advent of Christianity (vss. 7-16). Paul noted that: (1) after His crucifixion, Jesus descended into the hadean realm; (2) He then was resurrected; (3) He ascended back to heaven; (4) upon His ascension, He dispensed gifts; (5) the apostolic office was included in the reception of these miraculous capabilities; (6) the purpose of these gifts was to equip and edify the Church; (7) the preparation provided to the infant Church by these gifts was temporary ("till" is an adverb of time connoting when the miraculous gifts were to terminate—see pp. 24-25), in that the same preparation soon would be available through the completed revelation, i.e., "the faith."⁶¹ Further, the reference to "the faith" in Ephesians 4:13 cannot refer to a time when all people or all Christians will achieve unity in faith. As noted earlier, such a circumstance will never occur. Paul was referring to the time when all people would have access to all of God's communication to man, thus giving them the potential for attaining spiritual maturity ("a perfect man" vs. "children"—see pp. 23-24).

Once all of the information necessary to the promotion of the Christian religion was revealed to the early church (through oral means made possible by the distribution of the gifts), the Church would have the means available to grow and mature in Christ (cf. 1 Corinthians 13:8-13). While prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers⁶² were part of this early development of Christianity (Ephesians 4:11), the office of an apostle was the primary means by which Christ accomplished the inauguration of His religion.

The apostles had the sole responsibility of executing the will of the Son of God in founding, organizing, and fully equipping the church of Christ on Earth, that she, in turn, might fulfill her heaven-borne mission, until Jesus comes again.⁶³ That is why Paul could say two chapters earlier that the household of God (i.e., the Church) was built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets (Ephesians 2:20; cf. 3:5; Revelation 21:14). That is why he informed the Corinthian Christians:

God has appointed these in the church: **first apostles**, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? (1 Corinthians 12:28-30).

The apostles are said to be “first” in the significance and criticality of their divinely appointed role. The apostles specifically described their unique role in the early Church as entailing giving themselves to “the word of God” and “the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:2,4).

The Duration of an Apostle

Once the Church of Christ was established and Christianity was given its initial presentation (cf. Colossians 1:23), the apostolic office faded from the scene along with the

age of miracles. As an eyewitness of Christ's resurrection, Paul referred to himself in relation to the other apostles as "last of all" (1 Corinthians 15:8). Neither apostles nor miraculous gifts was needed any longer. They had served their temporary purpose (Mark 16:20; Acts 4:29-31; 13:12; 14:3; Romans 15:18-19; Hebrews 2:3-4; cf. Exodus 4:30). As noted earlier, miraculous gifts functioned as scaffolding while the Church was under initial construction, and were removed once the structure had been completed (1 Corinthians 3:10; 13:11; Ephesians 4:13-14). The book we call the Bible is the totality of God's written revelation to the human race. Consequently, people now have access to everything they need (2 Peter 1:3) to enter into a right relationship with God via Christianity and the Church of Christ. The apostles "had no official successors. From the nature of their duties, there could be no succession."⁶⁴ Apostles, quite simply, are no longer needed.

No Apostles Today

Unfortunately, several groups that claim affiliation with the Christian religion allege to have apostles among them, including Catholicism, Mormonism, and some Pentecostal groups. This claim is unbiblical. No person living today can meet the qualifications given in Scripture for being an apostle. No one living today has been an eyewitness of Christ's resurrection. Christ has selected no one living today for the apostolic role. No one living today possesses the miraculous capabilities of an apostle. We should not be surprised that people would falsely claim to be apostles. Jesus warned that false prophets would come in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they would be ravaging wolves (Matthew 7:15). Paul described some of his opponents in these words:

For such are **false apostles**, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

Further warning was issued to the Galatian churches: “But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:8). Anyone claiming to be an apostle today who teaches anything in addition to the New Testament is clearly not an apostle of Christ.

Peter added his voice on the same subject: “But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction” (2 Peter 2:1). No wonder John admonished: “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1; cf. Matthew 24:11,24). In the Revelation, the church at Ephesus was commended because they “tested those **who say they are apostles** and are not, and have found them liars” (Revelation 2:2).

Catholicism maintains that Peter was the supreme bishop, even over the other apostles, and that every pope since Peter is an apostolic successor to Peter. The pope is selected after literally days of deliberation by cardinals in the Vatican. The only apostle in the Bible that was not handpicked by Christ in person was Matthias. Yet he was not selected by mere men deliberating and debating his potential. He was selected by the casting of lots—which was simply

another way for Jesus to do the selecting (Acts 1:26; cf. Proverbs 16:33).

It is incredible to think that any human beings living today would presume to appoint apostles. In pinpointing the credentials of an apostle, Luke (Acts 1) made it abundantly evident that to qualify as an apostle a person would have to have seen the Lord and been an eyewitness of His resurrection. That is why Paul was careful to state: “Am I not an apostle? ...Have I not **seen the Lord?**” (1 Corinthians 9:1). In recounting his conversion, he quoted Ananias as having said, “The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and **see the Just One**, and **hear the voice of His mouth**. For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard” (Acts 22:14-15). What alleged modern-day apostle could make such a claim?

The New Testament also makes clear the fact that an essential characteristic of an apostle was that he had been selected by Deity. When Jesus was on Earth, He hand-picked the first 12 apostles. After His departure from Earth, the disciples cast lots to select a successor to Judas. Their method allowed no input from mere humans—except in the recognition that two men possessed all the qualifications necessary to be an apostle. Casting lots allowed God to do the selecting. Divine control in the selection process by casting lots was common in Old Testament history.⁶⁵ Solomon claimed: “The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord” (Proverbs 16:33). Indeed, Peter’s prayer on the occasion shows that the decision already had been made by the Lord before the actual casting of lots: “...show which of these two **You have chosen**” (Acts 1:24). The summary statement regarding Matthias—“he was numbered with the eleven apostles” (Acts 1:26; cf.

Matthew 28:16; Mark 16:14; Luke 24:33)—gives way to a return to the expression “the Twelve” (Acts 6:2; cf. Acts 2:14). Paul also was handpicked by Jesus—to be a “chosen vessel” (Acts 9:15). No human being on Earth today can claim he has been personally singled out and chosen by Jesus to be an apostle.

A third proof that no apostles exist on Earth today is the fact that New Testament apostles were empowered by God—not only to perform miracles—but also to convey miraculous power to other people who then could work miracles themselves. As noted earlier (pp. 50ff.), this characteristic is demonstrated in detailed fashion in Acts: “Now when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money” (Acts 8:18). The issue of modern-day apostles may be settled very quickly. To authenticate their claim to be apostles, they must be able both to perform miracles as well as confer miraculous power to others. The apostles of Jesus in the New Testament demonstrated their apostolic status without hesitation. Anyone today who claims to be an apostle should be willing to do the same. No such ability exists today.

Original Apostles Were Sufficient

A fascinating passage in the New Testament sheds further light upon this notion of modern-day apostles. That passage is Matthew 19:28. There Jesus informed Peter and the other apostles: “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” A related passage is Luke 22:29-30 which says, “And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as my Father bestowed one upon Me,

that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

These verses are Christ’s figurative declarations describing the role of the 12 apostles in the establishment of the church and the dissemination of the Gospel proclamation.⁶⁶ The “regeneration” refers to the Christian era, which began at Pentecost, during which time spiritual regeneration became possible through the blood of Christ (Titus 3:5). It is an equivalent expression with the “time of reformation” (Hebrews 9:10). The throne of Christ’s glory refers to His present location at the right hand of God.⁶⁷ The “judging” done by the apostles refers to the rule that the apostles exerted while they were on Earth, setting in place the features of New Testament Christianity (Matthew 16:19; John 20:22-23). The “twelve thrones” refers to their complete authority from Christ to implement Christ’s will until the end of time—which they presently do today through their authoritative writings—found only in the New Testament. Their writings are nothing more or less than Christ’s Word—by which **all** are judged (John 12:48). The “twelve tribes” is a figurative way to refer to the church—the spiritual Israel.⁶⁸

Neither Christ nor the original apostles needs successors or representatives on Earth today. **They continue to rule and reign over the kingdom** through the work that they achieved in the first century, and that is preserved for all in the New Testament. Christ is now on His throne ruling and reigning. The apostles also are on the thrones assigned to them by Christ. To suggest that the apostles have modern-day successors is to discount and discredit the **current** rule of the original apostles. Neither Christ nor the apostles has abdicated their authority or their current rule to any humans on Earth.

