

TONGUES

A Biblical Study



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Tongues: A Biblical Study

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Chapter 1: God The Holy Spirit

Baptism of the Holy Spirit is such an important doctrinal subject that discussions keep taking place on this subject wherever people accept Christ for the first time. More so if they come in touch with some of the modern movements that have introduced various new teachings in the name of the Holy Spirit.

Though this subject is of such importance, and of wide interest, no new book has come up in the last two decades to handle the subject of Baptism of the Holy Spirit. This is surprising in the light of the great interest in this subject. Part of the reason for this silence can be attributed to lack of commitment to the more serious subjects of the Bible in the face of numerous contemporary subjects that get unnecessary and unproportional attention though they are not doctrinally significant. Also, the post-modern thinking that has crept among Bible-believing church has tended to minimize the importance of doctrinal truths and has emphasized the importance of practical living.

Meanwhile, the rise of bizarre and non-evangelical movements like the Charismatic Movement, the Toronto Movement etc have filled Christendom with new and unbiblical terms. For example today we hear of the slaying in the spirit, holy laughter, holy barking, holy vomiting etc. all popularized in the name of the Holy Spirit, though neither these terms nor these ideas have any basis in the Bible. This has in turn made people afraid to speak on the doctrinal aspects of the Holy Spirit. This is very harmful because God the Holy Spirit plays a substantial role in regeneration, sanctification, and nurturing of the body of Christ and ignorance about the Holy Spirit will result in corresponding decline in spiritual vigor and growth.

The Person And Work Of The Holy Spirit

In Scripture we often see God the Father and God the Son speaking to man and therefore almost everyone has a picture of that Father as well as that of the Son as "persons". However, since the Holy Spirit is not depicted in the Bible as interacting directly with people, most people have only a hazy idea about the person and work of the Holy Spirit. This confusion is compounded by the spread of numerous movements that build their case upon a generally insufficient (or sometimes even distorted) understanding of the Holy Spirit.

The Person Of The Holy Spirit: As one of the three persons in Trinity, God the Holy Spirit is God and this can be understood from numerous passages in the Bible. For example, when Annanias and Saphira spoke a lie about the property that they sold, the Scripture clearly says that the lie that he spoke to the Holy Spirit was a lie spoken to God. In Acts 5 we read

"3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God."

Thus anyone who studies that person and work of the Holy Spirit should keep in mind that Holy Spirit is God, and that the same respect and reverence is due to Him as is to the Father and the Son.

Since Holy Spirit is God, it should also be kept in mind that He is a person. The God of the Bible is not a non-personal power, but rather a person who communicates with mankind. This aspect is at times forgotten about the Holy Spirit when Christians talk of His powerful activities. So much so that many a times Christians consider the Holy Spirit merely as some kind of a non-personal divine power. As a result, many of them address Him and talk about Him as though he were merely a power that is at the beck and call of the preacher. This is a totally erroneous concept of the Holy Spirit, and it has its roots more in pagan philosophies of magical powers and not in the Bible.

Since God the Holy Spirit is part of Trinity, He is a person who is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent. He is everything that God is, and Christians should approach the Holy Spirit with the same reverence with which they approach the Father or the Son. This needs to be said emphatically once again because many of the more modern movements that go by the name of the Holy Spirit, such as the Toronto Movement, often depict the Spirit as merely some kind of non personal power which is at the beck and call of the preacher. This is blasphemy, and no Bible believing Christian should fall into this trap of devaluating the Holy Spirit.

The Scripture makes it clear that within Trinity, father is the author, son is the Creator and Saviour and Holy Spirit is the executor and sustainer. That is why we read in Acts 1:8

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

While the Triune God is involved in everything in the universe, each one has a different role to play. Thus instead of confusing the Holy Spirit with some kind of man-controlled and humanly-manipulated divine power, we should look at Him as what He is: omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent God, not a mere power.

The Work Of The Holy Spirit: Since Holy Spirit is the executor of the eternal plan of God, he does practically everything related to sustaining the creation and the creatures, including God's children. In reference to creation we read in Genesis 1:2

"And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters"

In relation to the daily life of God's children we read in Romans 8 26 and 27

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God".

His activities in the Church age include, among many others, attracting people to Christ, convicting them of truth, regeneration, baptism, indwelling, filling, sealing, guaranteeing, spiritual gifts, fruits of the spirit, helping people to understand the scripture, empowering believers, etc. Also, it the God

the Holy Spirit who caused the Bible to be written down as His inspired word, exactly the way He wanted everything recorded. He interacts continually with believers, who need to respond to him with respect and deference. This is the reason why believers have been asked not to grieve the Spirit (Ephesians 4:30) and not to quench the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

A proper understanding of the person and work of the Holy Spirit requires that we study the subject of Holy Spirit in detail. Any such study would be a life-transforming experience, because it is the Holy Spirit who empowers our spiritual life. However, In this book we will limit ourselves to the topics of Baptism of the Holy Spirit and The Gift Of Tongues.

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Chapter 2: Baptism Of The Holy Spirit

The key to understanding exactly what the baptism of the Holy Spirit is found in 1Corinthians 12:13 which says,

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

However, before we look at this verse in detail, we need to briefly review the concept of baptism.

The Meaning Of Baptism: The word baptism comes from the Greek word BAPTIZO which is a Greek word used for immersion or washing. In the New Testament, Baptism is the act of taking a believer and immersing him totally and completely in water to show to the world that through faith this person has been united with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection. It is essential for him to be completely submerged in the water so that instead of two entities (water and the believer), only one entity (water) remains visible to people when this person is dipped into the water to totally identify and unite with it.

Thus whenever the Scripture talks of baptism, it is talking of an identification, union, or merging of two entities into one and any passage related to baptism can be understood only when this definition is kept in mind.

Baptism Of The Holy Spirit: Baptism of the Holy Spirit is totally a New Testament concept and such baptism did not exist in the Old Testament. In the New Testament it was introduced in a prophecy when John The Baptist said:

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" (Matthew 3:11).

The Gospels were written in the dispensation of Israel, and while a good amount of information in the gospels is related to the Jewish dispensation. Church was a "mystery" that was finally revealed on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came down upon the believers in a special way to mark the beginning of the Church age. However, the four gospels do give some glimpses here and there of the as yet future church and the statement by John the Baptist is a good example of such windows into what God was going soon to do to His children. (Other references Mark 1:7; Luke 3:16; John 1:15; John 1:26)

Finally the day of Pentecost came with its manifestations and the disciples immediately understood that this was confirmation that what was promised, you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit, has taken place. They also understood that the new dispensation of Church has started. In the coming days God made it clear to the disciples that the dispensation known as Church was going to be totally different from what it used to be before. Earlier only Jews were God's chosen people, but now everyone -- Jews and Gentiles -- was going to be a part of this body.

