

# SUPPLEMENT #1

## Explaining What we Believe

### *How Should a Person be Baptized?*

#### INTRODUCTORY TEXT:

*Hebrews 6:1-3*

- 1 *Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,*
- 2 *Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.*
- 3 *And this will we do, if God permit.*

#### I. Review.

##### A. The Church is Built on Six Elementary Teachings.

- 1 Foundation is made up of obedience to certain teachings: (i.e., Wise man built his house upon rock.)

##### B. Salvation is found in the teachings: Repentance, Faith, and baptisms.

- 1 First building Block: Repentance, What it is and what it isn't.
- 2 Second building Block: Have Faith in God.
- 3 Faith's Meaning: *Faith is the confirmation, or title-deed, of the things we hope for, perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses.*
- 4 Faith's Mainspring: Comes by the Word of God
- 5 Faith's 3-fold Medium: Knowledge => Belief => Trust
- 6 Faith's Magnitude: Faith is the foundation of the entire Christian life.
- 7 Faith's 3 Measures: Little Faith => Great Faith => Perfect Faith
- 8 Faith's Means: Increase our faith by claiming the promises
- 9 Faith's Mildew: Hindrances to faith include ignorance, disobedience, hopelessness, senses, wavering, unworthiness, and fear.
- 10 Faith's Maturity: Confession and Action

#### II. Third Teaching: Water Baptism.

##### A. Overview:

- 1 Baptism's Plurality. As we come to this principle, we find it is in the plural. This is because there are two elements of baptism, one of water and the other of the Spirit. These two elements are so intertwined that Jesus could unite them as a single baptism (John 3:5) and Paul could speak of them together as one baptism (Ephesians 4:5). In this lesson we are going to discuss water baptism.
- 2 Water Baptism's Necessity. Water baptism is a necessity in the New Testament plan of salvation.
  - 1 It is necessary because Jesus commanded it: *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"* (Mark 16:16). *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"* (Matthew 28:19). Jesus taught it to Nicodemus (John 3:1-5).
  - 2 To the New Testament believers, baptism fulfills the type of the laver in the Tabernacle. The command given to the one to enter the tabernacle was, *"...wash lest ye die..."* (Exodus 30:20-21). These words back up the words of Jesus in Mark 16:16.
  - 3 Peter and all the apostles preached and practiced water baptism (Acts 2:38; 10:44-48; 19:1-6). Ananias told Saul the persecutor who was praying at Damascus, *"Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord"* (Acts 22:16).

3. Water Baptism's Practice. How was water baptism used in Scripture?

*People Weren't Sprinkled in the New Testament...*

*they were Immersed!*

- 4 Baptize means to dip. The Greek word for baptism is "baptizo" (bap-tid-zo) which means "to dip", was used among the Greeks to signify the dying of a garment, or the drawing of water by dipping a vessel into another. (Source: *Vine Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*)
- 5 The church's doctrine of water baptism was pointed to by John the Baptist's baptism: He called upon the people to repent, "confessing their sins", thus acknowledging their unfitness to be in the Messiah's coming kingdom.
- 6 Distinct from John's baptism - is the water baptism commanded by Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19), a baptism to be undergone by those who have turned from their sins and are having faith towards God. By this baptism, people witness to their identification with Him in death, burial, and resurrection (Acts 19:5; Romans 6:3-5; I Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:12).
- 7 This phrase in Matthew 28:19, "*Baptizing them into the name*" would indicate that the baptized person was closely bound to, or became the property of, the one into whose name he or she is baptized.
- 8 In Acts 22:16, the word, baptizo, is used in the middle voice, in the command given to Saul of Tarsus, "*arise and be baptized,*" the significance of the middle voice form being 'get thyself baptized'. The experience of those who were in the ark at the time of the flood was a figure or type of the facts of spiritual death, burial, and resurrection, Christian baptism being a corresponding type: "*a like figure*" (I Peter 3:21). Likewise the nation of Israel was figuratively baptized when made to pass through the Red Sea under the cloud (I Corinthians 10:2).

