

An overview of the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts.

Everyone is **filled with the Spirit** when they are baptized into Christ.

(Acts 2:37,38) The promised Spirit, *not the gifts of the Spirit*, is part of the gift of God. Since baptism is the point where we are buried **into** Christ and we are raised like he was raised...baptism is not optional. (Romans 6:3,4) We cannot be baptized **into** something unless we are **outside** of that something. (I Peter 3:21; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:12)

Without the Spirit it is impossible to be saved (Romans 8:9), so we cannot be saved without water baptism because baptism is where we receive the indwelling of the Spirit.

Not everyone received one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, so the gifts are not a salvation issue. In the case of Cornelius (Acts 10) some received the ability to speak in tongues (languages) before they were saved.

The ability to speak in tongues (languages) is not a sign to believers, it is a sign to unbelievers. (I Corinthians 14:22) If the bible is "*God-breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be **thoroughly equipped** for every good work.*", why do we need any additional signs. Can we tell the unbeliever something different from what the New Testament teaches? If the unbeliever does not understand what is being said, tongues have no value in teaching.

The Spirit intercedes for us, without the gift of tongues (Romans 8:26,27), so the gifts were not essential for this blessing. Unless one has the gift of interpretation, one cannot know if what is said is truth. The witness of history tells us that ecstatic language was a popular practice of pagans of that time. Unintelligible language would be nothing unusual...or particularly effective. Tongues were languages that people recognized as their own languages (Acts 2:1-12), not the special language of God or unintelligible gibberish.

If a person had the gift of Speaking in tongues (languages) he was to control the gift. He was to speak in an orderly manner, so that if an unbeliever came in he/she would not think the speaker was out of his mind (crazy).

Many people go to Romans 8:25-27 as a proof-text for spiritual gifts today. In reading the context we see that his is not a discussion of spiritual gifts. Paul is talking about the hope we have through the indwelling of the Spirit which is something every Christian possesses.

How about the plain statement of Paul in I Corinthians 13:8? "*Love never fails. But where there is prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.*" One thing is sure, when this ceasing, stilling and passing away was to happen, faith, hope and love would be left. This had to be before the second coming of Jesus, because when Jesus returns there will be no faith and hope...they will be turned into **reality**.

There is an interesting statement in Jude 3. "*Dear friends, although I was very*

*eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for **the faith that was once for all** entrusted to the saints."* The writer of the book of Jude was able to write, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that the gospel had been delivered **once for all**. In Galatians 1:8, Paul says "*But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the **one we preached**, let him be eternally condemned.*" What was already taught was all that was needed for salvation.

Since the scriptures are God-breathed, complete and thoroughly equip me...and the Spirit of God lives in the temple of my body helps in my weakness and intercedes for me...**what am I missing?** Speaking in a language I have not learned does not make me better. Prophecy does not add anything to the message I already have revealed through scripture.

The Bereans were called noble because of their willingness to search the scriptures to make sure Paul was teaching the truth. (Acts 17:11) This is all any of us can do!

It is very important to remember that when I Corinthians was written the spiritual gifts **had not** accomplished their purpose, so Paul **encouraged** believers to use their gifts in an orderly manner. (14:26-40). Paul plainly tells the Corinthians that the gifts of **tongues, prophecy** and **knowledge** would pass away. When were the gifts to pass away?

I Corinthians was written in about 55 A.D. There is no mention of spiritual gifts in II Corinthians which was written less than a year later. In fact, the only other mention of Spiritual gifts that I know of after I Cor. 12-14 is in the historical account of the giving of gifts...found in Hebrews 2:1-4 and Ephesians 4:11. In Hebrews we understand the purpose for the gifts...they were a testimony to the words spoken. Ephesians was written about three years after the Corinthians letters, and Spiritual gifts were still operative.

For some reason, the issue of Spiritual gifts became a non-issue after about 58-60 A.D. By the time Paul's Letters to Timothy were written (64 A.D.), he could write that the Scriptures were complete... "*so that the man of God may be **thoroughly equipped unto all good works.***" (II Timothy 3:16,17) There was no further need for gifts...to confirm the spoken word.

This emotional issue is very similar to beliefs about baptism. The Bible clearly teaches that we are saved at the point of being buried in water (baptism), not before baptism. (Romans 6:3,4) In fact, I Peter 3:21 plainly states that baptism **saves** us. But, many people do not accept this idea because they have **experienced** salvation without baptism.

Does experience negate truth?

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