Additionally, the fact that Jesus declared that all 12 apostles would occupy thrones in the kingdom proves that Peter had no greater authority than the other apostles. The apostles were equal in their reception and wielding of the authority delegated to them by Christ. Yet the Catholic Church claims that the immediate successors to Peter were Linus (from A.D. 67 to 79), Cletus (from A.D. 79 to 91) and Clement (from A.D. 91 to 100). They agree that the apostle John would have still been alive throughout this period.⁶⁹ The doctrine of the primacy of Peter means that the first three of the alleged successors of Peter would have exercised authority over the still-living apostle John—who had been handpicked by Christ Himself! The very John whom Jesus placed on one of the 12 thrones would have been under the authority, knowledge, and power of three popes who had not been selected to be among the original Twelve!⁷⁰

Hayden aptly summarized the New Testament position regarding modern-day apostles:

The 13 apostles chosen, ordained and endowed by the newly crowned Messiah faithfully and fully executed their commission. When they entered into everlasting rest, the church was established, with all needful ministries to edify, extend and perpetuate it throughout all coming centuries. Then the extraordinary, which was necessary to found a new institution, was succeeded by the ordinary, which is sufficient to teach, regulate and govern the subjects of Christ's kingdom according to the laws that went forth from Jerusalem. The revelation of God was completed. The word of faith is henceforth nigh every believer, even in his mouth and in his heart. The apostolic office ceased, and evangelists and pastors became the permanent teachers and superintendents of the church.⁷¹

CHAPTER 6: REVIEW QUESTIONS

Holy Spirit Baptism

1. Where is the first allusion in the New Testament to Holy Spirit Baptism?
2. What did Jesus promise the apostles just prior to His ascension? Cite the verse.
3. In what three chapters in John did Jesus promise that the apostles would receive the guidance and assistance of the Holy Spirit?
4. What did Jesus mean by “power”? Cite the verse.
5. To what statement, made previously by John the baptizer, did Jesus refer in Acts 1:5? Cite the verse where the original utterance is found.
6. To whom did Jesus confine His application of Holy Spirit baptism?
7. Who is the antecedent of “they” in Acts 2:4? Cite the verse.
8. Due to Holy Spirit baptism on the day of Pentecost, who was empowered to do “many wonders and signs”? Cite the verse.
9. Cite one additional verse from Acts that indicates the miraculous empowerment of the apostles.
10. Where is the next direct reference to Holy Spirit baptism to be found in the Bible and to whom did it apply?
11. Based on Peter’s statement in Acts 11:15 (“as on us at the beginning”), how often did Holy Spirit baptism occur during the intervening years between Pentecost and Cornelius?
12. To whom did the expression “all flesh” refer in Joel’s prophecy (2:28)?
13. Cite two verses where this meaning is evident.
14. What two significant terms did Paul use in Romans to describe both categories of human flesh?
15. What was the purpose of the apostles receiving Holy Spirit baptism?

16. What was the purpose of the Gentiles receiving Holy Spirit baptism?
17. Who was the only other conceivable recipient of Holy Spirit baptism?

I Corinthians 12:13

18. Grammatically, who is the personal agent in this verse that does the baptizing?
19. Into what receptacle is one baptized?
20. What did Paul mean when he said in 1 Corinthians 12:3—“no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit”?
21. When/how did the Holy Spirit reveal His instructions?
22. What three synonymous phrases does Paul use in 1 Corinthians 12:8-9?
23. To what do the three phrases refer?
24. To what do the three phrases **not** refer?
25. To what does the word “baptism” refer in 1 Corinthians 12:13?
26. What human agency did the Holy Spirit use to teach the Corinthians to be baptized, and to actually baptize them? Cite the verse.
27. Cite three verses that teach the same concepts as 1 Corinthians 12:13.
28. What was the spiritual condition (as it pertains to salvation) of the apostles when they received Holy Spirit baptism?
29. What was the spiritual condition (as it pertains to salvation) of the Gentiles when they received Holy Spirit baptism?
30. What element was necessary in order for the Gentiles to be saved? Cite the verse.

Laying on of the Apostles’ Hands

31. If Holy Spirit baptism occurred only twice (excepting Paul), what other means was available for others in the first century to work miracles or speak in tongues?

32. What two important facts are apparent from the account of Peter and John's visit to Samaria?
33. Name three instances in the New Testament in which individuals acquired miraculous powers via the laying on of the apostles' hands.
34. How does one explain 1 Timothy 4:14 in which it appears that Timothy received his miraculous gift via the presbytery?

Are There Modern-Day Apostles?

The Definition of an Apostle

35. What is the meaning of the term "apostle"?
36. In what two distinct senses is the word "apostle" used in the New Testament?
37. How many "official" apostles are noted in the New Testament?

The Qualifications of an Apostle

38. What three qualifications were necessary to become an apostle in the official sense?

The Work of an Apostle

39. State the twofold purpose of the apostolic office.
40. In what passage did Jesus explain to His apostles that they would be responsible for instigating initial entrance into His Church?
41. Explain the significance of the apostolic activity of "binding" and "loosing."
42. What did Jesus do after His resurrection?
43. What term identifies Jesus' departure from hades?
44. What did Jesus do upon His ascension into heaven?
45. What miraculous office was included among these gifts?
46. What was the purpose of these gifts?
47. What term specifies the temporary nature of the gifts? Identify its grammatical usage.
48. To what was Paul referring in his use of "the faith"?

49. What would be available to the church once all the information necessary to promote the Christian religion was revealed to the early church? Cite the passage.
50. Which gift was the primary means by which Christ accomplished the inauguration of His religion?
51. On what did Paul say the household of God/the Church was built? Cite the verse.

The Duration of an Apostle

52. What happened to the apostolic office once the Church was established and Christianity was given its initial presentation?
53. Where is the totality of God's written revelation to the human race now contained?
54. What now is the status of the Church of Christ with regard to the necessity of apostles?

No Apostles Today

55. What religious groups today claim to have apostles?
56. How do we know no God-approved apostles exist today?
57. In what verse did Jesus warn of the rise of false prophets?
58. In what verse did Paul refer to "false apostles"?
59. What is the spiritual condition of any person today who claims to be an apostle of Christ and teaches anything in addition to what is already in the New Testament? Cite the passage.
60. In what three verses did Peter and John say that false prophets/apostles would arise?
61. How was Judas' successor, Matthias, selected and how do we know the selection was actually made by God—not man?
62. In what verse did Paul connect his right to apostleship to having seen the Lord?
63. Who informed Paul that he had been chosen by God? Cite two verses.

64. What verse indicates that Peter acknowledged that God had already chosen Matthias to be Judas' successor?
65. To claim to be an apostle today, it is not enough to be able to work a miracle, since one would also have to possess what additional ability?

Original Apostles Were Sufficient

66. What did Jesus mean by His use of the term "regeneration" in Matthew 19:28?
67. To what was Jesus referring in His allusion to "the throne of His glory"?
68. In what way do the apostles "judge"?
69. Who are the "twelve tribes"?
70. Of what are modern-day apostles guilty in view of the fact that both Christ and the original apostles **continue** to rule and reign over the Kingdom of Christ via the work they did while on Earth, now preserved in the New Testament?

CHAPTER 7 THE DELUSION OF MODERN-DAY MIRACLES

Finally, consider the cultural and societal circumstances that contribute to a misunderstanding and misrepresentation of New Testament teaching on miracles. As American civilization continues to manifest all the indicators of moral and spiritual decline, one cannot help but observe that one change that has come over society in the last half century has been a significant shift from the **rational** to the **emotional**.

Misplaced Homage to Emotion

We as a society have shifted from a print culture to a media culture, from a “read, study, and think” culture to an image-oriented culture. Television, cinema, computers, mobile devices, and the media overwhelm the viewer with images. This communication medium requires less critical and thoughtful analysis which is supplanted by feeling, impressions, and surface appraisals. Have you noticed that so many movies these days are fast-paced, action packed, and loaded with special effects? Have you come to the end of a movie and felt jarred and over-stimulated? Yet, when the experience is over, you realize that there simply was very little substance—certainly nothing of any real spiritual value. Your spirit was not nurtured with wholesome, uplifting content, though your flesh was excited and stirred.⁷²

Religion has not remained unscathed from this culture-wide inclination. Indeed, the extent to which emotion and feeling have affected doctrine and religious practice is monumental.⁷³ Churches now regularly seek to justify illicit religious practices by confusing spirituality with mere physical or emotional sensation. Inherent in this confusion is

an implicit misunderstanding of the nature of spirituality, the role of emotion, and the essentiality of obedience. Emotion and feeling, in fact, are equated with being “spiritual.” The changes in worship which are now advocated are targeted at stimulating emotions and making worshippers **feel** their religion. These emotional sensations are then mistaken for spirituality and religious authenticity.

Unbiblical Role of the Holy Spirit

The emphasis on emotion is also evident in the increased emphasis placed on the role of the Holy Spirit over the last few decades. One manifestation of this influence is the tendency to **downplay objective interpretation of the Bible—our ability to arrive at the truth—and, in exchange, to rely more on the Holy Spirit to “illuminate” Scripture in order for a person to comprehend it.**

With the commencement of the modern Pentecostal Movement in 1900, the Holy Spirit was given a new emphasis and role in Christendom. Eventually, charismatic tendencies began to spread across denominational lines and infiltrate the religious practices of many different groups. At first, this movement was largely confined to the uneducated, undiscerning classes of rural American society, known for their gullibility and superstitious tendencies. The manifestations of Pentecostalism through the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s included frenzied body movements, earning its practitioners the derogatory label—“holy rollers.”

After World War II, the leading proponents of Pentecostalism toned down their act and cloaked themselves in an air of respectability and academic sophistication.⁷⁴ Their appeal began to extend to more mainline religious people, spawning a variety of nontraditional charismatic groups (e.g., the “Foursquare” churches, the “Full Gospel” churches,

and most recently, the “community” churches that have sprung up all over the country). Now traditional Pentecostal groups⁷⁵ have “crossed the tracks” and built fashionable, expensive church buildings, drawing significant numbers of adherents.

These circumstances have exerted a considerable influence upon Christendom as a whole, facilitating an imbalance between emotion and logic. The heavy emphasis in the past upon knowing the Bible and relying upon the objective nature of Scripture went far to insulate churches from the subjective, irrational tendencies of the charismatic phenomenon. However, with the decline of Western civilization and the concomitant dilution of New Testament Christianity with its belief in the inerrancy and inspiration of the Bible, many churches have come to embrace feelings and personal experience as standards of authority, ultimately enshrining emotionalism in place of spirituality.