**The Bible Speaks:**

<b>MUCH WATER</b>	<i>John was baptizing at Aenon because there was much water there (John 3:23).</i>
<b>INTO THE WATER</b>	<i>They both went down into the water (Acts 8:38).</i>
<b>OUT OF THE WATER</b>	<i>They came up out of the water (Acts 8:39).</i>
<b>BURIED IN WATER</b>	<i>Buried with him in baptism (Colossians 2:12)</i>
<b>PLANTED IN WATER</b>	<i>We have been planted together (Romans 6:5)</i>

**The Scholars Speak:**

**SCHAFF-HERZOG** Baptism was always a burial. The command to baptize was a **RELIGIOUS ENCYCLOPEDIA** command to immerse (Volume 1, Page 451).

**CATHOLIC BIBLICAL** Immersion was the oldest method employed. Buried in **ENCYCLOPEDIA** baptism, Romans 6:4 (Page 61, Paragraph 2).

**CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA** In the early centuries all were baptized by immersion in streams or baptisteries (Volume 2, Page 263).

**ENCYCLOPEDIA DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE** It is evident that the action performed in baptizing immersion (Page 202).

**WORLD BOOK ENCYCLOPEDIA** The early church practiced immersion or submerging under the water (Volume 2, Page 70).

**ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH** Martin Luther preferred immersion as more true to original practice (Volume 1, Page 188) "Although in many places it no longer is customary to thrust and plunge children into the

font of baptism but only to pour the baptismal water on them out of the font, the former, Nonetheless, is what should be done and it would be right according to the meaning of the Word.”

**THE PULPIT COMMENTARY** Romans 6:4, “Buried in Baptism”, The reference is to baptism by immersion (Volume 18, Page 156).

#### **An Important Note:**

An important factor is overlooked by the exponents of sprinkling. The original New Testament text and the spoken language of the day was Greek. The authors of the New Testament knew the Greek word ‘baptizo’ meant to immerse. They also knew the Greek word “rantizo” meant to sprinkle. These often- used words were never interchangeable, as they had separate meanings. If God had intended for His ministers to sprinkle, the Greek word “rantizo” would have been employed, not “baptizo”.

If sprinkling cannot be found in the Bible, then those who utilize it are practicing a tradition of man, which makes the “word of God of none effect” (Mark 7:13).

Infants Weren’t Baptized in Scripture...They had to Believe first! As with sprinkling, the doctrine of infant baptism cannot be found in the New Testament without adding to it. Scriptural logic cries out against infant baptism. The very mode (immersion) makes it illogical and impractical. The teaching surrounding baptism automatically prohibits it.

#### **The Bible Speaks of Teaching and Believing**

**MATTHEW 28:19** “Teach all nations, baptizing them...” - teaching or preaching must precede baptism. See Acts 2:4.

**ACTS 8:36-37** Eunuch: “What doth hinder me to be baptized?” Philip: “If thou believest with all thine heart.” Believing is a prerequisite of baptism. See Mark 16:18.

**ACTS 2:38** “Repent and be baptized every one of you...” Repentance must precede baptism. (See Luke 24:47,\_)

#### **A Few Items to Ponder:**

...the first recipients of baptism were adults. Infant baptism was a later development that led to sprinkling. *Chambers Encyclopedia, Volume 2, Page 112.*

...there is no direct evidence in New Testament Scripture for infant baptism. *Interpreter’s Bible Dictionary, Volume 1, Page 352.*

...the earliest Christian literature makes no reference to baptism of infants. *Encyclopedia Britannica, Volume 3, Page 138.*

...the first mention of infant baptism was about 185 AD Not universal until the 6th century. *History of the Church, by Walker, Pages 87,88.*

...that 350 Lutheran pastors of West Germany wish to abandon infant baptism. Many of these same pastors refused to baptize their own infants. They felt that baptism should be understood first by the recipient. *Time Magazine, May 1968, Page 58.*

...that Karl Barth of Switzerland, the best known theologian of the 20th century said, “There is no biblical basis for infant baptism. This tradition is simply an old error of the church.” *Time Magazine, May 1968, Page 58.*

*Conclusion:* A child should be old enough to receive teaching, believe, and repent of sin before being baptized. Dedicating children to God and asking Him to bless is biblical. This Jesus did (Luke 18:15-17; Matthew 19:13-15.)

***People Weren’t baptized in the titles: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost...***

***They Were Baptized in the Name of Jesus!***

9 Three Gospel writers refer to a **NAME** that was to be used in preaching the gospel.

10 Matthew 28:19 states how to be baptized: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them **IN THE NAME** of

*the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”*

11 Mark 16:16 states the importance of baptism: *“He that believeth AND IS BAPTIZED shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”* It is either life or death.

