



.. God so loved the world...

# MIRACLES

Written by **Carmen D. Hilliard** - Copyright 1989

## INTRODUCTION:

**M**iracles are discussed rather casually in the New Testament. The writers make little effort to prove they were real but assume the reader believes it. Miracles that Jesus and others performed were never denied. In this lesson, we will not attempt to prove the validity of miracles. They can be verified as fact and are a matter of historical record. Our purpose will be to help the reader see the difference between a *real* supernatural miracle of the first century, and the *fake* miracles of the twentieth century. This can be done by looking at evidences in the Bible which prove that miracles have ceased and also by using our common sense and good reasoning. Though many people claim to have the ability, the facts show us that no one in the twentieth century can perform a supernatural miracle. The most important thing I hope you will see by studying this material is how insulting this fake teaching is to God. Fake miracles make God look weak or limited in power. They also leave the impression that God is partial to only a select few. To believe in miracles today, a person must have a blind faith and trust in the idea and teaching of men, instead of what God wrote in the Bible. They are led by emotional experiences and trust their feelings as a guide, not their intellect or the truth from the Bible.

Please remember that **God will not force you to see the truth! He will allow you to be deceived if you want to believe a lie. It will be entirely up to you to make the decision of what to believe.** Look at this issue honestly. Do you know and understand everything your church practices in religion? Have you demanded to know the Bible scriptures that prove everything they

teach? You may find that you have been a victim of this false teaching. I hope you will have the courage and determination to come out of it by studying the Bible to learn the truth. If you are willing to look at the evidence, the truth will not be hard to see. Some are afraid of learning the truth. They don't want to change a religion or leave friends and family. These people will turn through the pages of this lesson and not really study the issue.

**L**earning true facts will set you free from any religious error.

But you must want the truth enough to search for it.

## 1. WHY DO PEOPLE LIE ABOUT SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

Countless numbers of people claim they have performed or witnessed a miracle. They make bold allegations of how God has used them to supernaturally heal the sick, to prophesy and speak in tongues. They claim that God communicates with them through visions and dreams. Would these people lie? **Yes!** Unfortunately, many people who seem to be very religious will lie if the price is right. In America, emotionalism in religion is the current rage on television. The leaders of this movement became rich and famous by feeding on the feelings and needs of people who are ignorant of the truth. So, yes, **many** will intentionally lie and deceive others for power and money and position. Some people, however, really do believe that miracles are possible today. They think of every unusual happening as a miracle or regard it as a special message or a leading from the Spirit. In reality, there are logical and natural explanations for the things that

**W**hen Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money . . .

Acts 8:18

---

happen in our life that are not of a **supernatural** nature. An example: If a person recovers from a rare disease when his doctors predicted he wouldn't live, it isn't a miracle! And who said that doctors have all the correct answers? Many unusual happenings are a result of God working within His providence, by manipulating His natural laws to bless us and accomplish His purposes. You may not have the scientific or medical explanation for each unusual happening at the time, but that doesn't make it a miracle. Ask for the lesson on God's Providential Care and learn how God answers the prayers of His children. (Work through Introduction and Section 1)

## 2. HOW DOES GOD HEAL THE SICK TODAY?

God heals the sick today in the same way He has from the beginning of time. Each person has within his body, natural healing processes that God uses to balance his health after accidental injuries or disease. He manipulates these, along with using the help or skill of doctors and medicine, to accomplish His purposes. A positive mental attitude is important in recovery from illness. It is well known among doctors that many people suffer from ailments that can be "cured" or greatly helped by making the person **believe** they can get well. Many suffer from psychosomatic illnesses. (A physical illness that has been created by an emotional disturbance.) Through medical research, physicians have learned that all known diseases are psychological to some degree and that all illness is directly affected by a person's mental and emotional state of mind. Thousands of people have been cured of disorders through **hypnosis**. The treatments are used by Christians, non-Christians and even by faith healers. But the good result it brings is not a miracle.

Anyone can have better health through autosuggestion.