It is not uncommon in emotion-based churches to hear their members speak of how they think the Holy Spirit is leading and guiding them in everyday behaviors. They speak of how they can “sense the Spirit moving” them, providing “inner promptings” and urging them to do certain things. Liberal preachers admonish the members to “be open to the Spirit’s guidance,” to “fan the flame of the Spirit’s fire,” and to “follow His nudge.” The change that has come over the Church respecting the Holy Spirit is simply another manifestation of the liberal tendency to evade personal responsibility for one’s own thoughts and behavior. It is a crutch for the emotionally immature who are desperately grasping for emotional security and spiritual fulfillment. Distorting Bible teaching regarding the role of the Holy Spirit is not the answer. Attributing thoughts that pop into the mind to the Holy Spirit, or feeling that

the Holy Spirit is leading one to do something, are convenient ways to do what one chooses to do and still feel justified. **Crediting the Holy Spirit with one's thoughts and acts allows the individual to feel his decisions are out of his control and under the guidance of the Spirit.** The resulting euphoria and sense of freedom is a recipe for spiritual disaster. One by one, the clear teachings of the Bible will fade into insignificance and irrelevance. **Once individuals cut themselves loose from the objective statements of Scripture in order to travel down the pathway of what they surmise or feel God is leading them to do,** other clear-cut doctrines of the Bible are eventually jettisoned as well (including the singularity and uniqueness of the church of the Bible,⁷⁶ the exclusive and restrictive plan of salvation,⁷⁷ and the rigid parameters of acceptable worship⁷⁸)—all in the name of “spirituality” and “spiritual maturity.”

The True Meaning of Spirituality

To bring emotion and logic into proper, i.e., biblical, balance, one must understand **the scriptural definition of “spirituality.”** **Biblical spirituality is not what one feels but what one comes to know and do.** The term “spiritual” pertains to the spirit—not the emotions. The “spiritual” person in the Bible is the one who earnestly seeks to come to an understanding of God’s will and then diligently obeys that will. “Spirituality” consists of being governed by the biblical substance and content authored by the Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:13-15; 14:37). Since the Word of God was authored by the Spirit, to be “spiritual” is to imbibe His teachings and to engage one’s own spirit in a fruitful encounter with the Holy Spirit’s **message** (1 Peter 2:2,5). To be spiritual, **His** thoughts, opinions, and precepts must be permitted to impact the human spirit (Romans 15:27).

“Spiritual worship” entails responding rationally to God’s will with worship that is predetermined and prescribed by Him (Romans 12:1).⁷⁹ It is worship that is conformed to the Holy Spirit’s instructions about how to worship Deity. “Spiritual songs” (Ephesians 5:19) are songs whose lyrics convey correct biblical concepts. The “law is spiritual” (Romans 7:14) because its source is the Spirit and it constitutes an accurate expression of the Spirit’s will. What’s more, that law is addressed to the human spirit/mind—not human emotions.

Yet current proponents of change leave the impression that our worship assemblies would be more “spiritual” if we would employ arm/hand waving, dramatic presentations, handclapping as an accompaniment to singing, female worship leaders, solos, choirs, performance groups, instruments, etc. They simply have not grasped the biblical meaning of “spirituality.” Such innovations cannot be “spiritual” since they are **neither authored nor authorized by the Spirit** in the New Testament. They are **manmade**. If a worship practice is not prescribed by the Holy Spirit, mere humans are the source of the practice. Such practices come from and originate in the mind of man—not God. Hence, they constitute “self-imposed religion” (Colossians 2:23).⁸⁰ They may well create more emotional excitement among participants, but such pleasurable sensations are not what the Bible designates as “spiritual.” Stated plainly, the term “spiritual” in the Bible refers to engaging one’s spirit/mind in thoughts followed by actions that are in harmony with and conformed to the Holy Spirit’s directives as articulated in His Word, i.e., the Bible.

The charismatic movement has long since demonstrated that external artifice and focus on physical display is no indication of true, spiritual worship. In fact, the evidence

suggests that such cheap substitutes sidetrack people from true worship. While God intends for our emotions to be engaged as we worship, pure emotional stimulation must not be mistaken for **spiritual** worship, nor become the essential **goal** of the worshipper.

Nevertheless, our current culture's propensity for centering on external appearance and surface image has deceived some into thinking that external emotional indicators (like swaying arms,⁸¹ jumping up and down, squeals, handclapping, etc.) are the criteria for measuring spirituality. Nothing could be further from biblical truth. It surely smacks of arrogance or ignorance for recent generations to be judgmental about preceding generations by deeming them **unspiritual simply because their worship appeared on the outside to be formal and unemotional. The fact is their worship was extremely spiritual, not only because it conformed faithfully to the Spirit's own instructions,** but because it demonstrated compliant spirits, respectful hearts, and people who were gripped by a calm and reverent awe for the majestic Creator of the Universe. They did not fashion their worship to suit or stimulate **themselves**. They did not need artificial stimulants to bring meaning to their religion and their lives. They found true contentment and zestful satisfaction in knowing that they were in tune with their Father and in line with His will.

Their focus was clearly upon God and genuine linkage with Him. The focus being urged upon us today by those who are disconnected from genuine spiritual worship is on the stimulation of the worshipper. Display and show are the inevitable result, as well as never-ending innovation and change as "creative thinkers" (not content to conform to God's thinking) perpetually formulate "fresh" ideas and new practices. By insisting upon calling attention to

self and to “worship leaders,” i.e., professional performers, **worshippers become spectators** who have been distracted from worship with attention drawn away from God.

Those who wish to revolutionize worship practice in our day owe it to themselves to examine earnestly their motives in hopes of deterring them from their road to ruin. They have aligned themselves with a long line of individuals who have instigated change—with disastrous consequences (e.g., Genesis 3:6; Exodus 32:1-28; Leviticus 10:1-3; Numbers 11:1-35; 12:1-16; 14:4; 16:1-50; 1 Samuel 8:1-22; 13:8-14; 14:1-35; 2 Samuel 6:1-11; 2 Chronicles 26:16-21; Isaiah 30:9-13; Jeremiah 6:13-19; et al.).

The Proper Interplay Between Emotion, Reason, and Behavior

But doesn't God want us to engage our emotions when we worship Him? Aren't we to love Him with our **hearts**⁸² as well as with our **minds**—as Jesus says in Matthew 22:37? These rhetorical questions are, of course, appropriate and to be answered in the affirmative. But the salient follow up question is: “But **how** do we worship God with our emotions?” The conversion of the high-ranking treasurer of Ethiopia illustrates biblical protocol for the proper balance between reason, doctrine, and emotion (Acts 8:26-39). On a return trip to Ethiopia from Jerusalem, this government official was reading from Isaiah 53 while sitting in his chariot. When Philip encountered him, he asked, “Do you **understand** what you are reading?” Expressing his desire for assistance, Philip took a seat in the chariot with him and proceeded to explain Bible teaching to him. Notice that Christianity is first and foremost a **cognitive** experience. Intellectual awareness and mental comprehension must occur **first** and take priority over every other

facet of religious experience. Initially, a genuine encounter with God entails rational, logical analysis of truth.

After listening to and thinking about the concepts articulated by Philip, the treasurer “put two and two together” when they happened upon a body of water. Based upon what he had learned from his Bible study with Philip, he concluded that he must be baptized to please God. Notice that the second facet of religious experience is **obedient response**—compliance with the stipulations of God. Correct reasoning must lead to correct conclusions to which a person’s mind, will, and body must submit. Physical compliance must follow intellectual realization.

After achieving a rational comprehension of God’s will, making a conscious, informed decision to conform to that will, and then enacting obedience by being immersed, the treasury official “went on his way rejoicing.”⁸³ Here is the proper place of emotion in the Christian religion. Here is the correct balance between human reason, divine doctrine, and human emotion. Human emotion is to be subservient to and brought under the control and direction of the human mind—as that mind is governed by the words of God. Emotion must be rooted in rationality. Rationality must take priority over emotion. The biblical sequence is: facts, faith—and then feeling.

Summary

The times in which we live have certainly demonstrated a heavy orientation toward emotion at the expense of reason. The tremendous increase in diversity of viewpoint in American society with reference to morality, religion—and virtually everything else—reflects this shift away from rational assessment of truth. The result has been that most people are living life from the subjective perspective of

how they feel about things. Out of this cultural inclination to resist absolute, objective standards, agents of change have reacted to what they perceived to be an emotionless approach to religion by past generations in the church.

Apart from whether this perception is fair or accurate, we must reaffirm the fact that emotion is permissible in the practice of New Testament Christianity. Emotions were created by God. A major problem facing the church is that those who introduce illicit change are assigning an unscriptural function to their emotions. They are employing the emotions in a way and to an extent that God never intended. Liberalism, whether in politics or religion, relies heavily upon emotion rather than intellect, reason, and rational persuasion. The liberal call for change arises out of emotion, is driven by emotion, and depends upon emotion for its continued survival. The truth is that faithful Christian churches have not been “top heavy” on logic. The priority of the intellectual, logical, and rational over the emotional among such churches is simply a reflection of the same priority—the same balance—**that Scripture itself portrays**. Indeed, such churches have merely emphasized that the mind, directed by the Word of the Spirit, must bring under control the body with its passions, emotions, and appetites—even as Paul himself explained in Romans 7:13-8:14.