12 Luke 24:47 gives us five important things:

- a) Repentance,
- b) and remission of sins,
- c) should be preached in his name,
- d) among all nations,
- e) beginning at Jerusalem.

**At Five of these things were fulfilled in Acts 2:5,38**

<b>Biblical Proof for Water Baptism in the Name of Jesus:</b>
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ACTS 2:38 *“...Repent and be baptized every one of you in the NAME OF JESUS CHRIST...”*

ACTS 8:16 *“...only they were baptized in the NAME OF THE LORD JESUS.”*

ACTS 10:48 *“He (Peter) commanded them to be baptized IN THE NAME OF THE LORD”* (which is Jesus - Acts 9:5).

ACTS 19:5 *“...they were baptized IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS.”*

ACTS 4:12 *“Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other NAME under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”*

COLOSSIANS 3:12 *“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”*

**The Historians Speak:**

**ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA** Baptism was changed from the name of Jesus to the words Father, Son, and Holy Ghost by the Catholic Church in the second century. Volume 3, Page 365-366.

Everywhere in the oldest sources it states that baptism took place in the name of Jesus Christ. Volume 3, Page 82.

**CANNEY ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RELIGION** The early church always baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus until the development of the trinity doctrine in the second century. Page 53.

**HASTINGS ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RELIGION** Christian baptism was administered using the words, “in the name of Jesus.” Volume 2, Page 377.

The use of a trinitarian formula of any sort was not suggested in early church history. Volume 2, Page 378.

Baptism was always in the name of Jesus until the time of Justin Martyr, when the triune formula was used. Volume 2, Page 389.

**CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA** Here the Catholics acknowledged that baptism was changed by the Catholic Church. Volume 2, Page 263.

**SCHAFF-HERZOG RELIGIOUS ENCYCLOPEDIA** The New Testament knows only the baptism in the name of Jesus. Volume 1, Page 435.

**HASTINGS DICTIONARY OF RELIGION** It must be acknowledged that the three-fold name Matthew 28:19 not appear to have been used by the primitive church, but rather in the name of Jesus, Jesus Christ, or Lord Jesus. Page 88.

On Acts 2:38. Name was an ancient synonym for ‘person’. Payment was always in the name of some person referring to ownership. Therefore, one being baptized in Jesus’ Name becomes His personal property, “ye are Christ’s.” Volume 2, Page 377.

## **The Apostles Speak:**

It is very striking that throughout apostolic teachings in the New Testament the gifts and blessings of the gospel that are connected with faith in certain passages are in other scriptures associated with water baptism.

### **By Faith**

#### **REMISSION OF SINS**

*“To him give all the prophets witness that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.”* Acts 10:43

#### **WASHING AND CLEANSING**

*“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*  
I John 1:9

#### **JUSTIFICATION**

*“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”* Romans 5: 1

#### **RECEIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT**

*“This only would I learn of you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?”* Galatians 3:2

#### **UNION WITH CHRIST**

*“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”*  
Galatians 2:20

### **By Water Baptism**

*“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...”*  
Acts 2:38

*“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”* Acts 22:16

*“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.”*  
I Corinthians 6:11

*“...Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”* Acts 2:38

*“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in the newness of life.”* Romans 6:3-4

## SONSHIP

*“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” John 1:12*

*“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” Galatians 3: 26-27*

## SALVATION

*“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” Ephesians 2:8*

*“The like figure where unto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” I Peter 3:21*

Who, in light of the scriptures just cited, would be so bold as to exclude either faith or baptism from God’s gospel program?

***Water Baptism isn’t just a symbolic ceremony....***

***It Has Great Power!***

### **What does water baptism accomplish?**

1 Sins are remitted by baptism. *“Then Peter said unto them, repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).*

- a Remission or forgiveness means to send away; completely cancel our debt. Therefore the word signifies the omission of the punishment due to sinful conduct, the deliverance of the sinner from the penalty that is divinely, and therefore righteously, imposed.
- b Secondly, it involves the complete removal of the cause of the offense; such remission is based upon the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

2 The Old Man is Buried at Baptism. *“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Romans 6:3-6).*

*“Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead” (Colossians 2:12).*

3 Baptism Washes Away Sins. The water itself does not have the power to do this, but God has ordained that through the obedience of His Word in Acts 22:16; *“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”*

Baptism is the second step of the new birth. Baptism is making preparation to receive the Holy Ghost. *“Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5).*

4. Baptism is part of Man's Salvation. That is, if the convert goes on and receives the Holy Ghost or the second part of this doctrine of baptisms. Mark 16:16 says that, "...he that believeth not shall be damned."