**P**roverbs 23:7 tells us, as a man thinks in his heart, so is he. We can actually become what we think about.

Many mental, physical, and emotional disorders can be cured with a positive attitude and a true faith in God. Learning self-control also cures many problems. How? Some people violate their bodies by abusing them in ways that God did not design them to function. Many substances, such as alcohol, pollute the body and damage vital organs. When a person abuses his body, the consequences are serious. But if the damage is not too great, and the abuse or mistreatment is stopped, normal operation and good health can be restored. God will not force a person to stop abusing his body. It is not a miracle when people make the decision to stop drinking alcohol or smoking marijuana to take control of their life. I hear people claim that God reached down inside them and took

away the desire for these things. God does not do for us what He expects us to do for ourselves. He will provide strength according to our faith. I hear people refer to the birth of a child as a miracle, but this is not true. God set the child bearing process in motion thousands of years ago. There are no miraculous conceptions or births today. It is achieved through God's natural laws.

A member of my family was badly mangled in a car wreck. The skull and jaw were cracked, his eyes were pierced with bone fragments, one hip was broken, the back and arms were broken. We did not think he would live. But he experienced almost a complete recovery. It took nearly a year to heal. Scars remain, and his eyesight is impaired but he is healthy again. God answered our prayers providentially by using the laws of nature He established, such as the healing processes of the body, to help him recover. God also used man's advancement in science, technology, medical skills, surgical techniques, medicine, and proper nutrition to restore his health. His recovery was **not** brought about through miraculous means. A faith healer of the twentieth century could not have healed his broken body. In the first century, a real supernatural miracle could have healed him *instantly*, with no recovery period, no scars, no impaired vision, or leftover pain, but a **complete** cure. *Do you see the difference?* (Work Section 2).

## 3. IT IS POSSIBLE TO KNOW THE TRUTH.

What is the truth? Will God heal by using supernatural miracles today? Can the dead be raised, as happened in the New Testament? Do men today actually hear the voice of God giving a prophetic message? Is it possible for a person to walk on water, or speak a tongue (language) that he did not study to learn? Remember, there are two reasons why people don't see the truth about miracles: One: They don't know all the facts. Two: They have been misled by false teaching and are psychologically fooled by emotion. The truth is not hard to see or understand.

**T**he Bible was written to reveal the truth and expose error.

Men have distorted the truth by using the Scriptures that refer to miracles in the first century and applying them to us today. But they do not apply to us. All the facts must be put together. When you learn why and how God used miracles in the New Testament, and then read the Scriptures telling when they were to stop, it will be clear to you why people who claim to perform miracles today are false teachers. *False teaching of any kind is an insult to God because He gave us the Bible so we could know truth.*

---

It is a problem to convince a person to look at all the facts when an admired friend has taught him that miracles are possible. Naturally, he doesn't think his friend could be wrong. The friend seems so close to God, so spiritual and loving. Keep in mind, if a person truly wants the truth, and is sincere in his search to find it, he will demand to have it . . . at all costs. He will not want to believe a lie. He will be open minded, question everything he is taught, lay it alongside the evidence from the Bible, and then be honest about the facts. Otherwise he is not a sincere seeker or lover of the truth. It does make a difference what we believe. Our faith and hope can be severely damaged by trusting a lie. (Work Section 3 )

#### 4. GOD CHOOSES NOT TO USE MIRACLES TODAY

When I say that miracles are not possible today, I don't mean that God **can't** perform them any longer. Of course He can! What I mean is, **now**, in the twentieth century, God has other ways to accomplish His will without the use of miracles. For example: God no longer creates man from the dust of the ground. Even though He once did it, and still has the ability, He doesn't create man in this way any longer. God could flood the world to destroy the wicked. He did it once before, but has promised that He wouldn't again. Because He once did something in a certain way, doesn't mean that He will continue it. God uses His power in the way He knows is best. When God says He **will not** do a thing, He never goes back on His word. Going against His word would make Him a liar. It is impossible for God to lie! God instructed Paul to tell the Corinthians that spiritual gifts **would cease** when the Bible was completed. The Bible was finished around the end of the first century, and the gifts ceased, just as He predicted. God **stopped** using miracles as a means of teaching because His Word was completely written for the entire world to have. To say that gifts are continuing today is calling God a liar. (Work Section 4.)