This is explained in 1Corinthians 12:13 which says,

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

We know that we are all part of the body of Christ, and the Scripture equates us with members of the body. In Romans 12:5 we read

"So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another".

Obviously, in light of the above, we can understand that at the moment of our salvation, God the Holy Spirit takes us and unites us with the body of Christ, so that we become members of the body. "We are baptized into one body" or we are united into the body of Christ. This process of taking a believer at the moment of his salvation and uniting him with the body of Christ is known in the word of God as "Baptism of the Holy Spirit". Never before was anything like this, because before the day of Pentecost God dealt only with the Jew. However, now "whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free" we are all one because all of us have been united into one and the same body -- the body of Christ, through the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Conversely, all who are born-again and who are members of the body of Christ are partakers in the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Bible does not ask a child of God to wait for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit though God's children are commanded to take care of many other things with respect to the Holy Spirit (such as be ye filled with the Spirit, do not quench the Spirit, do not grieve the Spirit). This is again an indication that Baptism of the Holy Spirit is a divine activity that is totally independent of human yearning or craving for it.

It is to be noted that Corinth was a church made up of a mixed group of people. Some were highly spiritual while some were totally carnal and rebellious with many of them in between these states. However the Spirit of God says that "all" of them were baptized. This is again an indication that baptism of the Holy Spirit is a process that God the Holy Spirit administers to all believers irrespective of their spiritual state.

That believers are members of the body of Christ is emphasized in numerous passages in the Scripture. Some of them are:

So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. (Romans 12:5)

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. (1Corinthians 12:12)

But now are they many members, yet but one body. (1Corinthians 12:20)

Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. (1Corinthians 12:27)

That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel (Ephesians 3:6)

Baptism of the Holy Spirit has nothing to do with a deeper Christian life or anything else related to practical Christian life. Nor is it equal to the filling of the Holy Spirit. Rather, it is an action of God the Holy Spirit whereby He joins us to the body of Christ which is also called the Universal Church.

While God had a single race of people unto Him in the Old Testament, in the New Testament He chose both Jews as well as Gentiles to be a new race that was one not because of racial oneness but rather because of spiritual oneness. This spiritual oneness comes when the Holy Spirit takes a new believer and unites him with the "Body" of Christ so that today all who are saved are the body of Christ. This is the result of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and thus the purpose of the baptism is to make us members of this universal body.

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Chapter 3: Tongues: A Biblical Perspective

As part of Trinity, Holy Spirit is Eternal God. He is ever-present in the Universe, but came to the earth in a special way on the day of Pentecost to nurture the church till the rapture of the Church. He helps individual believers and the church on the earth to lead a life and testimony that in keeping with the high calling with which the New Testament believers have been called.

From the early 1900s there has been a renewed emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit, and because of His special role in our lives in this dispensation it is always good to give due attention to the person and work of the Holy Spirit. However, we notice that instead of emphasizing the over-all and wide-ranging work of the Holy Spirit, many nominal churches of Charismatic bent, revival groups from nominal churches, revival groups from Roman Catholics, and Pentecostal churches over-emphasize only the subject of Tongues. This seems to be a highly imbalanced outlook, and needs a Bible-based study.

What Is The Gift Of Tongues?

"Speaking in Tongues" is the translation of the Greek expression *LALEIN HETERAIS GLOSSAIS*. It means that the speakers spoke in languages that they did not know. These were, obviously, real languages which the speaker did not know and in which God communicated the gospel and other divine truths to the listeners (Acts 2:4, 1 Corinthians 12:28). In the report in Acts the people groups are listed whose language was heard there and that is very helpful in realizing that when people speak in tongues they use real human language not known to them but which is spoken somewhere on the earth.

The Scripture makes it clear that Speaking in Tongues is a spiritual gift that has two aspects.

1. A Spiritual Gift
2. A Sign Gift

Tongues has been recorded in the Bible in the two ways mentioned above and we need to look at both the aspects.

1. Tongues As A Sign: The first reference to Tongues is found in Isaiah 28:11, 12 where it is mentioned as a sign to Jews or to the Jewish nation. Then in 1 Corinthians 14:22 the Scripture says that Tongues are a sign not for believers but for the unbelievers. On comparing these two statements of Scripture, we can deduce that when God used tongues as a sign, it was meant as a prophetic sign for the unbelieving Jews. It was a sign of judgment, and it was also a call to return to God's path.

Prophetic Importance of Signs: The Jews were a special people of God, but they kept lapsing into spiritual compromise and got alienated from God. As a result God sent them into slavery, but kept loving His people. As a result He sent both discipline as well as invitation to them. A sign of this was the ruling of God's people by people of alien languages (Isaiah 14:21, 22, Deuteronomy 28:49, Jeremiah 5:15). Thus prophetically speaking, one purpose of tongues was to sign to the Jewish nation that they are under God's judgment and that they need to return to God.

We read in the Scripture that the Jews seek signs (1 Corinthians 1:22, John 6:30, Luke 23:8, Matthew 24:3). This is a unique characteristic of Jews and God used alien languages (Tongues) as a sign to communicate with them.

The Scripture makes it clear that another sign was given to the Jews when the prophecy in Joel (Joel 2:28-32) came to pass on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:16-21). During His public ministry our Lord had given information about what was going to happen on the day of Pentecost (Mark 16:17).

Thus it is clear that Tongues is a gift with prophetic significance that God used as a sign to communicate with His chosen people. Isaiah reminds that when God pours the Holy Spirit on His people during the end times, and when they communicate the gospel in non Jewish languages, it would be a sign and a warning to the unbelieving Jews. Christ also makes it clear that this sign shall be shown to unbelievers when believers speak in languages that are not their own. When Jewish believers received the Holy Spirit in a special manner for the first time on the day of Pentecost, this prophetic statement made by the Lord was fulfilled.

Historical Importance: We receive the historical record about the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the subsequent sign gift of tongues in the book of Acts. There are three records in this book of people speaking in other tongues. The Scripture makes it clear that on each of these three occasions, the gift of tongues was a sign to Jewish people. These three occasions are:

- *On the day of Pentecost, Acts 2:1-13*
- *In the house of Corenelius, Acts 10:40-43*
- *The disciples at Ephesus, Acts 19:1-7*

a. Other Tongues On The Day Of Pentecost: The Lord had promised His disciples to send the Holy Spirit upon them in a special way (John 14:26, 14:26, 16:7-15, Acts 1:5, 8), and what was witnessed on the day of Pentecost was a unique fulfillment of this promise. This even was unique in many ways. The tongues of fire was never seen on any other occasion when they spoke in tongues. Nor was there rushing of mighty wind on any other occasion.