*"Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:"* I Peter 3:20-21.

Baptism does produce the desired result. A person who is baptized after he has repented, can have the assurance that his sins are removed from the records which are kept in heaven. *"As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he (God) removed our transgressions from us."* Psalms 103:12.

<i>Water Baptism Replaces the Law's Circumcision</i>
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1 Circumcision's first mention. The first mention of circumcision is found in Genesis 17 as the sign of the Abrahamic covenant. *"This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised."* (Genesis 17:10)

2 Circumcision's Necessity. The necessity of carrying out this sign is seen in verse 14, *"And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant."* Further emphasis is placed upon our minds by the reading of Exodus 4:24-25: *"And it came to pass by the way at the inn, that the Lord met him [Moses], and sought to kill him. Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me."*

3 Circumcision is to be of the heart and not the flesh. A search through prophetic scripture proves that circumcision is also a foreshadowing of future events. Jeremiah 4:4 says, *"...take away the foreskin of your heart..."* So there is also a circumcision of the heart which must take place. (See also Deuteronomy 10:12, 16 and Jeremiah 9:45.) That there is a circumcision of the heart is made plain by Colossians 2:11-12. It is also made plain that the physical witness to the New Testament covenant sign is water baptism; notice, *"In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism..."*

4 New Testament circumcision is water baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Just as God sent the destroyer to Moses' household for failure to keep this covenant of circumcision of the flesh, He will also not spare anyone who fails to keep the covenant of circumcision of the heart. It is necessary in order for one to make heaven.

1 A type of this is found in Joshua 5. God would not allow the Israelites to possess the promised land until they had fulfilled the covenant. After circumcision, notice the words of verse 9: *"And the Lord said unto Joshua, this day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day."* Egypt was to Israel as the bondage of sin is to us. Likewise, before we inherit our promised land (heaven), we will have to have the sign of the new covenant which is water baptism or "the circumcision made without hands."

2 Another thing of interest in baptism is that every example of baptism took place immediately at the time of repentance and faith. There was never a waiting period so they could get a group together before they would baptize.

**The Final Question: The Words of Simon Peter to Cornelius: "Can any man forbid water?"**

**Explaining What we Believe**  
***Have Tongues Ceased?***

1 CORINTHIANS 13:8-13, NIV

8Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. 9For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. 11When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. 12Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

13And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Perhaps you have heard people say to you, “The Bible says tongues have ceased!” Actually, the Bible doesn’t say any such thing. It says that tongues “will” cease, not “have” ceased. Yet, those who believe they have ceased also believe God’s Word says it will happen.

*"The gift of healing, like the rest of the miracles, which the Lord willed to be brought forth for a time, has vanished away in order to make the new preaching of the Gospel marvelous forever."*

*(John Calvin, "Institutes", Battle translation, 1960, p.1467).*

Those who believe, however, that tongues have not ceased are equally as adamant in their belief.

*"Given the dearth of explicit evidence, it strains credulity to postulate a point in time (whether the death of the last apostle, the end of New Testament canon formation, completion of the church, or whatever) that effects a dramatic mutation in the Spirit's person and work so that he is no longer the power-anointing, charismatic being he once was, but is now restricted solely to his inner-transforming work."*

*(D.A. Oss, "Are Miraculous Gifts For Today? Four Views", ed. Wayne Grudem (IVP, 1996) p.271)*

Such begins our discussion today on whether the supernatural enablement of the Holy Spirit and more specifically tongues is available for today. Those who believe that such gifts have passed away find themselves in denominations that emphasize the supremacy and perfection of the Word over the Spirit of God. Those who believe that such gifts have not passed away often find themselves overemphasizing the work of the Spirit over the Word.

This is a faulty dilemma for God’s Word is Spirit-inspired. It is possible and indeed Christian to hold to the revelation found in Scripture and to the inspiration found in God’s Spirit. One will not contradict the other.