Twentieth-century preacher Gus Nichols once debated a charismatic preacher who would begin to quote a Scripture, pretend to forget it, request help from the Holy Spirit, pause awaiting the Spirit’s aid, and then quote it as though the Spirit had supplied it right there on the spot. Nichols observed the audience deeply swayed by this clever strategy. However, the man tried it once too often and the alert Nichols was ready and waiting. The man misquoted

a passage after going through his emotional manipulation procedure. Nichols told the audience of the glaring error and quoted the passage correctly. He informed the startled audience that it was not the Holy Spirit who was aiding the man, but one of the seducing spirits referred to in 1 Timothy 4:1.⁸⁴

Another insightful example of how faithful Christians of the past have countered the false views regarding emotion and the alleged miraculous work of the Holy Spirit is seen in an incident in the life of another 20th-century preacher, author, and debater George DeHoff:

I was preaching in a big tent meeting in Lepanto, Arkansas.... One night after the prayer, we were standing up singing and a man came right down the middle aisle, all dressed up with a three piece suit. He shook hands with me, came right on the platform and told me his name, and said, "The Lord spoke to me and told me to come and preach tonight." Well, of course, that upset me. There the brethren got me to hold a meeting and the Lord got somebody else. I said, "What time did the Lord speak to you?" He said, "This afternoon." I said, "What time this afternoon?" He said, "Uh, uh, about three o'clock." Well, I said, "My friend, just be seated and forget about it because He spoke to me at seven o'clock and told me He had changed His mind, for me to go ahead and preach and ignore you."⁸⁵

Those of us living today have been preceded by great, knowledgeable Christian men who have effectively exposed error and accurately presented the truth about the miraculous to so many—and the need to restrain human emotion in order to engage in logical analysis of the text. What an eternal tragedy that so many Christians are now falling for the same shenanigans and ploys that these men accurately and competently decimated—ploys that have been spawned by the same sellout to emotion and alleged miraculous intervention by the Spirit.⁸⁶

CHAPTER 7: REVIEW QUESTIONS

Misplaced Homage to Emotion

1. What significant shift has occurred in American civilization in the last half century?
2. In what way do churches seek to justify illicit religious practices?
3. With what is “spirituality” often equated?
4. At what are man-made worship changes targeted?
5. What are emotional sensations mistaken for?

Unbiblical Role of the Holy Spirit

6. What is one evident manifestation of the emphasis on emotion?
7. Under this influence, what does one tend to downplay?
8. In exchange, on what does one tend to rely?
9. What imbalance has resulted from the rise of Pentecostalism and the influence of the charismatic movement that commenced in the early 20th century?
10. What heavy emphasis in the past went far to insulate churches from the subjective, irrational tendencies of the charismatic phenomenon?
11. What have many churches come to embrace as their standards of authority?
12. What have they ultimately enshrined in their practice of Christianity?
13. What does attributing one’s own thoughts and behavior to the Holy Spirit enable a person to evade?
14. To what do some attribute thoughts that pop into their head?
15. What does such attribution conveniently enable a person to do?
16. What does crediting the Holy Spirit with one’s thoughts and acts allow an individual to do?

17. What will happen once individuals convince themselves their thoughts and acts are being guided by the Holy Spirit?

The True Meaning of Spirituality

18. To what does the term “spiritual” pertain and to what does it not pertain?
19. Of what does spirituality consist?
20. Since the Word of God was authored by the Spirit, what does it mean to be spiritual?
21. What is “spiritual worship”? Cite a passage.
22. What are “spiritual songs”? Cite a passage.
23. In what way is the law “spiritual”?
24. In what further way may the law be said to be spiritual?
25. Why may handclapping in worship, choirs, praise teams, mechanical instruments, and female worship leaders **not** be considered “spiritual” activities?
26. If a worship practice is not prescribed by the Holy Spirit, who is the source of that practice?
27. If a worship practice does not come from the mind of God, what is its origin?
28. What expression does Paul use to label such worship? Cite the passage.
29. Give a plain statement of the meaning of the term “spiritual.”
30. Though earlier generations of Christians may have manifested on the outside a more formal and unemotional expression of worship, what two things demonstrated that they engaged in spiritual worship?
31. Who was the worship of such generations **not** fashioned to suit?
32. What four things will be the inevitable result when worship is refashioned to focus on the stimulation of the worshipper?
33. What do worshippers become when attention is directed to “worship leaders”?

34. Cite three passages where individuals in the Old Testament instigated change with disastrous consequences.

The Proper Interplay Between Emotion, Reason, and Behavior

35. Identify the three “phases” that the Ethiopian Eunuch enacted in his response to the Gospel that clarify the role of emotion in Christianity. Cite the passage.
36. State the correct balance between human reason, divine doctrine, and human emotion.
37. In what must emotion be rooted?
38. What three words summarize the biblical sequence?

Summary

39. From what subjective perspective are most people living life?
40. Since emotion is permissible in the practice of Christianity and God created our emotions, what major problem is the Church facing?
41. What does giving priority in religion to the intellectual, logical, and rational over the emotional reflect?
42. In what passage does Paul emphasize the necessity of bringing under control the body with its passions, emotions, and appetites by means of the mind as it is directed by the Word of the Spirit?

CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSION

In light of all the biblical data set forth in this study, certain conclusions are quite evident. Since there are no apostles living today, and since Holy Spirit baptism was unique to the apostles (Acts 2) and the first Gentile converts (Acts 10), there is no Holy Spirit baptism today. Likewise, there is no miraculous healing today. There are no tongue-speakers today. The miraculous element in the Christian religion was terminated by God near the close of the first century, since the purpose of miracles was to confirm the divine origin of the speaker's message. Once the last apostle died, the means by which miraculous capability was made available was dissolved. With the completion of God's revelation to humanity, now available in the Bible, people living today have all that is needed to be complete and to enjoy the fullness of Christian existence (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3; Ephesians 4:14).

The alleged miracles and tongue-speaking of today simply do not measure up to the Bible's description of the miraculous. They are unverifiable, ambiguous, and counterfeit. Today's "divine healing" consists of vague, unseen, non-quantifiable aches and pains like arthritis and headaches. But in the New Testament, people were raised from the dead (Matthew 10:8; 11:5)—even days after death (e.g., John 11:17). Shriveled or severed body parts were instantly restored (e.g., Luke 6:6-10; 22:50-51). People who had been **born** blind had their sight restored (e.g., John 9:1). Those lame **from birth** were empowered to walk (Acts 3:2). First-century miracles were not limited only to certain ailments and psychosomatic illnesses that could be cured through natural means, or by mental adjustments on the part of the infirmed. Jesus healed "**all** kinds of sickness

and **all** kinds of disease” (Matthew 4:23). He went about “healing **every** sickness and **every** disease among the people” (Matthew 9:35). He gave the apostles these same powers “to heal **all** manner of sickness and **all** manner of disease” (Matthew 10:1). No disease or sickness was exempt in the New Testament (cf. Acts 28:8-9). Where are these instances today? When has anyone restored a severed limb lost in an accident? When has a self-proclaimed “faith-healer” raised anyone from the dead? Where are the miracle workers who have healed the blind, the crippled, the paralyzed, and those whose infirmities have been documented as having been in existence for many years (John 5:3,5)? Where are the televangelists who will go to the children’s hospitals and rectify birth defects and childhood diseases? Where are those who have ingested lethal doses of poison or been bitten by a venomous snake and remained unharmed (Mark 16:18; Acts 28:3-5)? All of which leads to this conclusion: the “wonders” being offered today are nothing more than “lying wonders” (2 Thessalonians 2:9),⁸⁷ i.e., counterfeit, false, and deceptive (*pseudous*).⁸⁸ An honest searcher for the truth is forced to conclude that the miraculous age has passed.

But human beings always are looking for something new, something exciting, and something flashy. They grasp for the attractive and the sensational, they want the easy way out, and they want something that makes them **feel** religious and secure—without having to face up to personal responsibilities. Hence, there will always be those who, instead of searching the Scriptures to find out whether these things are so (Acts 17:11), will simply disengage their minds, their spiritual sense, and their God-given ability to “test all things; hold fast what is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

Genuine Christianity today consists of simply taking the written Word of God, and studying it carefully in order to learn what God expects of us: simple meditation and reflection upon the Word of God—no brass bands or circus theatrics, no flash of light, or dream, or vision, no sudden rush attributable to the Holy Spirit. The pathway to heaven consists of honest, intensive investigation of written revelation, and a life of diligent self-discipline and self-denial that strives to incorporate spiritual attributes into one's life—attributes like patience, compassion, kindness, humility, forgiveness, honesty, integrity, peace of soul, joy, and clean, moral living. There are no short cuts to spirituality. **The miraculous is no answer.** Even in the first century, miracles were not designed to develop these spiritual attributes.

Certainly, God loves us and has promised to care for us (e.g., Matthew 6:33). But His workings in the Universe and in our lives are undertaken today providentially through the natural laws that He set into motion. After the first century, He has not—and will not—violate His own purposes by interfering with these laws in order to perform a miracle. In the final analysis, we are under obligation to seek His assistance by listening to the instructions found in His written Word.

Ask yourself this question: which is certain, always true and trustworthy, always reliable, and never changing: subjective human experience—or God's holy Word? Only words from God, then and now, will equip us and prepare us for eternity. As Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the **words** of eternal life" (John 6:68). Cornelius was instructed to contact Peter, "who will tell you **words** by which you and all your household will be saved" (Acts 11:14). On the occasion of Paul's defense

before Agrippa and Porcius Festus, suddenly Festus cried out: “Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!” Paul’s cool, calm, intelligent reaction typifies true Christianity: “I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak **the words of truth and reason**” (Acts 26:25). Jesus said to the Father, “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your **word** is truth” (John 17:17). When Satan attempted to prod Jesus into performing a miracle, Jesus insisted, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by **every word** that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).