#### 5. WHY DO CHURCHES BELIEVE IN THE GIFTS?

In many churches, having the spiritual gifts is a test to determine if one is really spiritual or not. Many members are taught a person's faith is weak and immature if they don't believe in the existence of spiritual gifts. Those who doubt are generally regarded as not having true knowledge or insight into the Scriptures. They are regarded as only babes spiritually. So, the pressure to have a greater spirituality is strong. I know of actual cases where people are coached to speak in a combination of syllables which gets them started in "tongue speaking". A person must work hard to create

the feelings and mimic what the "tongues" sound like to them. When they learn it, they are convinced they have been put on a higher level of spirituality in the church among their peers. They seek earnestly for this extra acceptance from among the church members and from God. Many believe that God will not save them until they experience it. This is a highly emotional issue with many people. Churches that believe in the miraculous activity teach their members to pray for it by opening up to allow the Spirit's leading. He looks for the Spirit to reveal Himself by feeling His presence emotionally. Church services are filled with emotional responses attributed to the Spirit's work. If a person wants it badly enough, eventually, his imagination will bring about the feeling he is hoping and striving to attain. When a person has this experience, it is moving. It gives him a false belief that God is controlling his life and using him in a special way. Is this real? If it is not, then what is it?

In 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12, we are told it is a strong delusion that God allows one to have when he has chosen to give himself over to a lie.

A friend of mine had this kind of experience. During an assembly, she was told by the leaders of her church to completely give her mind and body to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to slay her spirit and take over her life. This action would free her of sin. She was assured that if her faith was real and her surrender genuine, she would feel the Spirit take control. She believed them. Shaking with fear, she worked to make it happen, hoping her faith was strong enough. Others encouraged her by praying aloud for the Holy Spirit to slay her will. Her emotions mounted during the excitement, and breathing became difficult. Finally, she fainted from **exhaustion and hyperventilation**. In her heart and mind, she was convinced that it was the Holy Spirit who caused her to lose consciousness.

She had surrendered in faith to a deception of the truth and was fooled by her own emotions.

God does not promise this to the Christian in the Bible. The idea originated in the mind of men, not God. This is a tragic case of misguided belief. But it's only **one** of many false teachings and misunderstandings of how the Holy Spirit works. People believe them because they have a lack of true knowledge and want an emotional experience to feel spiritual. Yes, false teaching stems from ignorance of the facts. The belief in spiritual gifts is one of the most common errors in churches today. Why? Because it is a quick and easy way to feel

---

spiritual. People want an instant faith, based on feelings, and don't want to take the time to study the Bible to get it. They are taught that God puts faith into them and the feeling comes from God. The feeling is what makes it right to them, even though having such an experience is not promised nor found in the Bible.

**T**he mind will produce any feeling you tell it to, even if the information fed to it is false.

Some of the spiritual gifts can be imitated, such as tongues, prophecy, healing, visions, etc., with little difficulty. **A good actor with leadership abilities can look and sound very convincing in faking the spiritual gifts.** He can always find followers who will believe what he says; it isn't hard. Many start by acting out the spiritual gifts. They become so good at it, they fool themselves into believing it's real. **Here is how you can tell the difference between a fake and one that is real:**

**A**sk them to raise the dead, walk on water, or move a mountain to a new location.

If they really had the ability to perform miracles, the way it was done in the New Testament, they could do all these things. But it is impossible for them to do, and **they know it.** They will tell you stories of fake miracles and expect you to take their word for it. They will use excuses such as, "I shouldn't put God to the test." But you tell them, "This is the reason God used miracles . . . to teach and prove what was the truth and to expose a lie." Many churches use the entire service to create highly emotional experiences. They shout and speak in utterances which are supposed to be "tongues", building the assembly into a frenzy. This is believed to be the Holy Spirit's work. But here is an interesting fact for you: In the New Testament, **spiritual gifts were never used for the purpose of stirring the emotions.** In the early church, gifts were an intelligent, controlled means of teaching the gospel and had nothing to do with feelings or emotion. Spirituality is a controlled faith. It is an intellectual decision of the mind to obey God in spite of our emotions. (Work Section 5)

## 6. OLD TESTAMENT MIRACLES

When God performed a miracle, it was for the purpose of demonstrating His power and authority.