### **The Belief of Cessation**

But, let’s examine this idea that tongues have ceased to exist. The belief that the miraculous has passed is called “cessationism.” Nearly all fundamentalists and most mainline Protestants believe this. Cessationists teach that the spectacular works and gifts of the Spirit ceased with the Apostles or at some point in time close to the original Apostles passing away. The miraculous gifts that passed away – say they – included tongues, prophecy, and other empowerment which override the ordinary course of nature. Adherents to this doctrine hold that the miraculous is out of reach to believers today.

Such a belief places the God who gave birth to the Church in the role of a benign absent manager. Any outward signs of spiritual activity are presumed to be false or a pretentious work of the flesh. To many today, Pentecost is only a day on the orthodox calendar. The spiritual gifts made available through the Risen Christ are only distant memories.

### **The Basis of Cessationism**

The scriptural foundation for this doctrine is the passage we read in I Corinthians 13:

1 CORINTHIANS 13:8-13, NIV

*8Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where*

*there is knowledge, it will pass away. 9For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. 11When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. 12Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.*

*13And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.*

This is the primary passage used by individuals to argue cessation. The Apostle Paul mentions three gifts: prophecies, tongues, and the word of knowledge. These communicative gifts of the Spirit involve the use of speech – of human speech with divine unction. Since they involve humanity, they are ‘imperfect.’ Yet, someday when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.

Hundreds of years ago, John Calvin believed that the miraculous disappeared where the preaching of the Gospel could be showcased. Later, fundamentalists would argue that the closing of the canon of Scripture would be the “perfection” spoken of by Paul. Thus when the writing of the New Testament was finished the miraculous was over.

To support their belief, cessationists point to history and say that by the second or third century, spiritual gifts had all but ceased. It was, however, about the same time that the official church began to teach that grace was dispensed through the official church organization and God’s voice could only be heard in the church’s spokesmen. The working of the Spirit was crowded out by the official church but found residence in those often called heretics (Acts 24:14).

### **The Confusion of Cessationism**

Cessationism believes that the Greek word *teleios* - translated “perfect” in the KJV and “perfection” in the NIV – refers to the full canon of Scripture. This belief, however, didn’t become popular until the 20th Century when the modern Pentecostal movement began sweeping the world. Tongues-speaking became the object of great ridicule by various religious groups and individuals.

Proponents of the cessationist belief that the “perfection” was the completion of Scripture also didn’t bother to hide their true feelings about the outbursts of the gifts of the Spirit in Scripture as well:

*At the Tower of Babel, God confused the languages of men. The only other biblical incident that can rival that confusion of languages is the confusion of tongues at Corinth. They had so confused their understanding of the gift of tongues, that they had substituted the reality for a satanic counterfeit. Because of this, Paul had to write an entire chapter just to deal with that issue.*

*--John MacArthur, Jr.*

*“The Truth about Tongues” Part I*

To compare Corinth with Babel is a stretch. To compare the confusion of tongues at Babel with the zeal of Corinth is a greater stretch. To boldly state that the Corinthian experience was nothing but a satanic counterfeit swerves close to blasphemy (Matthew 12:30-32).

Some of the greatest Greek scholars do not see the Greek word *teleios* referring to the canon of Scripture:

- In *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, he defined *teleios* as being the “perfect state of all things to be ushered in by the return of Christ from heaven.”
- In *Alford’s New Testament for English Readers*, he defined the use of the word *teleios* in terms of “the Lord’s coming and after.”

The only Scriptural basis for rejecting the validity of speaking tongues rests on a questionable interpretation of the word ‘*teleios*.’

- “There is not a single verse in the Bible where the Greek adjective *teleios*...refers to the completed New Testament” (Donald Lee Barnett, *Speaking in Other Tongues: A Scholarly Defense*, p. 176).

Yet, you can find in Scripture where *telos*, the noun form of the same Greek word, speaks of the consummation of the age and the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ

MATTHEW 24:14

14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end [telos] come.

Perhaps of greater impact than Matthew's writings is none other than the opening chapter of I Corinthians:

I CORINTHIANS 1:7-8

7 So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:

8 Who shall also confirm you unto the end [telos], that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Not only does telos refer to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, it also refers to Jesus Himself.

REVELATION 21:5-6

5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end [telos].

It is interesting that the Apostle Paul in Ephesians describes Jesus as the Risen Christ who gives gifts to men. As long as Jesus Christ remains the Risen Christ and is not yet the Returned Christ, gifts will be given to men.