CHAPTER 8: REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Who terminated the miraculous element in the world, and when?
2. What happened once the last apostle died?
3. What now enables people living today to be complete and enjoy the fullness of Christian existence? Cite a verse.
4. Give two examples of first century miracles that demonstrate that alleged modern-day miracles are counterfeit.
5. Cite a passage that shows that no sicknesses or diseases were exempt from being treated instantaneously and miraculously by Jesus and His apostles.
6. Like those noted in 2 Thessalonians 2:9, what types of “wonders” are being performed today?
7. Give several terms that describe what most people are seeking in conjunction with their religious beliefs.
8. Instead of disengaging our minds and spiritual sense, what should we do? Cite two passages.
9. What does genuine Christianity consist of today?
10. Of what does the pathway to heaven consist?
11. What were miracles in the first century **not** designed to do?
12. If miracles do not occur today, in what way can/does God work in our lives?

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13. Once the miraculous age passed away, what will God **not** do?
 14. In what way are we under obligation to seek God's assistance?
 15. What is certain, always true and trustworthy, reliable, and never changing. Cite two verses.

ANSWERS TO REVIEW QUESTIONS

CHAPTER 1

1. Reason—1:18 (p. 1)
2. Our feelings, what someone else says happened to them, and our own experience (p. 1)
3. To ask: what does the Bible teach? (p. 1)
4. Do I honestly believe the Bible to be the Word of God? (p. 1)
5. 2 Timothy 2:15; Acts 17:11 (p. 1)
6. What the Bible actually says (p. 1)

CHAPTER 2

1. “Miracle,” “sign,” and “wonder” (p. 3)
2. Acts 2:22; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:4 (p. 3)
3. “Work” and “mighty deed” (p. 3)
4. Working **outside** the laws of nature (p. 3)
5. The birth of a baby; the beauty of a flower; the narrow avoidance of an accident (p. 3)
6. The usual course of nature (p. 3)
7. Providence/providential (p. 3)
8. See the chart on p. 4.
9. The discerning of spirits (p. 5)
10. The discerning of spirits (p. 5)
11. A known human language (p. 5)
12. The Word of God (p. 6)

CHAPTER 3

1. Confirmation (p. 7)
2. Validate or endorse the speaker’s oral remarks (p. 7)
3. Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3-4; Acts 8:6; Acts 4:29-30; and others listed at the bottom of p. 7
4. They legitimized and verified it (p. 8).
5. The **signs** Jesus performed—John 3:2 (p. 8)
6. (1) **Signs** confirm the Word; (2) the **Word** was presented; (3) the Word created **faith** (p. 8).

7. (1) Paul presented the Gospel to the proconsul; (2) Paul performed a miracle by striking Elymas blind; (3) the proconsul believed the Gospel teaching—Acts 13:12 (p. 9).
8. See chart on pp. 10-11.

Other Purposes: Super-Spiritual?

9. Nothing—gifts were bestowed by the Holy Spirit without regard to spiritual status, let alone superiority (p. 12).

Other Purposes: To Make Well?

10. To relieve suffering—which was purely a side effect/benefit (p. 12)
11. Hardship and suffering—1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 4:12-17 (p. 13)
12. They have failed, since Christians have experienced the same sufferings as unbelievers (p. 13).
13. A minority (p. 13)
14. Miracles did not have as their purpose to show God's love or ease pain, sickness, and suffering (p. 14).

Insufficient Faith?

15. Faith (p. 14)
16. The dead and the demon possessed (p. 14)
17. The man born blind—John 9 (p. 14)
18. Paul (“thorn in the flesh”), Timothy (“frequent illnesses”/stomach trouble), Trophimus, Epaphroditus (p. 15)
19. A miracle (p. 15)
20. Additional miracles (p. 16)
21. John 20:30-31 (p. 17)
22. The unbeliever (p. 17)

What About the Elders?

23. By receiving the laying on of the apostles' hands (p. 17)
24. Made well physically (p. 18)

Summary

25. That Elijah's words were "the word of the Lord"—1 Kings 17:24 (p. 18)

CHAPTER 4

1. Once God revealed the entirety of the information He wished to make available to mankind (p. 21)
2. The miraculous (p. 21)
3. 2 Peter 1:3 (p. 21)
4. The written Word of God (p. 21)
5. Its all-sufficiency—1 Corinthians 1:22, 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (p. 21)

The Church in Corinth

6. "Fail," "cease," "vanish away," "done away"—1 Corinthians 13:8 (p. 22)
7. "in part" (p. 22)
8. The "perfect" (p. 22)
9. Jesus, heaven, Christian maturity/love (p. 22)
10. Miraculous gifts (p. 22)
11. The fully revealed Word of God (p. 22)
12. "Totality," "whole," "complete," "that from which nothing is missing," "brought to its end, finished, and lacking nothing necessary to completeness" (p. 22)
13. A child (p. 23)
14. A man (p. 23)
15. "Childish things" (p. 24)
16. A clouded mirror vs. face to face (p. 24)

The Church in Ephesus

17. It indicates the finishing point of miraculous gifts (p. 25).
18. The unifying of all believers (p. 25)
19. The system of faith, the completed body of information that constitutes Christianity—Jude 3, Galatians 1:23, Acts 6:7, 13:8, 14:22, 16:5 (pp. 25-26)
20. The summation and totality of Christian doctrine (p. 26)

CHAPTER 5

Tongue-Speaking

1. A known human language unknown to the speaker (p. 29)
2. Acts 2 (p. 30)
3. Known human languages (p. 31)
4. A bugler sounding meaningless noise (p. 31)
5. “In the world” (p. 31)
6. Isaiah 28:11-12 (p. 32)
7. Because it would prove that the tongue-speaker was empowered by God to speak the language spoken by the unbeliever, thereby confirming the divine origin of the tongue-speaker’s words (p. 32).

Tongues of Angels?

8. To humans, in human language (p. 33)
9. Unbelievers (p. 36)
10. (1) take turns one at a time, (2) no more than three tongue-speakers per service, and (3) tongue-speakers remain silent if no interpreter is present (pp. 36-37)

CHAPTER 6

Holy Spirit Baptism

1. Matthew 3:11 (p. 39)
2. They would be endued with power—Luke 24:49 (p. 40).
3. 14-16 (p. 40)
4. The empowerment of the Holy Spirit—Acts 1:8 (p. 40)
5. That Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit—Matthew 3:11 (p. 40)
6. The apostles (p. 40)
7. The apostles—Acts 1:26 (p. 41)
8. The apostles—Acts 2:43 (p. 41)
9. Acts 5:12; 14:3; 15:12 (p. 41)
10. Acts 11:15-17—the Gentiles (p. 41)
11. It did not occur (p. 42).

12. The two racial groupings of humanity, i.e., Jew and Gentile (p. 43)
13. Isaiah 40:5; Luke 3:6; Isaiah 66:23 (pp. 43-44)
14. "None" and "all" (p. 44)
15. To equip them to speak and confirm inspired truth (p. 45)
16. To convince Jewish Christians that Gentiles were eligible candidates for receiving the Gospel and entering the Kingdom (p. 45)
17. Paul (p. 45)

I Corinthians 12:13

18. The Holy Spirit (p. 47)
19. The one body of Christ (p. 47)
20. He meant that the Holy Spirit would have to reveal that information before a person could affirm it (p. 48).
21. When He empowered the apostles to speak and write that information (p. 48)
22. "Through the Spirit," "through the same Spirit," and "by the same Spirit" (p. 48)
23. The Holy Spirit's action (p. 48)
24. The state of being in the Holy Spirit (p. 48)
25. The water baptism of the Great Commission (p. 48)
26. Paul—Acts 18:8 (p. 48)
27. John 3:5; Ephesians 5:26; Titus 3:5 (pp. 49-50)
28. They were already saved (p. 50).
29. They were not yet saved (p. 50).
30. Water—Acts 10:47-48 (p. 50)

Laying on of the Apostles' Hands

31. The laying on of the apostles' hands (p. 50)
32. (1) Only **the apostles** could transfer miraculous ability and (2) all others who could perform miracles received their ability indirectly through the apostles—not directly from God (p. 51).
33. Philip, the Ephesians, and Timothy (p. 51)
34. 2 Timothy 1:6 uses the preposition meaning "through" or "by means of" while 1 Timothy 4:14 uses the prepo-

sition meaning “in the midst of” or “with.” Timothy’s gift came through Paul while the elders were present lending their support (p. 52).

Are There Modern-Day Apostles?

The Definition of an Apostle

35. One sent, messenger, envoy, delegate (p. 53)
36. (1) Unofficially to refer to one sent by other humans on a task and (2) officially as a divine emissary (p. 53)
37. 14—the original 12, plus Judas’ successor (Matthias), and Paul (p. 53)

The Qualifications of an Apostle

38. (1) See the Lord and be an eyewitness to His resurrection, (2) be specifically selected by the Lord or Holy Spirit, and (3) be invested with miraculous power (p. 54)

The Work of an Apostle

39. (1) Launch the Christian religion and (2) produce the New Testament (p. 54)
40. Matthew 16:18-19 (pp. 54-55)
41. The Greek future perfect passive means the apostles would simply implement the divinely pre-approved details pertaining to Christianity (p. 55 and Endnote 60).
42. He descended into the hadean realm (p. 55)
43. Resurrection (p. 55)
44. He dispensed gifts (p. 55)
45. The apostolic office (p. 55)
46. To equip and edify the Church (p. 55)
47. “Till”—adverb of time (p. 55)
48. The time when all people would have access to all of God’s communication to man (p. 55)
49. The means available to grow and mature in Christ—1 Corinthians 13:8-13 (p. 56)
50. The office of an apostle (p. 56)
51. The foundation of the apostles and prophets—Ephesians 2:20 (p. 56)

The Duration of an Apostle

52. It faded from the scene along with the age of miracles (pp. 56-57).
53. In the Bible (p. 57)
54. Apostles are no longer needed (p. 57).