The Tongues-speaking on the day of Pentecost helped the Jews living in rebellion in foreign lands (who had gathered at Jerusalem) to hear the proclamation of God in non Jewish languages which they were accustomed to (Acts 2:11). When God the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles, they worshipped and glorified God in various languages as worshipping God was given prime importance in all spiritual gatherings of the Jews (Exodus 15:11, Psalms 26:6, 40:5, 77:11, Isaiah 25:1).

When Jews in dispersion who spoke numerous non Jewish languages heard Galileans speak of God's glory in the very same languages without learning them, they were awe-struck (Acts 2:12). Here the Scripture uses the Greek word DIALECTOS for tongues (Acts 2:6, 8) and this represents actual languages used by people groups. Though Hebrew is supposed to be the first language of the Jews, those dispersed to other nations had picked up the national languages of those nations as their first language. When the Apostles presented the divine message in those tongues, everyone was obviously amazed and stunned. Since nothing of this sort was ever seen, and since there was much commotion all around, they thought some people had gotten drunk. That is what the Holy Spirit had to prompt the Apostle Peter to rise up to give an explanation that this was the fulfillment of what all the Jews had been expecting on the basis of what was said in the prophecy of Joel. He emphasized the following points:

- The Holy Spirit that was promised by Christ (Acts 1:8) had finally arrived in a special way, and this had furnished a special sign to the unbelieving Jews on that day of Pentecost.
- This was also a historical sign of the fact that the Holy Spirit shall be given in a special way in this dispensation to all who are saved through grace by faith in Christ Jesus (Acts 10:43, Romans 8:23).
- This was a sign that the Baptism of Spirit which John the Baptist and Christ had prophesied (Act 1:5, 8, Matthew 3:16) had taken place.

- What these people were speaking was not some kind of meaningless gibberish but rather these were languages current in many of the countries where the Jews were in exile (Acts 10:40-43).

b. Other Tongues In The House Of Corenelius: The gift of tongues seen for the second times in the book of Acts in the house of Corenelius. It was also a unique event. This was the first time when the gospel was preached to gentiles after Pentecost. The Jewish believers needed to understand that for the first time God has brought in gentiles into the new group of believers called the church. Therefore God the Holy Spirit gave them these gentiles gift of Tongues with the specific purpose of serving as a sign to the Jews. (Acts 10:43). It is this sign, coupled with an earlier vision, that God used to reveal to Peter and companions (Jews) that in the Church age both Jews as well as gentiles going to be part of the same body. Thus tongues here, spoken by gentiles, were a sign for the Jews.

A few things about the gift of Tongues in the house of Corenelius should be noted by all Bible students:

- After the departure of Christ they had to wait for receiving the Holy Spirit. However, in the household of Corenelius such waiting was not needed.
- Unlike the day of Pentecost, there was neither any rushing of wind, nor tongues of fire at this occasion when people were given the gift of Tongues.
- Unlike what the apostles Peter and John did to Samaritans (Acts 8:17) and unlike what apostle Paul did to the disciples of John the Baptist (Acts 19:1-7), laying of hands was not involved here for receiving of the Holy Spirit.

c. Other Tongues And The Disciples At Ephesus: At Ephesus we see the record about a few disciples of John The Baptist. What happened here is again unique. While these disciples of the Baptist had taken the baptism of repentance, they were totally unaware of the new dispensation of church that started on the day of Pentecost. When these disciples heard the gospel of Christ from, they promptly accepted Christ as Saviour and accepted believers baptism. Further, as soon as the apostle Paul laid their hands upon them, they received the gift of baptism to demonstrate to all that even the disciples of John are assimilated into the church when they accept Christ as their personal Saviour.

While the Holy Spirit came upon people on many occasions, the gift of tongues is reported along with that only on the three occasions mentioned above. One can come to several objective deductions on the basis of the three reports recorded in the Scripture and they are:

a. About Tarrying For Receiving The Spirit: The disciples tarried at Jerusalem for receiving the Spirit because the Lord had commanded them to do so (Acts 2:1-4, 1:5, 8). They spoke in numerous tongues (languages) when the Spirit came upon them. The Spirit came not because they tarried, but they tarried because they were commanded to wait till God's promise is fulfilled. Thus tarrying was not the precondition for the grant of the Spirit. However, there was no tarrying involved in the two other occasions when they spoke in tongues after the Spirit came upon them. Thus it is clear that tarrying is not a precondition for receiving the Holy Spirit or for speaking in tongues after the incident at Pentecost. Tarrying meetings have no Biblical basis.

b. Laying Of Hands For Receiving The Spirit: The first time that the Holy Spirit came upon people in a special way (in Church Age) was on the day of Pentecost. It was not in conjunction with the laying of hands upon the recipients. The Samaritans received the Holy Spirit after the laying on hands (Acts 8:14-18), but there is no biblical record that they spoke in tongues. However, there was laying of hands on the disciples of John and there was also the gift of Tongues (Acts 19:1-7). Thus the

Scripture does not make laying of hands essential for receiving of the Holy Spirit, for speaking in tongues, or for the Baptism or anointing of the Holy Spirit. It is obvious that the Holy Spirit moves on different occasions in different manners as per His sovereign will (1 Corinthians 12:11).

An Evaluation Of The Gift Of Tongues As A Sign: The Scripture does not insist upon Tongues as the only or essential sign of the baptism or receiving/indwelling of the Holy Spirit. What is more, except for the three historical occasions recorded in the book of Acts, the gift of tongues does not manifest anywhere else in the New Testament as a sign of having received the Holy Spirit. The Samaritans who received the Spirit by laying of hands (Acts 8:16) are not recorded by the Scripture as having spoken in Tongues. Thus it is obvious from the Scripture that Tongues is not spoken as a sign by all those who receive the Spirit.

The 3000 who accepted the Lord on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:47) and who received the Holy Spirit by faith (1 Corinthians 12:3) are not recorded as speaking in Tongues. Since Dr. Luke was a very methodical writer, it is obvious that God the Holy Spirit used him to provide us a very accurate report of what happened on that day. Since he wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we are also assured that all essential information about this conversion is recorded accurately, and also that no essential information has been left out from the record.

When we examine the history and theology of the gift of Tongues, it becomes obvious from the Scripture that this is a gift God uses to communicate with non believing Jews. It is a sign unto them. Since people who never learnt a language speak in that language, and since God uses it as a sign to the Jews, it is rightly labeled as a Sign Gift. We see God using this gift to communicate with Jews on the day of Pentecost, at the household of Corenelius, and also at Ephesus. Each time it conveyed essential information to Jews.