We read of how He parted the Red Sea for the Israelites to cross over and sent manna from heaven to feed them. The miracles that God performed through Moses proved the accuracy of God's message and demonstrated His power over life and death. (Work Section 6).

## 7. NEW TESTAMENT MIRACLES

In the New Testament, when Christ came to earth and lived among men, He performed miracles to prove that He was the Son of God. What He taught came from the Father, John 20:30-31: **Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing ye may have life in His name.** John says in these verses that it was the miracles that proved He was God's Son. Without seeing a miracle, the Jews would not have believed He was the Savior God had promised for centuries. We believe in Christ today because of the miracles recorded in the New Testament, not because of any miracles performed today. Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, John 12:1. Peter raised Dorcus from the dead, Acts 9:39-42. **No one can raise the dead today.**

In the first century, there were only two classes of people: Jews and Gentiles. It is important to understand the hatred and prejudice that existed between the Jews and Gentiles to realize why God used miracles to break down the walls that divided them and build the one church which is His family.

**C**hrist's death canceled the Old Law of Moses.

His New Law was put in its place. That made salvation possible to both Jew and Gentile. But they hated each other. Gentiles were like dirt under the feet of a Jew. Jewish customs were mocked by the Gentiles. The hatred and contempt that existed between the Jews and Gentiles of that day surpasses anything we can imagine from our twentieth century experiences. Jews were raised with instructions not to associate with the Gentiles. They did not want the barriers of prejudice and contempt to be lifted. It took a miracle to convince the Jews that it was God's plan to include the Gentiles in the Kingdom of Heaven and that the Old Testament Law of the Jews had been abolished forever. (Acts 10-11) (Work Section 7.)

## 8. GOD'S PURPOSE FOR SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Not every Christian had a spiritual gift in the first century. The purpose for giving a select number of Christians the ability to work these miraculous deeds was **to provide them with new knowledge of God's truth, help them to understand it, and prove what they were hearing was from God, not man.** "Tongues" gave Christians the ability to cross over language barriers and teach non-Christians the gospel in their own native tongue. At that time, the people only had the Old Testament in written form but didn't have the New Law of Christ, which contained the gospel, telling how to be saved from sin. It didn't tell them about the church. The last 27 books of the Bible, known as the New Testament, had not been written, and man didn't have everything God wanted us to know.

**M**iracles were the means God used to complete the knowledge contained in the Bible.

(Work Section 8).

## 9. WHEN DID GOD STOP USING SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

God stopped using spiritual gifts when they had accomplished their purpose. Their purpose was to perfect the truth. **How?** With the use of spiritual gifts, the truth was being preached in pieces, spread out in many places. But God **perfected it**, by bringing all of the knowledge, that each gift was capable of teaching, together in one place. The **complete** Bible. Paul teaches that each gift was only a part of the truth, 1 Corinthians 13:9-10. **"For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away."** God's plan was to take each of these parts (each spiritual gift represented a part of the whole truth) and write it down, so that everyone, not just a few, would have the same means of teaching and proving the truth. The perfect Bible was the plan God was working through man to complete.

When His plan came together, both the Old and New Testaments completely harmonized to tell one story. It contains all the evidence to prove the historical account of creation, Genesis 1-2. It tells how sin entered the world, Genesis 3. It reveals how God redeems man of sin, through Jesus. It contains genealogies of the key people God used to bring about His plan and prove the accuracy of what they did. The Bible provides scientific

evidences, prophecies of the future, and warnings of Satan's tricks to get man to sin and go to Hell, 2 Corinthians 11:13-15. It gives man instructions on how to live the Christian life, 2 Timothy 3:16-17. It has the power to expose the inner workings and intentions of man's heart, Hebrews 4:12.

**I**t contains everything that God wants man to know about this life and the one to come. He left nothing out. **We have it all.**

When the writing of the Bible was finished, it gave all men God's complete knowledge collected in one place.

**A**nd when the perfect (the Bible) was finished, spiritual gifts ended. They were not needed any longer. The complete knowledge of the Bible took their place.