No Apostles Today

55. Catholicism, Mormonism, some Pentecostals (p. 57)
56. No one can meet the qualifications of an apostle given in Scripture (p. 57).
57. Matthew 7:15 (p. 57)
58. 2 Corinthians 11:13 (p. 58)
59. He is accursed—Galatians 1:8 (p. 58).
60. 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 4:1; Revelation 2:2 (p. 58)
61. They cast lots (Acts 1:26)—by which the Lord made the decision—Proverbs 16:33 (pp. 58-59).
62. 1 Corinthians 9:1 (p. 59)
63. Ananias—Acts 22:14 (p. 59); also Acts 9:15 (p. 60)
64. Acts 1:24—“which of these two You have chosen” (p. 59)
65. The ability to confer miraculous power to others (p. 60)

Original Apostles Were Sufficient

66. The Christian era (p. 61)
67. His present location at the right hand of God (p. 61)
68. They set in place the parameters of Christianity and then articulated Christ’s Word by which all are judged (p. 61).
69. A figurative reference to the Church—spiritual Israel (p. 61)
70. They are guilty of discounting and discrediting the current rule of the original apostles who, along with Christ, have not abdicated their authority or current rule to any humans on Earth. Hence, we have no need for apostles today (p. 61).

CHAPTER 7

Misplaced Homage to Emotion

1. A shift from the rational to the emotional (p. 68)
2. By confusing spirituality with mere physical or emotion sensation (p. 68)
3. With emotion and feeling (p. 69)
4. At stimulating emotions and making worshippers feel their religion (p. 69)
5. Spirituality and religious authenticity (p. 69)

Unbiblical Role of the Holy Spirit

6. Increased emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit (p. 69)
7. Objective interpretation of the Bible—ability to arrive at the truth (p. 69)
8. The Holy Spirit’s “illumination” of Scripture in order for a person to comprehend it (p. 69)
9. An imbalance between emotion and logic (p. 70)
10. Knowing the Bible and relying on the objective nature of Scripture (p. 70)
11. Feelings and personal experience (p. 70)
12. Emotionalism in place of spirituality (p. 70)
13. Personal responsibility (p. 70)
14. The Holy Spirit and His leading (pp. 70-71)
15. To do what one chooses to do and still feel justified (p. 71)
16. To feel his decisions are out of his control and under the guidance of the Spirit (p. 71)
17. The clear teachings of the Bible will fade into insignificance and irrelevance (p. 71).

The True Meaning of Spirituality

18. It pertains to the spirit—not to the emotions (p. 71).
19. Being governed by the biblical substance and content authored by the Spirit (p. 71)

20. To imbibe His teachings and to engage one's own spirit in a fruitful encounter with the Holy Spirit's message (p. 71)
21. Responding rationally to God's will with worship that is predetermined and prescribed by Him—Romans 12:1 (p. 72)
22. Songs that have lyrics that convey correct biblical concepts—Ephesians 5:19 (p. 72)
23. Its source is the Spirit and it constitutes an accurate expression of His will (p. 72).
24. It is addressed to the human spirit/mind (p. 72).
25. They are neither authored nor authorized by the Spirit (p. 72).
26. Mere humans (p. 72)
27. The mind of man (p. 72)
28. "Self-imposed religion"—Colossians 2:23 (p. 72)
29. Engaging one's spirit/mind in thoughts and actions that are in harmony with and conformed to the Holy Spirit's directives as articulated in His Word, i.e., the Bible (p. 72)
30. (1) Their worship conformed faithfully to the Spirit's own instructions and (2) it demonstrated compliant spirits, respectful hearts, and a calm and reverent awe for the Creator (p. 73).
31. Themselves (p. 73)
32. Display and show, never-ending innovation and change (p. 73)
33. Spectators (pp. 73-74)
34. Genesis 3:6; ; Exodus 32:1-28; Leviticus 10:1-3; Numbers 11:1-35; 12:1-16; 14:4; 16:1-50; 1 Samuel 8:1-22; 13:8-14; 14:1-35; 2 Samuel 6:1-11; 2 Chronicles 26:16-21; Isaiah 30:9-13; Jeremiah 6:13-19 (p. 74)

The Proper Interplay Between Emotion, Reason, and Behavior

35. (1) Intellectual awareness and mental comprehension of the Gospel, (2) obedient compliance, and (3) rejoicing—Acts 8:26-39 (pp. 74-75)
36. Human emotion is to be brought under the control of the human mind as that mind is governed by the words of God (p. 75).
37. Rationality (p. 75)
38. Facts, faith, feeling (p. 75)

Summary

39. How they **feel** about things (pp. 75-76)
40. Those who introduce illicit change assign an unscriptural function to emotions (p. 76).
41. The same priority that Scripture itself portrays (p. 76)
42. Romans 7:13-8:14 (p. 76)

CHAPTER 8

1. God, near the close of the first century (p. 81)
2. The means by which miraculous abilities were made available was dissolved (p. 81).
3. The completed revelation of God to humanity in the Bible—2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:4; Ephesians 4:14 (p. 81)
4. Raising the dead; restoring shriveled or severed body parts; restoring sight to those born blind; enabling those lame from birth to walk (p. 81)
5. Matthew 4:23; 9:35; 10:1; Acts 28:8-9 (pp. 81-82)
6. “Lying wonders,” i.e., counterfeit, false, and deceptive (p. 82)
7. Something new, exciting, flashy, attractive, sensational, the easy way out, something that makes them **feel** religious and secure (p. 82)
8. Search the Scriptures, and test everything and hold to the truth—Acts 17:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:21 (p. 82).

9. Studying the Word of God carefully to ascertain God's expectations (p. 83)
10. Honest, intensive investigation of written revelation and a life of self-discipline and self-denial that strives to incorporate spiritual attributes into one's life (p. 83)
11. Develop spiritual attributes (like patience, compassion, etc.) (p. 83)
12. Providentially through the natural laws that He set in motion (p. 83)
13. Violate His own purposes by interfering with natural laws in order to perform a miracle (p. 83)
14. By listening to the instructions found in His written Word (p. 83)
15. God's holy Word—John 6:68; Acts 11:14; 26:25; John 17:17; Matthew 4:4 (pp. 83-84)

ENDNOTES

- 1 How does one account for the existence of persons today who adamantly maintain that they have personally witnessed or been the recipient of a miracle? The answer lies in the fact that people in Bible times made similar fallacious claims—from those who were fooled by the magicians of Pharaoh's court in the 14th century B.C. (Exodus 7:11-13,22-23; 2 Timothy 3:8) to those who sincerely believed the 1st century A.D. sorcerers Simon and Elymas could work miracles (Acts 8:9-11; 13:8). In all such cases, those deceived by the "deceit and trickery" (Acts 13:10), "the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting" (Ephesians 4:14), the "lying wonders" and "unrighteous deception" (2 Thessalonians 2:9-10; cf. 2 Corinthians 11:14-15) are without excuse and will be held accountable by God for their gullibility and susceptibility to "believe a lie" (Jeremiah 29:31; 2 Thessalonians 2:11). The fact remains that all of us are capable of knowing the truth and distinguishing truth from error (Matthew 7:15-16; 1 John 4:1).

The story is told of a Gospel preacher named John O'Dowd who attended a Pentecostal meeting where, allegedly, a deceased person was going to be raised from the dead. When O'Dowd arrived at the gathering, he observed that the deceased was displayed in a casket, and those in attendance were in line to pass by the open casket, to view the body before life was restored. O'Dowd joined the line and when he came to the side of the casket, he inserted a hat pin into the leg of the "deceased"—which caused a premature and unexpected raising of the "dead," much to the chagrin of the sponsors of the charade, which, in turn, caused such a stir that the police were summoned and O'Dowd was blamed for the ensuing ruckus and spent the night in jail for "disturbing the peace." Observe that, without O'Dowd's interference which exposed the hoax, no doubt many individuals would have been fooled/deceived and convinced that they had witnessed a bona fide miracle. However, the deceived would have no excuse for their gullibility and failure to investigate the claim as well as compare the claim with Scripture.

- 2 See John 5:20,36; 7:3,21; 9:3; 10:25,37-38; 14:10-12; 15:24.
- 3 W.E. Vine (1952), *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Old Tappan, NJ: Revell), Foreword.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 75, emp. added.
- 5 Otfried Hofius (1976), "Miracle," *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 2:626, emp. added.
- 6 *Ibid.*, 2:633, emp. added.
- 7 William Arndt and F.W. Gingrich (1957), *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press), p. 755.
- 8 See the discussion of this gift—not to be confused with solo singing—in Dave Miller (2007), *Richland Hills & Instrumental Music* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press), pp. 42-43. Also Dave Miller (1996), *Piloting the Strait* (Pulaski, TN: Sain Publications), pp. 205-206.