As we study the passages in the book of Acts, it becomes obvious that the use of tongues by God as a Sign Gift ceased very early in church age. As a result, there is no longer any mention of the Tongues as a sign during the formation of churches though the history of such formation is recorded in numerous places. Tongues makes its appearances only several years after, in the church at Corinth. There we see another aspect of the gift of Tongues -- Tongues not merely as a sign, but as a Spiritual Gift to be used repeatedly by the recipient -- and we need to study this aspect of Tongues in detail.

2. Tongues As A Spiritual Gift: The doctrines related to the Church age are concentrated mostly in 21 Epistles. God the Holy Spirit got them to us via inspired writers (1 Timothy 2:15) so as to instruct church age believers. Thus all essential doctrines that church age believers need to know are there in these 21 Epistles.

Of the 21 Epistles that God gave to the Church, only 1 Corinthians mentions the gift of Tongues, and it is no longer mentioned in other Epistles though they do discuss spiritual gifts at considerable detail. Within the Corinthian Epistle, the discussion of Tongues is limited to chapters 12 to 14, and let us study what the Scripture says in these chapters.

a. The Doctrinal Importance of Tongues: Earlier passages that we studied gave the prophetic and historical background of Tongues in Church age. The Corinthian passage explains the doctrinal aspects of this subject and these can be listed as follows:

- Tongues is a Spiritual Gift: the Scripture makes it clear that the manifestation of Tongues seen in the Corinthians church was a spiritual gift (1 Corinthians 12:10, 28, 30; 13:8; 14:23). The very same chapters go on to remind believers that everyone in the church does not get the same gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4-11).
- Tongues are meaningful languages, not gibberish, and they need to be expressed with clarity (1 Corinthians 14:9, 10). All real languages have words, sentences, grammar, etc. The gift of Tongues being the gift of using real -- but unlearned -- languages it should exhibit all these characteristics or real languages. We need to note that the word used here for Tongues is GLOSSA which refers to real languages.
- God the Holy Spirit and the Scripture permits only two, or at the most three, persons to use the gift of Tongues in the church (1 Corinthians 14:27). What is more, they need to speak one after another, not simultaneously. Several people speaking together in tongues is a violation of Biblical protocol, and is contrary to the strict instruction of the Bible.
- An interpreter must be present. If no interpreter is present, then Tongues is not to be used in the church under any circumstance (1 Corinthians 14:28). It is a strict command of the Scripture that only one man should speak in Tongues at a time, and that also only and only if interpretation is available (1 Corinthians 14:27).
- God's word does not allow women to speak in Tongues in the church and they are strictly forbidden from using this gift in the church (1 Corinthians 14:34). Thus women speaking in Tongues in church is a serious violation of the Scripture.
- When the Scripture says that Tongues shall cease (1 Corinthians 13:8), it is obvious from the Scripture itself that Tongues is not going to be an everlasting gift for the church.
- Doctrinally speaking, the gift of Tongues is not a sign of the receiving the Holy Spirit, baptism of the Holy Spirit, or filling of the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, it was a spiritual gift that was granted to certain individual believers for special purposes (Acts 2:4).
- Even when it was given as a spiritual gift to church age believers, the primary target of Tongues was unbelievers. The primary purpose was not the edification of believers (1 Corinthians 14:21, 22, 4).
- The Scripture makes it clear that the gift Tongues has to be exercised when there is a need. It is not to be used collectively, because a collective use (when many speak in tongues at the same time) leads to mockery and not spiritual conviction (1 Corinthians 14:23). It is a strict protocol laid by God's word that Tongues should be used in the Church only by one person at a time (1 Corinthians 14:27).
- The Spirit of God places Tongues at the tail end of spiritual gifts when it lists spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:28). In other words, as per the inspired word of Holy Spirit, the gift of tongues is not one of the prime communication gifts in the church. When one reads the list of spiritual gifts, it becomes obvious that they are listed in the order of their importance for the church.
- The Holy Scripture reminds believers not to chase the gift of tongues but that they should rather desire the better gifts (1 Corinthians 12:31).

The gift of tongues came as a fulfillment of God's prophecy in the Old Testament (1 Corinthians 14:22). Its presence did prove that the Holy Spirit was given but it was not the primary gift of communication in the Church. Those who spoke in other Tongues on the day of Pentecost spoke about God's glory. However, unlike prophecy, it was not used to communicate church age doctrine or information.

The primary purpose of the Scriptures related to Tongues in 1 Corinthians is not to exhort the church to use the gift of Tongues. On the contrary, here was a church where this gift was being misused, and the purpose of these instructions was to control and regulate the use of these gifts as per divine protocol. Such regulation became necessary because Tongues became a show-piece in the

Corinthian church were heresies, strife, lust, and spiritual pride was on its peak (1 Corinthians chapter 1 to 11).

The Temporary Nature Of Tongues

When the Scripture says that "Tongues shall cease" (1 Corinthians 13:8), it is obvious that the gift of Tongues is not one of the permanent gifts for the church age. This temporary nature of Tongues can be understood using the following points, based upon what the Holy Spirit has inspired in these chapters:

1. We do not see the gift of speaking in other Tongues given to anyone before the day of Pentecost. Numerous believers and disciples were there before the day of Pentecost, and many of them lived Spirit Filled lives but they did not speak in Tongues during that period (Luke 1:15, 35; 2:40). The apostles who spoke in Tongues on the day of Pentecost are not recorded as having spoken in other Tongues before or after that day of Pentecost. The apostle Paul spoke in Tongues after the day of Pentecost (1 Corinthians 14:18). However, he did not take any exaggerated view of this gift (1 Corinthians 14:19).

2. Tongues were a sign mainly for Jews (Isaiah 28:11). In 1 Corinthians 14:21, 22 we see this prophecy as fulfilled. The Scripture does not stipulate that this fulfillment should be repeated.

3. We can understand from the Scriptures that the gifts of Apostleship, Prophecy, Powerful Works, Healings, etc. were there only for a short period of time, and that they did not continue. The Scriptures asks believers/elders in a church to be called -- not people with the gift of healing -- to pray for sick people in the church (James 5:13-16). Since the mighty gifts that were used by God at the beginning of the church age ceased after their use was over, we can deduce from the Scriptures that the gift of Tongues also likewise ceased after its use was over. (You can read more details about it in the chapter related to "That Which Is Perfect").

What Tongues Are Not

Several things are obvious from the Scripture about the gift of tongues, and these are listed below:

1. Tongues is not one of the greater gifts, and it is definitely not the greatest gift (1 Corinthians 12:28-31). It is given only the last place in the list of spiritual gifts. What is more, other than the epistle to Corinthians, other epistles that list spiritual gifts do not include tongues among the gifts. Nor is tongues mentioned by these epistles.