It put all Christians on the same level and placed in each hand the same power, the same facts, the same proof, and information to teach the gospel. The apostles and Christians in the first century church understood that spiritual gifts were only **temporary** and would end. Paul asked them to use the gifts in the most effective way. He even tells them to earnestly desire to have the gifts for that purpose, but, he says, **"I will show you a more excellent way,"** 1 Corinthians 12:31.

Having the complete Bible is a much better way to teach than possessing all of the gifts. In the next few verses, 1 Corinthians 13:8-10, Paul tells them **when** the spiritual gifts would end, and **why** they would no longer be needed. **"Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away."** Then, Paul uses an example to illustrate how much better **"the perfect" (Bible)** would be than the use of spiritual gifts. In the 11th verse, he draws a contrast between the immature thinking of a child and the mature thinking and actions of an adult.

This is the point Paul was making: Compared to the superior abilities of the perfect Bible, spiritual gifts were an infantile method of teaching God's truth. With the Bible, miracles are not needed to prove or teach God's truth.

(Work through Section 9.)

## 10. THE ABILITY OF SUPERNATURAL MIRACLES VS. THE ABILITY OF A COMPLETE AND PERFECT BIBLE.

In 1 Corinthians 12:1-12, we find a list of nine spiritual gifts. Examine them closely to see how the Bible replaces them.

**1. Word of wisdom.** (This gift enabled a person to reveal the whole plan of salvation.) *Today, everyone may obtain this wisdom by studying the Bible, applying it to his life, maturing as a Christian, and teaching it to others.*

**2. Word of Knowledge.** (One with this gift could understand and teach the truths revealed by the apostles.) *The kind of knowledge that was done away with was the supernatural, instant knowledge obtained without the time and study to learn it. But the knowledge that one gains through the process of education has remained. All the knowledge they learned with this spiritual gift is contained in the Bible. The only difference in what they knew and what we can know is that we must study to learn God's truth. They had it instantly without study.*

**3. Faith.** (The gift of faith enabled one to move mountains as Jesus taught.) *There is a big difference between supernatural faith, and a faith that is gained through learning and obeying the truth. The Bible is what teaches us faith.*

**4. Gifts of healing.** (The ability to heal diseases, **instantly without a normal recovery period.** Supernatural healing of the body was always coupled with the teaching of the gospel. This was what proved that their message was from God.) *The main purpose was not the physical cure of the body but to reach the person with the gospel. Today God uses the skill of doctors, medicine, and the natural healing processes of the body to heal the sick or cure disease. Not everyone in the first century was cured. People died of disease and tragic circumstances then, as they do today.*

**5. Workings of miracles.** (Were acts that superseded all natural laws of nature. Signs and wonders such as raising the dead, etc. Again, these things were done along with teaching the gospel and served as their proof that the words they spoke came from God, not from man.) *Christians knew these were temporary and this method of teaching would be done away.*

**6. Prophecy.** (With this gift one could explain the past, present and future events.) *Today the Bible reveals all the same information. Man can look back on where he has been, and also learn of his destination, just by reading the pages of the Bible. There will be no new revelations to man, no new prophecies, other than what is revealed in the Bible.*

**7. Discerning of spirits.** (The ability to know the

secret motive of man's heart and mind.) *Today the Bible can be used to expose every false teacher and every false doctrine.*

**8. Different kinds of tongues.** (The ability to speak languages fluently that they had not spent the time to learn.) *Today the same message they preached is written in the Bible. It has been translated in all languages and has been circulated and preached throughout the world, Rom.10:18.*

**9. Interpretation of tongues.** (When someone taught another person in his own native language, the interpreter told the audience what he was saying.) *Paul instructed the church not to use the gift of tongues unless there was an interpreter present, I Corinthians 14:28. This is not the way it is done in churches today, as they try to mimic the "tongues". (Work Section 10.)*

## 11. MODERN-DAY TONGUES

In the Bible, the purpose of tongues was to teach. In Corinthians 14:22, Paul speaks strongly to some who were apparently misusing the gift of tongues and making a show of it. He makes it clear what tongues were to be used for by saying, **"Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serves not for them that believe not, but for them that believe."** Tongues were for the purpose of teaching those who **were not** believers. Prophecy taught those who **did** believe.