- 9 J.H. Thayer (1901), *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1977 reprint), p. 573, emp. added.
- 10 Thomas B. Warren (1972), *Have Atheists Proved There Is No God?* (Jonesboro, AR: National Christian Press), pp. 44ff. Also see Dave Miller (2015), *Why People Suffer* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press).
- 11 J.W. McGarvey (1910), *Biblical Criticism* (Cincinnati, OH: Standard), p. 354.
- 12 *Ibid.*, pp. 355-356.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 351.
- 14 For a discussion of Timothy's use of "wine," see Dave Miller (2003), "Elders, Deacons, Timothy, and Wine," Apologetics Press, <https://apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=11&article=1208>.
- 15 Albert Barnes (1956 reprint), *Notes on the New Testament: Matthew and Mark* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker), p. 150, emp. added.
- 16 This verse does not imply that the purpose of signs/miracles was to create faith. Rather, the signs recorded by John were intended to confirm/authenticate Jesus' **words**, specifically, His oral claim to be "the Christ, the Son of God" (vs. 31). The miraculous was never designed by God to generate faith—only the powerful words of God can do that (Romans 1:16; 10:17).
- 17 See, for example, Kyle Butt (2007), *Behold! The Word of God* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press); Dave Miller (2020) *The Supernatural Origin of the Bible: Proofs of Bible Inspiration* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press).
- 18 The term rendered "fail" and "vanish away" in vs. 8 and "done away" in vs. 10 is *katargeo* which means "to render inactive," "to condemn to inactivity," "to put out of use," "to destroy," "to remove from the sphere of activity," and "to make **completely inoperative**." The term rendered "cease" in vs. 8 (*pauo*) means to "restrain," "prohibit," "cause to stop," "come to an end," "to cease, leave off." Cf. 1 Peter 3:10. See Gerhard Delling (1964), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), 1:452-453; Wesley Perschbacher (1990), *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson), pp. 226,317; Arndt and Gingrich, p. 643; Thayer, p. 497.
- 19 The Greek term *meros* preceded by the preposition *ek* means "in part, partially," "the partial or incomplete," "partly, imperfectly," "in some degree." See Thayer, p. 401; Barclay Newman (1971), *A Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament* (London: United Bible Societies), p. 114; Perschbacher, p. 271; Arndt and Gingrich, p. 507; F. Blass, A. Debrunner, and Robert Funk (1961), *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press), pp. 114-115; James Moulton and George Milligan (1982 reprint), *Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-literary Sources* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), p. 399.
- 20 See Gerhard Delling (1972), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*,

- ed. Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), 8:73,75; Fredrick Danker (2000), *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago), third edition, p. 816; Thayer, p. 618. Also, “brought to completion; fully accomplished, fully developed; fully realized, thorough; complete, entire, as opposed to what is partial and limited”—Perschbacher, p. 404. Also “having reached its end,” “complete, final”—Moulton and Milligan, p. 629. Also “attaining an end or purpose, complete”—Danker, p. 995.
- 21 Moulton and Milligan, p. 629; Arndt and Gingrich, p. 817; Thayer, p. 618.
- 22 The Holy Spirit used the neuter article (τό) rather than the masculine (ὁ).
- 23 W. Robertson Nicoll, ed. (1900), *The Expositor’s Greek Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), 2:900, emp. added.
- 24 Kenneth Wuest (1943), *Treasures from the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), pp. 117-118.
- 25 By “completed revelation” I do not mean completed **canon**. I mean that all of God’s communication to humanity would have been revealed. See the New Testament discussion contrasting “mystery” with “made known” (Romans 16:25-26; 1 Corinthians 2:7-10; Ephesians 3:1-11). In the meantime, the process of producing copies of the various New Testament documents and circulating them far and wide would have been occurring rapidly and extensively from the very moment of their production by the inspired writers. Cf. Colossians 4:16, 1 Timothy 5:18 (where Luke 10:7 is already known and classified as “Scripture”), and 2 Peter 3:15-16 (where Paul’s epistles are already circulated and recognized as “Scriptures”).
- Greek scholar Daniel Wallace concedes that “there can be no objection...grammatically” to this viewpoint, however, he finds it “difficult to see such a notion in this passage, for this view presupposes that (1) both Paul and the Corinthians knew that he was writing scripture, and (2) the apostle foresaw the completion of the NT before the Lord’s return” [(1996) *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), p. 295.] Gordon Fee even declares the view as “an impossible view...since Paul himself could not have articulated it.” However, regarding the first allegation, Paul stated emphatically to the Corinthians his conviction that he was, in fact, relaying **God’s Word** to them: “If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are **the commandments of the Lord**” (1 Corinthians 14:37; also 2:4,12-13; cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 3:14)—a fact that, as noted above, Peter was also keenly aware of since he classified Paul’s writings as among “**the Scriptures**” [2 Peter 3:16]. Regarding the second allegation, while Paul’s mind was certainly engaged as he spoke and wrote Scripture, nevertheless, since he was acting under the inspiring influence of the Holy Spirit, he wrote with accuracy about things that **he could not have foreseen** on his own (e.g., 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; 1 Timothy 4:11ff.). See also Frank Pack (1972), *Tongues and the Holy Spirit* (Abilene, TX: Biblical Research Press), p. 120.

- MI: Eerdmans), 9:405, emp. added.
- 33 See W.F. Moulton, A.S. Geden, and H.K. Moulton (1978), *A Concordance to the Greek Testament* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark), fifth edition, p. 1005.
- 34 Henry Alford (1980 reprint), *Alford's Greek Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker), 2:14-15.
- 35 See the article "Prophesying with Instruments?" on the AP Web site: apologeticspress.org.
- 36 Hans Bietenhard (1975), "Angel," *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 1:101; G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, eds. (1997), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), 8:308; Walter Grundmann (1964), "angelos," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), p. 7; William Gesenius (1847), *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1979 reprint), p. 475; Danker, p. 8.
- 37 Helmer Ringgren (1997), "malak," *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), 8:310.
- 38 Grundmann, 1:74.
- 39 p. 318.
- 40 They could not be justified by "law alone" since all persons have violated God's laws. Hence, the need for "grace," i.e., the Gospel (Romans 1:16), which consists of Christ's atonement for sin on the cross, which may be accessed via an "obedient faith" (Romans 1:15; 16:26).
- 41 Kenneth Wuest(1943), *Untranslatable Riches from the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans) p. 86, emp. added.
- 42 McGarvey, p. 255.
- 43 Adapted from Wayne Jackson (1988), "The New Birth: What is It?" *Christian Courier*, 24:14, August.
- 44 See also McGarvey, pp. 254-256; Gareth Reese, (1976), *New Testament History—Acts* (Joplin, MO: College Press), p. 76; Dave Miller (2019), *Baptism & the Greek Made Simple* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press), p. 7.
- 45 J. Gresham Machen (1923), *New Testament Greek for Beginners* (Toronto, Canada: Macmillan), p. 41; Dana and Mantey, p. 101.
- 46 Dana and Mantey, p. 107.
- 47 Danker, p. 637.
- 48 C.F.D. Moule (1959), *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: University Press, 1977 reprint), p. 61; Thayer, p. 404; cf. Robertson, p. 611. See also G.B. Winer (1870), *A Treatise on the Grammar of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark), p. 471.
- 49 Nicoll, 4:127; cf. Robert Jamieson, A.R. Fausset, and David Brown (no date), *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 2:414; George Williams (1960), *The Student's*

- Commentary on the Holy Scriptures* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel), sixth edition, p. 956.
- 50 Arndt and Gingrich, p. 99; Danker, p. 122; Thayer, p. 68.
- 51 Matthew 10:1-5; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16; 9:1-2.
- 52 Acts 9:15; 22:14-15; 26:16-18; 1 Corinthians 15:8-9; Galatians 1:11-12,15-16.
- 53 Romans 11:13; 15:16; Galatians 2:8; Ephesians 3:8.
- 54 E.g., Romans 1:5; 1 Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:1,11-12.
- 55 Hayden expands these credentials to seven in W.L. Hayden (1894), *Church Polity* (Kansas City, MO: Old Paths Book Club), p. 33.
- 56 Matthew 10:5; Mark 3:13-14; Luke 6:13; Acts 1:26; 9:15; 22:14-15,21; 26:16.
- 57 Mark 3:15; 16:17-20; Luke 9:1-2; John 14:12,26; 15:24-27; 16:13; Acts 2:43; 4:29-31,33; 5:12,15-16; 6:6; 8:14-18; 19:6; 2 Timothy 1:6; Romans 1:11; Hebrews 2:3-4.
- 58 Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-48.
- 59 1 Corinthians 14:37; Galatians 1:12; Ephesians 3:3-4; 1 Thessalonians 5:27; 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 3:14; 1 Peter 1:12; 2 Peter 1:12-21; 3:15-16. God also chose to use Mark, Luke, James, and Jude to contribute to the New Testament canon, though they were not apostles in the official sense.
- 60 The Greek uses the future perfect passive and should be translated “will have been bound/loosed in heaven” as in the NASB (cf. Matthew 18:18-20; John 20:22-23). Cf. the ESV footnote as well as the Mounce Reverse-Interlinear New Testament, Disciples’ Literal New Testament (DLNT), Christian Standard Bible (CSB), Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB), International Standard Version (ISV), New English Translation (NET), New Life Version (NLV), World English Bible (WEB), Young’s Literal Translation (YLT), et al.
- 61 By “completed revelation” I do not mean completed **canon**. I mean that all of God’s communication to humanity would have been revealed. See the New Testament discussion contrasting “mystery” with “made known” (Romans 16:25-26; 1 Corinthians 2:7-10; Ephesians 3:1-11). In the meantime, the process of producing copies of the various New Testament documents and circulating them far and wide would have been occurring rapidly and extensively from the very moment of their production by the inspired writers. Cf. Colossians 4:16, 1 Timothy 5:18 (where Luke 10:7 is already known and classified as “Scripture”), and 2 Peter 3:15-16 (where Paul’s epistles are already circulated and recognized as “Scriptures”).
- 62 The words “pastors and teachers” share the same article in the Greek, and so should likely be construed to mean “pastor-teachers,” i.e., a single function in which pastors (those selected by the local congregation to serve as elders or shepherds) were endowed with the miraculous ability to teach inspired information not yet made available in written form.
- 63 Hayden, p. 22.
- 64 *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