2. The Scripture does not mention Tongues as an evidence or sign of salvation. It is mentioned only as one among the many spiritual gifts that were given to believers (1 Corinthians 12:4, 28). Thus if anyone insists that everyone in church should speak in Tongues, or that they should seek the gift of Tongues, they are teaching contrary to the Bible and are guilty of adding to what the Scripture teaches. Since Tongues are mentioned only 3 times in Acts, and only in 1 Corinthians, and since the remaining epistles totally omit a mention of this subject, it is obvious that the gift does not deserve the exaggerated attention that it is given by many today.

3. Having the gift of Tongues, or exercising it, is not necessarily a mark of spirituality. A good example is the church at Corinth where the gift of Tongues was used liberally by a large bunch of highly carnal and unspiritual group of believers. What is more, the way they used Tongues had no

control of the Holy Spirit, and it crossed all spiritual boundaries of order. That is the very reason that the Scripture had to issue detailed corrections in 1 Corinthians chapters 12 to 14.

4. The Scripture does not insist upon Tongues as an essential or unavoidable sign for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Scripture records three instances when the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the children of God resulted in speaking of tongues (Acts 1, 9, 10). At the same time, in the same book we read of other instances when the coming of the Holy Spirit was not accompanied with speaking in Tongues (Acts 2:37-47, 8:14-17). Further, the Scripture makes it clear that everyone who has accepted Christ has been baptized by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13; Romans 8:23; 1 Corinthians 12"3). Thus the Scripture makes it clear that though all the New Testament believers have been baptized by the Holy Spirit, only negligibly few of them have spoken in Tongues.

Language Of Angels?

Some people maintain that Tongues look like gibberish because they are languages of Angles (1 Corinthians 13:1), and are thus different from human languages. They argue that there is nothing wrong in using this gibberish in the church.

While the use of Tongues in the early church was perfectly alright when the proper protocols were followed, there is nothing in the Scripture to identify it with gibberish. On the contrary, wherever angles have spoken in the Bible, they have always used clear and perceptible languages (Luke 1:11, 28; 24:4). Thus one has every reason to believe that the language of angels is not mere gibberish.

The gift of Tongues, when it was granted, was the gift of speaking clearly spoken languages which one had not learnt before. The speech contained very clear divine messages, and it was not made up either of gibberish or of mere repetition of meaningless words.

Does The Gift Of Tongues Exist Today

We already saw from the Scripture that Tongues was a spiritual gift, meant to be a sign to the Jews. "The Jews seek for signs while the Greek seek wisdom" (1 Corinthians 1:22). God had prophesied in the Old Testament that He will grant the sign of Tongues to the Jews, and the speaking in Tongues on the day of Pentecost was the fulfillment of this promise (Acts 2:1-13). There was a second manifestation of Tongues in the house of Corenelius, and that was a sign to the Jews that God's new dispensation includes Gentiles along with Jews in the body of Christ (Acts 10:47). Unlike the Jews, since the gentiles do not seek signs but rather knowledge, they searched the Scriptures for spiritual knowledge (Acts 17:11) and received it.

The following need to be understood about tongues:

1. Tongues Shall Cease: 1Cor 13:8 says, "whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away".

The Scriptures makes it clear that gifts of prophecy and knowledge were given by God to communicate divine message to people. It is also clear from the Scripture that all these gifts of special communication, including Tongues, for one cluster that shall cease at the same time. Divine revelation was given part by part to mankind by prophets and communicators (Hebrews 1:1). However, now that the divine revelation is complete in the form of the Canon of the Bible, these special communication gifts including tongues have ceased. Gifts that communicated divine

message in part (1 Corinthians 13:9, 10) cease when the complete written revelation reaches mankind. Thus no temporary communication gifts continued after the book of Revelation was written down.

2. Are Present-day Tongues Of Divine Origin: Pentecostals, Charismatics, new age churches, renewal groups etc. lay a good amount of emphasis to speaking in tongues, healing, and prophecy. However, it is essential to assess whether the tongues, prophecies, and other miracles seen in these groups is of divine origin. We should never forget that the magicians at the time of Moses were able to duplicate many things that were divine in origin. Thus not every miraculous manifestation is from God.

Based upon the Scriptures we can come to the following deductions:

a. Many of these Tongue-promoting people claim that speaking in Tongues is proof of salvation. Thus they make it compulsory for all people in their churches to speak in Tongues before they can claim that they are born-again. This is a totally anti-bible practice because nowhere does the Scripture make speaking in Tongues a test of one's salvation.

b. Many of these Tongue-promoting people ask people to tarry for receiving the Holy Spirit. However, in the Scripture the Lord commanded ONLY His apostles to tarry for the Holy Spirit. Further, they were not given the Spirit due to tarrying, but rather they tarried because they were not supposed to do their work till the promise of Christ about the Spirit was not fulfilled.

Nowhere in the 21 Epistles does the Scripture ask God's children -- individually or collectively -- to tarry for the Holy Spirit. In fact Holy Spirit is the first divine gift that every born-again person receives (Romans 8:23; 1 Corinthians 12:3; Ephesus 1:13, 14). The Scripture makes it clear that ALL Church Age believers have received the Holy Spirit and His baptism (1 Corinthians 12:13).

c. In all Tongues-promoting churches we see believers speaking collectively in tongues. However, the Scriptural command is to speak in Tongues only one at a time (1 Corinthians 14:27).

d. In all Tongues-promoting churches they insist that everyone should receive the gift of Tongues. However, the Scripture teaches that Tongues is a spiritual gift that was given during its existence only to a few people according to the will and purpose of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 11, 13, 29-31).

e. In all Tongues-promoting churches we observe that the speaking in tongues often involves the speaking of one and the same words, and that individuals keep repeating the same pattern of gibberish from the day they speak in tongues. However, Scripture reminds that the gift of Tongues involves speaking in real languages which one has not learned (Acts 2:1-13; 1 Corinthians 14:19). It cannot be the repeating of the same meaningless words for years together by a given person just as any communication is not repetition of the same words.

f. In all Tongues-promoting churches we witness women actively participating in the speaking of Tongues. This is totally contrary to the command of the Scripture that women should remain silent in the church (1 Corinthians 14:34-39).

g. In all Tongues-promoting churches we witness collective speaking in Tongues but no interpretation. The Scripture does not allow people to exercise the gift of Tongues in the church if interpretation is not available (1 Corinthians 14:28). Thus this is a violation of biblical commands. Even on the rarest of rare occasions when someone purports to translate the message, it often

becomes obvious to the listeners that there is seemingly no correspondence between the Tongues-speaker and the translator.

h. All Tongues-promoting churches teach that Tongues is the greatest spiritual gift and that every committed believer should yearn to obtain this gift from the Holy Spirit. Contrary to this, the Bible lists Tongues as the last and least among spiritual gifts which are granted by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:28). How can the Holy Spirit not lead His children to teach things that are diametrically opposed to what the Scripture says. Scripture has been written down by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (1 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20, 21). Thus it is difficult to accept a teaching or practice that is totally opposed to what the Holy Spirit has given to us in written form.