The Holy Spirit didn't jump on a person and cause him to do acts out of his control, or fall to the floor, or go into a trance like what we witness in some churches today. Neither were tongues a secret unknown language that nobody but God understood. These ideas are completely foreign to biblical truth. When someone came into the assembly speaking a language not known to them, a Christian having the gift of tongues could speak in their language and teach them the gospel. The hearer understood the message in his own language. Speaking a tongue had nothing to do with feelings. The minds of both the speaker and the hearer were in complete control during their communication.

People have always imitated the real thing. But the way tongues are exhibited today is not even a good imitation of the real thing. It is a common occurrence to see some jumping, shouting, waving their hands, or appearing to be in a trance, while uttering unintelligible syllables, such as ALATO-OA-ASH-MAH-WAH-NAH-LALOAM-BA. The speaker who does this claims he has a message from God in an unknown tongue, spoken by the Father through him. He is mistaken! What he is

speaking is not a language and it teaches nothing! The conclusion is obvious. Since it teaches no one, and no one understands, it is false and comes from the person's own imagination. Upon close examination of the facts, we can see the difference between the real gift of speaking in tongues of the first century (which was an intelligent language used to teach the gospel) and babbling (which is a twentieth century imitation of tongues). (Work Section 11).

## 12. WHAT IS THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is totally misunderstood by all churches that believe in miraculous gifts. Many religions teach the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is available to all believers today. Some say that it is necessary to one's salvation. This teaching is also false! If you are one who has been taught this, you have been deceived by error. Please try to be open minded and examine what the Bible teaches below.

**The Baptism of the Holy Spirit happened only twice in history.** Once on the apostles to teach the **Jews** on Pentecost in Acts 2, and the second time on the house of Cornelius, for the purpose of teaching the **Gentiles**, in Acts 10. To look at this honestly, let's go back just after the crucifixion, before Christ left the earth returning to heaven. He promised the apostles they would receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. **In Luke 24:49, He said, "And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be imbued with power from on high."** Then, in Acts 1:5-8, He told the apostles, **"For John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days from now:"** So when they were come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time you are restoring the Kingdom to Israel?" He said unto them, "It is not for you to know times and seasons which the Father has fixed by His own authority; **but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria; and even to the remotest part of the earth.**" He was telling them of the power they would receive and what to do with it. He told them where the event would happen and when. This promise was made exclusively to the apostles, and they alone received it.

How do we know? We know the apostles were the only ones to receive the power because of the wording in Acts 1:16-2:15. Read these Scriptures carefully. The language of the text is important. The pronouns, **"they"** and **"them"** that are used in those

verses refer back to the noun, **"apostles"**, of verse 26. Why is this point important? It is important because many religious leaders claim that others besides the apostles received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit that day and that all Christians have been receiving it since then. This idea is false! These verses are twisted to prove their theory. But the verses prove that only the apostles received the power that Christ had promised; **no one else, and it is not available today.**

## 13. PURPOSE OF THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

It has already been stated that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit happened only twice in history according to the Bible, and the first time was to the apostles. Let's examine this event closely to see exactly what it was and how it happened. It was a spectacular action by the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, for the purpose of giving them miraculous power.

It enabled them to teach the gospel to the Jews assembled in the city, and to establish the church.

In Acts 2, we find that thousands of Jews were gathered in Jerusalem for the Passover feast. It was the day of Pentecost when God sent His Holy Spirit to the apostles. The Scriptures tell us they **heard** the Spirit's presence and **saw** His miraculous power. The mighty sound of a violent wind was heard coming from heaven and filling the whole house where they were sitting. They saw the Spirit come upon them, distributing among them a visible flame of fire, which sat on each of the apostles. They were filled with the Holy Spirit, which gave them knowledge and the ability to use it. What they saw and heard was amazing. But notice, nothing is said of an emotional feeling or loss of control.