- 65 See Leviticus 16:8; Numbers 26:55; 33:54; 34:13; Joshua 14:2; 18:6,10; 19:51; cf. Acts 13:19; 1 Samuel 14:42; Nehemiah 10:34; Psalm 16:5.
- 66 Cf. James Bales (1957), *The Kingdom: Prophesied and Established* (Austin, TX: Firm Foundation), pp. 187-223.
- 67 Acts 2:34-36; Ephesians 1:20; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:13; 8:1; 10:12-13.
- 68 Galatians 6:16; James 1:1; cf. Romans 2:28-30; Galatians 3:29.
- 69 See G.C. Brewer's discussion as quoted in Bales, pp. 208-210.
- 70 See also Hayden, pp. 22-33.
- 71 *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34.
- 72 Frank Capra was a movie director, producer, and writer who created some of the most memorable, award-winning films of the 1930s and 1940s. His *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939) and *It's A Wonderful Life* (1946) remain heart-warming classics to this day. In his 1971 autobiography, Capra commented on the decline of virtue in Hollywood film-making, noting that "practically all the Hollywood filmmaking of today is stooping to cheap salacious pornography in a crazy bastardization of a great art to compete for the 'patronage' of deviates." [Frank Capra (1971), *The Name Above the Title: An Autobiography* (New York: Macmillan), p. 400.]
- 73 Examples of religious actions that clearly arise more from an appeal to the emotional vs. the rational include: the use of "sacred drama," solos and choirs, rosary beads, praise teams, candle lighting, handclapping, instrumental music, baby dedications, Mariolatry, swaying arms, non-Sunday communion, Christmas services, and Easter sunrise services. Such antics appeal to the flesh and constitute symbolism over substance. To the spiritual mind they are carnal, immature, juvenile silliness. See Endnote 77.
- 74 One is reminded of the famed charismatic Oral Roberts who founded a university and joined the Methodist church.
- 75 E.g., Assemblies of God.
- 76 Dave Miller, (2007), *What the Bible says about the Church of Christ* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press).
- 77 Kyle Butt and Eric Lyons (no date), *Receiving the Gift of Salvation* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press).
- 78 Dave Miller (2012), *Surrendering to His Lordship* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press).
- 79 The term rendered "reasonable" in this verse in the NKJV, and "spiritual" in the ESV and NASB (with "rational" in the footnote), and "true and proper" in the NIV, is the term *logikos* which means "pertaining to being carefully thought through, *thoughtful*...endowed with reason" [Danker, p. 598], "rational, spiritual, pertaining to the mind and soul" [Perschbacher, p. 259], "agreeable to reason, following reason, reasonable...the worship which is rendered by the reason or soul" [Thayer, p. 379]. Hence, our worship and service to God are rational, logical, cognitive, and spiritual (pertaining to the spirit, not the emotions), and must conform to the stated will of the Holy Spirit.

- 80 A careful study of this chapter in Colossians reveals that, like obsolete Jewish worship practices in the church at Colossae that were carried over into Christian worship, many within Christendom have originated a host of religious activities that are nothing more than “commandments and doctrines of men” (vs. 22) and therefore condemned as “self-imposed religion.” The Greek term refers to “self-made religion, do-it-yourself religion, idiosyncratic religion, perhaps would-be religion” [Danker, p. 276], or as Fausset noted: “arbitrarily-invented worship: *would-be-worship*, devised by *man’s own will*, not God’s”—[Jamieson, et al., p. 379, italics in orig.]. And as Coffman explains: “the kind of actions engaged in because they please the worshiper, and not because they were commanded by the Lord”—[James Coffman (1977), *Commentary on Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians* (Austin, TX: Firm Foundation), p. 390]. A vast array of faddish worship practices riddle Christendom—from lighting candles, arm waving, and Christmas services, to baby dedications, drama, and choirs. One would be hard-pressed to find divine sanction for such humanly-devised activities. Christian church worship is spelled out succinctly in the New Testament: (1) congregational singing (1 Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16), (2) prayer (Acts 12:12; 2 Thessalonians 3:1; James 5:16), (3) giving (1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 8/9), (4) Sunday/weekly Lord’s Supper (Matthew 26:26-29; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:20ff.), and (5) Scripture reading, preaching, and teaching (Acts 20:7; 1 Timothy 4:13). All actions that go beyond these simple avenues through which to approach God in “true” (John 4:24) worship are “sourced in the will of the worshiper, not the will of the one worshipped”—[Michael Magill (2011), *Disciples’ Literal New Testament* (Beaverton, OR: Reyma Publishing), p. 997]. They may appear to be reflections of the worshiper’s sincere humility—but such is “false humility” (vs. 23) and they provide no assistance “against the indulgence of the flesh” and living the Christian life. As Jesus declared: “in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men” (Matthew 15:9).
- 81 Cf. Dave Miller (2018), *Lifting Up Hands In Worship to God* (Montgomery, AL: King Solomon Publications).
- 82 Current culture typically juxtaposes “head” or “mind” on the one hand and “heart” on the other as a contrast between thinking and feeling: “You **think** with your **head**, you **feel** with your **heart**.” But one must go to the Bible and allow God to define His own terms. The Hebrew term for “heart” (*lehv*) refers to the “inner man, mind, will, heart” [Brown, Driver, Briggs, p. 524]. Hebrew linguistic specialist Jeff Benner notes: “To the ancient Hebrews the heart was the mind, the thoughts. When we are told to love Elohim with all our heart (Deut. 6:5) it is **not speaking of an emotional love**, but to keep our minds and our thoughts working for him” [Jeff Benner (2019), “Heart,” Ancient Hebrew Research Center, <https://www.ancient-hebrew.org/definition/heart.htm>.] Likewise the Greek term for heart (*kardia*) refers to the “seat of physical, spiritual and mental life” [Danker, p. 508] which includes the intellect, thinking, and volition. While it is sometimes difficult to separate the mind from

the emotions, since God “hard wired” our spirits into our bodies—with all of their chemicals, hormones, and physical frailties—nevertheless, the mind is distinct from our feelings. Our feelings cannot be trusted unless they are the direct result of right thinking in the mind. Consider the following occurrences of “heart” in the Bible and observe that understanding the term to refer to feelings or emotions would be nonsensical: 1 Samuel 16:7, Proverbs 23:7, Jeremiah 17:9-10, Malachi 4:6, Matthew 5:8, Luke 21:26. Though lexicographers will sometimes insert into their definitions of “heart” allusions to passions and feelings, they are introducing confusion into their definitions since the volitional side of man is clearly distinct and separate from the emotional side of man—though they co-exist. The more common term for emotions in the ancient world was “kidneys” (“reins” in the KJV). Cf. Jeremiah 11:20, NASB.

- 83 Technically, the term “rejoicing” does not refer to emotions or emotional euphoria—though emotions undoubtedly accompany genuine rejoicing. The Greek term means “to be in a state of happiness and well-being, rejoice, be glad.” The Greek word for “joy” refers to “the experience of gladness” [Danker, pp. 1074,1077]. Joy in the Bible is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). Joy is no more an emotion than are the other fruits of the Spirit, including being longsuffering and exercising self-control.

Instead, joy is a state of mind, a sense of contentment and well-being, a mindset of happiness and satisfaction, and being at ease with one’s moral and spiritual condition. People can work themselves into emotional excitement without being spiritually content or joyful (cf. the frenzied worship behavior displayed by the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18:26-28). As soon as they come off the artificial emotional high, they must return to their unhappy condition, just like people coming off a heroin high or state of intoxication. Biblical joy exists even in the midst of adversity, pain, and disappointment. Joy is a calm, firm confidence that all is well no matter what one is facing. No wonder Paul and Silas could be joyful though in great pain due to a severe beating, though imprisoned and fastened in stocks, and though without a praise team, instrumental music, and arm swaying (Acts 16:22-25).

A person who is joyous will generally also experience emotional excitement and euphoria. But the two are not to be confused as synonymous. One can experience joy without the emotion—and vice-versa. The emotion that one feels is distinct from the outward manifestations of emotion—which must be dictated by God, not the individual. The fact is that praise teams, choirs, arm waving, and candles create artificial, fake “joy.”

Does God want us to be joyous as we worship Him? Certainly. Does God specify precise external actions by which we are to worship Him? Absolutely. Hence, we must not express our joy and/or emotion by adding our own external actions. If God has stipulated precise external actions by which to worship Him, we cannot add our own. One could justify any and every external worship action by claiming: “That’s how

- I express my joy." We must learn to like, enjoy, and find delight, contentment, and satisfaction in conforming ourselves to **God's** directives and the stipulated expressions of worship **He** has authorized.
- 84 As reported in Robert Taylor, Jr. (1986), "Some Shall Depart From the Faith" in *The Church and the Restoration Movement*, ed. Bill Jackson (Austin, TX: Southwest Publications), p. 95.
- 85 George DeHoff (1988), "Honor To Whom Honor Is Due" Luncheon, Fort Worth Lectures (Bedford, TX: Brown Trail church of Christ), audio tape.
- 86 See Dave Miller (2019), *Is Christianity Logical?* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press).
- 87 "False wonders" (NASB), "pretended signs and wonders" (RSV), "counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders" (NIV).
- 88 Cf. Danker, p. 1097.

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