What is more, bizarre satanic practices like holy laughter, holy barking, holy vomiting, magical slaying, are some of the practices that are spreading in the name of the Holy Spirit. Anyone who reads the Scripture objectively will have to honestly accept that this kind of obvious satanic practices have no connection with the Bible or the Holy Spirit. "God is a God of order, and not of confusion" (1 Corinthians 14:32). But unfortunately, many are drawn to these erroneous teachings and practices, exactly the way insects are drawn to fire and are killed -- because they do not realize that that light will take away their life.

Reasons Why Tongues Are So Popular

There are a number of reasons why the Tongues movement is so popular in spite of being totally anti Bible in many of its aspects.

1. Spiritual Hunger: There is a great spiritual hunger these days in the hearts of people, and they yearn for visible signs of spiritual manifestations in their lives. Twentieth century and after have been a time when people have a great inclination for visible things. Since Tongues is a visible manifestation of something it satisfies their craving for something visible. Further, when this visible manifestation is presented in the name of the Bible, the Holy Spirit, salvation, and deep spirituality, people are drawn to it like magnets without ever pausing down to think whether it conforms to the bible or not.

2. Sign of Spirituality: Once a person comes under the influence of the Tongues and ecstasy crowd, he is constantly bombarded with the idea directly and indirectly that speaking in Tongues is the essential sign of spirituality. Since everyone wishes to be spiritual, there is a strong pressure to conform to this expectation. Since the emotional environment in these churches, especially in tarrying meetings, opens up one to easy emotional manipulation, many of them pass through ecstatic states and ecstatic utterances which can be induced psychologically. This is how many of them speak in Tongues. This observation is confirmed by the fact that a large number of those who speak in Tongues in the Charismatic crowd are not born again, have no conviction of their sin, and do not even know what salvation by grace through faith means.

3. Acceptance and Security: Once a person gets into a Tongues speaking group, speaking in Tongues becomes essential for acceptance and continuation in that group. Thus speaking in Tongues becomes essential for survival, and the atmosphere provided in tarrying meetings only enables their survival tactics. Many who formerly spoke in tongues have confessed the above to us. What is more, many who are firmly entrenched into the Tongues movement have also confessed these things to us during the sober moments of their conversation.

In summary, after a detailed Bible-based assessment, we come to the conclusion that what is seen in the present day Tongues speaking movements is difficult to identify as a genuine work of the Holy Spirit. Since these groups do things totally in contravention of the Bible, it is difficult to accept that it is God the Holy Spirit who is the author of the ecstatic manifestations seen among them. Holy Spirit will not go against the Scripture that He inspired because He is eternal God (Hebrews 9:14). He has not given the right to any human being to add anything or to remove anything from the Scripture that He has inspired (Revelation 22:18, 19).

We do accept that a large number of people claim to speak in tongues. We have seen these "tongues" on numerous occasions among Pentecostals, revival groups, new generation churches, Charismatics, and also among the magical laughter and hysteria type of crowd. However, since we see all of them to be violating clear cut commands of the Scripture, we find it impossible to accept these as works of the Holy Spirit.

Only the 66 books of the Bible are our authority in matters of doctrine and practice. When any experience or manifestation goes against these 66 books, one has to reject that manifestation and stand with the Bible.

Chapter 4: That Which Is Perfect

The New Testament is emphatic in the fact that the miraculous gifts will cease. The scripture is clear about this matter in where we read:

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

Thus nobody can dispute that these miraculous gifts shall one day cease. However, the question is "when" shall they cease. Continuing to insist about their presence, if they have already ceased, will be spiritually foolish. Similarly claiming that they have ceased, if they have not, will be spiritually detrimental. Thus our desire in this chapter is to come to a biblically sound answer to the question of when exactly shall these gifts cease.

For the sake of completeness, we will quote the entire passage from Scripture which talk about the cessation of temporary or miraculous gifts.

Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. (1 Corinthians 13: 8-12)

Several things are clear from the above passage. First, not all gifts are temporary. On the contrary, only a few are said to be temporary, and in this passage we find only three mentioned specifically: prophecies, tongues, and (the gift of) knowledge. I have added the parenthesis to emphasize the fact that it is not knowledge itself that shall be done away because Christians never become imbeciles whose knowledge has been done away. Thus it is talking about a special gift related to knowledge.

The passage is clear that the terminus point will be when "that which is perfect" shall come. With that the gifts that represent part information shall be done away with. (I have added the phrase "part information" on the basis of the five verses above which are talking about gifts relation to knowledge or information). It is easy to attribute a meaning to "that which is perfect" on the basis of denominational preferences, but we would like to find a meaning that is derived solely from the Bible.

First of all, we should notice that "that which is perfect" refers to a neuter object, and not to masculine or feminine. Thus in all languages where gender can be shown it is translated into the neuter tongue. In English and other languages where there is no neuter gender, it is translated as "a thing". This is because neuter gender is often used for things. Thus in all possibility, the Greek here (TO TELEION) is referring to a thing that is was yet to come when this portion of the Scripture was written.

Christians await the coming of many things. This includes the coming of Christ. But Christ is always referred to in the masculine and therefore it does not seem to refer to the rapture or the second coming of Christ. Holy Spirit (PNEUMA) is used in neuter gender but then it cannot be a reference to the coming of the Holy Spirit because His coming marked the start (not the end) of tongues. We are then left only with once choice: the reference is the Canon of the Bible which was still incomplete,

and that the incomplete communication gifts would cease when the written communication of the Canon of the Bible is over.

When we study the usage of the Greek word TELEIOS, another thing becomes clear: it generally refers to quantitative completion of an object or entity. Since the verses 8 to 12 quoted above initially talk about the incompleteness of certain communication gifts, it is obvious that TELEIOS (that which is perfect) is talking about communication that quantitatively completed. This again points the finger to the completion of the canon. In Hebrews we read:

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

The phrase divers manners is correctly translated as "various portions" as one finds in many translations that came after the King James Bible. It is also translated the same way in Indian languages. Obviously, though God kept talking to His people through prophets, and though such revelation was written down, it represented only a portion of what He was going to reveal. After revealing His word through prophets, God spoke to His people through His own Son. This revelation was written down in the 27 books of the New testament to complete the written revelation of God. However, the written Canon of the Bible was still incomplete when the Epistle to Corinthians was being penned and the completion of Canon was still in future.