I Corinthians 13 points to a time when the gifts of prophecy, tongues, and the word of knowledge will be done away with. Paul says this will happen when "that which is perfect has come" or "when perfection comes." Obviously, that is when Jesus comes back to usher in the eternal state.

We presently know in part, yet when we see Jesus we will know fully. When will we see Jesus face to face?

I JOHN 3:2-3

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

Although I Corinthians 12-14 might be considered the spiritual gifts section of the Bible, let us not forget that I Corinthians 15 is the great resurrection chapter of the Bible.

I CORINTHIANS 15:49-52

49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Full knowledge will come with the complete change. When corruption gives way to perfection – we will have no further need of prophecy, tongues, or the Word of Knowledge. But until then...

Speaking in Tongues is a Sign of the New Testament Church

The New Testament church began on the Day of Pentecost with the outpouring of the gift of the Holy Ghost. While it appears that the tongues in Acts 2 differ somewhat from the tongues in I Corinthians 13, each gift originates from the Risen Christ who gives gifts to men.

Such tongues-speaking was to accompany the New Testament Church. Jesus prophesied this:

MARK 16:15-20

15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

19 So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

They shall speak with new tongues. This was one of the signs that Jesus prophesied should follow those who believe. Paul said that believers should not be forbidden to speak with tongues and should earnestly desire to prophesy (I Corinthians 14:39).

Spiritual gifts are proof that the Lord is working with His church. Some twenty five years after the birth of the Church, Paul and the increasingly Gentile church were still speaking in tongues (I Corinthians 14). Gentiles like Cornelius and those at Ephesus spoke with tongues (Acts 10, 19). Paul went so far to warn his hearers that if anyone preached anything other than what he did, let him be accursed (Galatians 1:8-9). If tongues have ceased, it wasn't heaven that caused it.

Jesus said that people would hear the "sound" of the Spirit in everyone who was born of the Spirit (John 3:1-8). Just as the church was born with the "sound" from heaven, this rushing wind which caused stammering lips, the church still lives the same way.

### **The Lack of Tongues is Evidence that God is not Working with His Church**

In the Middle or Dark Ages, churches had "Holy Spirit holes" carved into the ceilings of the sanctuaries to symbolize their openness to God. On the Day of Pentecost, doves were released through these holes. Bundles of rose petals were dropped from these onto the people gathered inside. The choir and congregation were to make 'whooshing' sounds to remind people of the moving of the Spirit. (Diana Eck, Encountering God, Beacon Press, 1994).

Much of the emblems, the formal liturgies and the rituals were nothing more than making up for the loss of the moving of the Spirit. So, why would people want to teach that speaking in tongues and other spiritual gifts had ceased? Perhaps its because there is a sense of something missing in their own lives and churches. There is a form of godliness, but a lack of power.

Paul's approach to a church was not with eloquence or education but with a demonstration of God's Spirit and power. This lack of demonstration leads to a cold denomination.

Someone said that "our experience defines our theology." If we have not experienced something, then it is quite easy to speak against it. But, when Scripture shows that something is available and commanded – then we should seek for it.

I read the story recently of a pastor and his church who prayed that God would give he and the church he pastored great power. This pastor felt impressed to read the New Testament through and to obey everything the book said. He made it 10 chapters and he found the reason that he and his church didn't have the power of God working in their midst. They had not fully obeyed God's word.

MATTHEW 10:8

8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

He then recognized why they didn't see the sick healed, the lepers cleansed, the dead raised, and devils cast out – they had

not freely received. When you don't receive, you have nothing to give.

John's version of the Great Commission goes like this:

JOHN 20:21-22

21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:

Have Tongues Ceased?

No, the perfect One hasn't come yet. We have yet to see Him face to face. We still see through a glass darkly.

When Simon Peter preached his most famous sermon on the Church's birthday, he spoke of Joel's prophecy:

ACTS 2:15-21

15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.

16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:

19 And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:

20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord come:

21 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Joel's prophecy extends to the Tribulation time to come when the sun turns to darkness and the moon to blood. It extends to the coming great day of the Lord when that which is perfect is come.

Simon Peter told those people to repent, and to be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and that they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. He then said, "this promise," the promise of Joel is to everyone – you, your children, and to those who are afar off.

Tongues have not ceased, because Jesus has yet to return and He's still reaching people with His only Saving Gospel.