In the light of the above discussion, we have to firmly conclude that when the Canon of the Bible was completed, the special communication gifts given at the time of Pentecost (for communicating New Testament Truths) ceased to exist. What that which is Perfect was here, that which was partial was no longer needed. The gift of tongues was thus one of the communication gifts that ceased with the completion of the Canon.

When we study the post-apostolic history of the church, we notice that the gift of tongues is completely absent in their discourses. A very interesting writing is from that of Clement of Rome, who wrote a letter to the Corinthians in AD 95. In it discusses the spiritual problems in the church at that time, but does not mention tongues. Obviously, it was no longer an issue after it had ceased to exist. Another important document comes from Justin Martyr who lived from AD 100 to 165. He wrote much in relation to the century church. In his writings he even provided lists of spiritual gifts. However, the gift of tongues is not in these lists.

More early church history comes from Origen who lived from AD 185 to 253. He very clearly said that the miraculous signs at the start of the Church age (the apostolic age) were totally temporary and that no Christian in the third century practiced them. Chrysostom who lived from AD 347 to 407 in his sermon on 1 Corinthians 12 says that the miraculous gifts mentioned in this chapter had ceased to take place in the church. Saint Augustine who lived from AD 354 to 430 wrote about Acts 2:4 that the gift of tongues that was given at the time of Pentecost had passed away. Thus the writings of the most prominent church fathers who lived between AD 100 to 430 makes it abundantly clear that the gifts of tongues had ceased in the first century itself. This historical observation lends further support to our Bible-based deduction that "that which is perfect" is a reference to the Canon, and that all miraculous communication gifts (including tongues) ceased with the completion of the Canon.

Additional Insights From The Gifts Of Healings

While the disciples were at times were able to heal sick people, healing came as a "spiritual gift" only from the day of Pentecost onwards. In times before the Church Age one can notice special abilities given to selected people to do specific tasks, but the Bible never identifies these as spiritual gifts because Spiritual Gift is a totally New Testament or Church Age phenomenon. Thus we must study the gifts of healing mentioned in the Epistles not in the light of what happened before the church age, but rather in the light of what the Scripture says about spiritual gifts in the church age.

We must begin with the observation that Miraculous healings, or even miracles, is not a common part of the Christian or Jewish faith. The majority of miracles (and healings) in the Bible were concentrated in three periods of time. The first was at the time of Moses and Israelites in wilderness, the second was at the times of Elisha and Elijah, and the third was at the time of Lord Jesus. In the first case it was for a span of half a century, and the second case it was not much more than that. In the third case we notice that miracles started around 30 AD and ceased around 70 AD (a statement that we will explain in detail). Except for these three periods when miracles and healings were common, extraordinary miracles and healings were only sporadic in human history.

The reason why God does not perform frequent miracles in the bulk of human history is because right from the beginning it has been a divine principle that people should listen to God's message, not to miracles. Lord Jesus expressed this very clearly in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus thus:

Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. (Luke 16:29-31)

Thus if miracles and gifts of healing that were seen with the start of the public ministry of our Lord ceased soon, one should not be surprised. That has been the historical precedent, and extended periods of miracles were only exceptions in human history.

The arrival of the Church age started with powerful miracles as the Lord announced that He is now with the Church and not with the Jewish nation. The Apostles were able to perform many miracles and healings. For example, the Apostle Peter was able to heal the lame man at the temple using just two sentences (Acts 3:1-10). He was also able to raise Dorcas from dead in Caesarea by asking her to get up (Acts 9:40). No mumbo jumbo or extended procedure was needed. Then Paul was able to heal the demon-possessed slave girl at Philippi (Acts 16:16-19) just by make one statement.

However, as we proceed with the history of the church in the book of Acts, we notice a decrease and ceasing of miracles and healings. While Peter was rescued from the Jail by an angel, Paul was not granted a miraculous escape. Since Paul is the man through whom God the Holy Spirit gave the bulk of Church Age epistles, it is surprising that God did not deliver him from the jail. What is more, much before that God had stopped delivering His children from death, and Stephen is an example. Christians killed at the hands of Paul before his conversion are also examples. Finally when Paul became sick, God did not heal him. He himself was also not able to him, and he was unable to seek healing with the help of other apostles.

Timothy had to live with his abdominal problem though he was moving around with apostles. Epaphroditus became sick unto death and Paul could only despair and pray, but could not heal him. Nor could Paul get healing for these two beloved brothers from other apostles.

Thus as we read the history of the New Testament, it becomes clear that while there was a spurt in miracles and miraculous healing soon after the start of the church, these started to taper off soon and came to an end within decades so that miraculous healing was no longer available to Paul, Timothy, or Epaphroditus.

Thus it is very much obvious from both the recorded Old as well as the New Testament history that miraculous activities and gifts of healing had only a short span of existence. They ceased after this short span, because God prefers to work through His message and not through miracles. In the light of this, one should not be surprised if other miraculous gifts also cease within a short span of time.

Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Thus some feel that miracles should not cease. But we must not forget that this verse gives a statement about Jesus' nature, and not about His everyday actions. His everyday actions, as recorded for 4000 years in the Bible, vary from time to time and it is He who chooses what to do in a given situation. Thus a statement about God's NATURE cannot be used to make a necessary claim about His ACTIONS.

Chapter 5: The Tongues Movement

(A Theological History)

Though the gift of Tongues is often identified with Pentecostals, the movements that promote Tongues are much wider both in their denominational background as well as in their history. Since our aim in this book is to give a broad perspective of the issues involved, this chapter will give a general survey of how the emphasis on Tongues started and where it has reached in the twenty first century.

The story starts in 1500s when the Protestant Movement was vigorously growing. At that time, two schools of thought, one known as Calvinism and the other known as Arminianism, came into conflict with each other. Calvinism emphasized that salvation is secure, while Arminianism emphasized that salvation is insecure. Both the schools of thought grew first in Europe and then in the US from where they reached the whole world through the modern missions enterprise.

People who embraced Arminian thinking were always afraid of losing their salvation, and perpetually lived under fear about their future destiny. The moment people become uncertain of their eternal destiny, they sincerely start seeking for ways and means to keep their salvation secure. It is this sense of fear and insecurity that gave rise to the Holiness Movement.

The Holiness movement deeply influenced the Wesleyan school of thought within the Christian church. Soon "Deeper Life" conferences became a rage where the emphasis shifted from the work of God to the work of man, and dependence upon the Holy spirit shifted to "doing something to attain spirituality". The Holiness movement gradually weaned people away from dependence on the Scripture and the Holy Spirit to dependence upon personal emotional experience. Such weaning eventually resulted in creating a large stream of Christian faith where biblical discernment was gone and where experience was everything. Gradually the emphasis on special experiences to deepen one's Christian life increased and many manipulative preachers started using techniques of emotional manipulation to take their folks through "deeper Christian life". Deeper Life camps and conferences became common where the emphasis was on man-made emotional experience of spirituality. The more a preacher was able to emotionally manipulate people, the more popular he became as a "revivalist".

One of these spiritual manipulators was Charles Perham who encouraged William M. Seymour to be active in these emotionally charged meetings. One of Seymour's emotionally manipulative preachings in 1906 in Los Angeles resulted in ecstatic utterances. This particular meeting is often called the Azusa Street revival. This ecstatic meeting was such a new and "different" event that it became a powerful tool in the hands of revivalists to manipulate people. Soon many other preachers were able to copy and simulate such ecstatic behavior in their churches.

Gradually many of the leaders in this movement began to claim that this ecstasy was the manifestation of a special filling of the Holy Spirit, and that it was a repeat of what happened on the day of Pentecost. Since the entire Protestant world at that time was looking forward to an immediate return of Christ and since most expected the end of the world before 1910, this claim of an outpouring of the Spirit during those "end days" found quick acceptance among the Arminian-Holiness churches.

Gradually many of them developed the theology of this experience with some claiming that it was a special filling of the Holy Spirit. Others claimed that this was a Second Blessing, and still others claimed that this was the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. There was no uniformity or agreement in their

interpretation of this event, but all of them were agreed upon one thing -- that this was a special work of the Holy Spirit. They also maintained that a person's salvation is completed or confirmed only after a person spoke in tongues. It was a no-tongues no-salvation approach.

However, within about 40 years of this no-tongues no-salvation consensus, these groups again diverged in their thinking. By 1980 many groups, such as Assemblies of God took a stand that speaking in tongues was not necessary for salvation. According to their statement of faith, tongues is only a mark of filling of the Holy Spirit and of a deeper spiritual attainment. Within the Tongues practicing churches there is a full spectrum of belief about Tongues, with some claiming it as essential for salvation while others claiming that it is only a manifestation of a deeper spiritual life. There is no agreement among the Tongue-practicing churches today about the precise role that Tongues plays in a believer's life.

There is this lack of agreement over the precise nature and role of tongues mainly because the entire theology of tongues is based not upon sound interpretation of the Bible, but rather because it has been built up as a patchwork theology that has very little foundation in the Bible. It is mostly based upon human experience coupled with authoritative pronouncement of men, with little regard to the Bible.

A fence, once broken, is often difficult to put back into its original shape. Biblical boundaries of doctrines, once broken, are also difficult to place back as it used to be. Arminianism questioned the security of salvation, then holiness movement added works to salvation, and then the tongues movement added an emotional experience to salvation. The concept of Sola Scriptura (Bible Alone) was completely jettisoned by 1906. The result was obvious by 1960.

While the Pentecostal Movements that came out of Asuza Pecefic utterances emphasized that people should accept Christ first, and tongues should come AFTER that, a new movement came up in 1960s and after that where accepting Christ was no longer necessary. Known as the Charismatic Movement, it is a movement totally different from the Pentecostal Movement. In the Charismatic movement, it was no longer necessary to accept Christ as personal Saviour. The stress was on emotional experience, not on salvation. In fact this movement started among nominal churches where the gospel of salvation was anathema to the pastors and lay people there. Once the people in nominal churches, and even in Roman Catholic churches, started getting ecstatic utterances, the movement spread fast.

With Charismatic movement it was no longer necessary to accept or confess that one was a sinner. It was also no longer necessary in this movement to accept Christ as one's personal Saviour. All that was needed was to get into these revival movements, pass through the stages of spiritual stimulation prescribed by preachers for getting into a trance-like situation, and ecstasy came automatically to all. With that one's spiritual attainment was over. Since accepting Christ as Saviour and getting saved was no longer an issue, people came into this movement like a flood-tide. Many in the Roman Catholic hierarchy were quick to spot the benefits of this deviant movement for the safe-keep of the Catholic church.

They realized that here is a movement that purports to be a Bible-based Protestant movement, but which is so totally devoid of Bible and Biblical connections that it can safely be used by the Roman Catholic church to arrest the flow of their members to Protestant churches -- by claiming that now the Roman Catholic church is able to offer "Protestant Revival" within the Catholic church. Many crafty preachers within the Protestant churches discovered the same: here was a movement that called itself Christian, but which was so devoid of Christian content that these preachers could simply exploit this movement to build up a mass-support for their private spiritual kingdoms.

This is how a large number of Radio and TV preachers built up mega private spiritual kingdoms, amassed multiple millions, and led a luxurious life that would shame even the most carnal non Christian reveler. People influenced by them, however, preferred to be fleeced rather than be awakened by truth. This de-christianization of the Christian faith by the Charismatic movement has eventually led to the complete paganization of one stream of the Christian church.

The complete paganization started with what is often called the Toronto Movement which brought in the hysterical laughter often called the Holy Laughter. Eventually this bizarre phenomenon progressed to holy roaring, holy barking, and holy vomiting. Rolling on the ground is common. Slaying in spirit, where people suddenly fall down on the ground when a preacher waves his hands, also became common in this movement. None of this is in common with what is seen in the book of Acts. On the contrary, all of these have been effects produced by sorcerers for the past six millennia, and never have these ever been identified with the Christian faith.

A careful examination of the Toronto Movement theology and practices shows that there is nothing "holy" or Christian in this movement. On the contrary, these bizarre practices are the manifestation of occult and satanic submission by these "Christian" leaders who induce these bizarre phenomenon in those who are gullible enough to come under their influence.

The most prominent leader of this bizarre movement is Benny Hinn who has very clearly confessed that he received power for initiating these strange phenomenon when he was praying at the grave of the late Katheryn Kulman. He said that some kind of an "invisible power" came out of the grave and settled upon him, after which he was able to produce these manifestations of the spirit. Obviously, that is not the Holy Spirit.

Summary

Non Christian religions are able to manipulate people as much as they want because people have no assurance of salvation. The gullible simply follow the most bizarre demands of those religious leaders who promise salvation.

The same thing happened with Arminianism in the Christian faith. Once security of salvation was questioned, it opened the way for all kinds of manipulations in the Christian community. From Arminianism it went to holiness movement, deeper-life manipulations, and then tongues. Half a century of emphasis on the false concept of Tongues, and the door was opened for Charismatic movement which totally broke away from the Bible. A few years into the Charismatic movement, and they brought in occult and sorcery into the church. That is the where the deviant movements stand today. The next stage would probably to openly worship the gods of Canaan -- which we already see in the writings of what is called the "Prajapati Super-cult" where they worship the Hindu god Prajapati as Jesus Christ.

Christians need to be careful of any movement that questions the authority and sufficiency of the Bible. The tongues movement is a good example of such a movement. It needs to be shunned by every discerning Christian.