Nowhere does the Bible describe this event as the Holy Spirit taking control of their minds and bodies. The Spirit communicated with their intellect, but it wasn't through an emotional experience or feeling. There was no doubt that this was from God and that it was the promise that Christ had made to them. The Holy Spirit empowered them with a miraculous intellectual ability to speak in 15 different languages of the people represented in Jerusalem that day. The apostles had not previously learned these languages. Some, they had never heard spoken before that day. Yet they could speak each language fluently. When they spoke, it was not a jabbering of unintelligent sounds, but eloquent words that brought conviction to the hearts of the Jews in the audience. "Three thousand people asked, "What must we do to

---

be saved?" Acts 2:47. Because of the apostles' gift of tongues, they learned of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. They learned He is the Son of God, that He died so they could receive forgiveness of their sins. (Work through Section 13.)

#### 14. THE SECOND TIME HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM HAPPENED

**This was ten years after the Pentecost event.** God instructed the apostle Peter, in Acts 10, to go and preach to the Gentiles (beginning with a man named Cornelius). Peter had never associated with a Gentile, Acts 10:28. It took some persuasion to convince him to go. When Peter and some of the Jewish brethren who went with him arrived at Cornelius' house, Peter watched as the Holy Spirit came upon the Gentiles, just as He did on the apostles at Pentecost. Later, when Peter was back in Jerusalem, he explained to the other Jewish brethren what had happened, Acts 11:15-16. He said, "**the Holy spirit fell on them even as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, John indeed baptized with water but you shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit.**" What did he mean by, *as on us at the beginning*? The beginning he referred to pointed back to the day when the new Law of Christ (the gospel) was preached for the first time by the apostles. It was the day of Pentecost, the beginning of the church, when the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles in just the same manner as Peter saw Him come upon the Gentiles at Cornelius' house. Peter and the other Jews with him had witnessed, with their own eyes, that God included the Gentiles into the church, the body of Christ. It placed the Jews and Gentiles on equal basis. Neither would have believed this without seeing the Baptism of the Holy Spirit once again from God, for the last time.

The Holy Spirit Baptism that Cornelius' house received **was not what saved them**. Peter taught them the gospel, they obeyed it, and that is what saved them. He gave them instructions to be baptized in water to be saved, Acts 10:47-48. Some have asked, "Did Holy Spirit baptism make Cornelius an apostle?" No! He was not chosen by Christ to be an apostle, nor did Cornelius have the same power and instructions that Christ gave to His apostles. What the Holy Spirit Baptism did for the Gentiles on that day, was to show the Jews that God was also adding to the church the Gentiles who obeyed the gospel. The Gentiles at Cornelius' house received some of the spiritual gifts which gave them the power to go teach the gospel to others, just as the Jews had been doing for 10 years.

**Twenty years after this happened**, Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:5, that there is only **one** baptism. **That one baptism is immersion in water for the forgiveness of sins**. We must be baptized to be saved, Acts 2:38, but the baptism that saves is not Holy Spirit Baptism. It was a phenomenon that happened only twice in history and is not commanded nor possible today. Every time we read the word baptism in the Scriptures, we must not confuse it with the Holy Spirit Baptism that happened only twice in history, never to be repeated. When people say they have experienced the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and felt it come upon them, it is something they have either imagined or have been mistaken about, because God never promised it in the Bible to anyone today, and no one can receive it. (Work Section 14.)

#### 15. WHO HAD THE GIFTS IN THE FIRST CENTURY.

Not everyone in the first century church had one of the spiritual gifts. Yet, churches today teach that anyone desiring the gifts can have them, especially the gift of tongues. **1 Corinthians 12:28-30. And God has set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, different kinds of tongues. are all apostles? are all prophets? Are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? have all gifts of healings? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?** Spiritual gifts were not given to every Christian and were not for their personal use. Having a gift didn't give a Christian moral strength to fight against sin, and it didn't increase his spirituality. A Christian grew spiritually in the first century just as we do today: by obeying God's Word. Those who had a gift were subject to the same temptations and sin as everyone else. The apostle Peter sinned, Galatians 2:9-14. There were no personal benefits in having a gift, other than what one could do with it to teach the gospel to others. (Work Section 15).

#### 16. HOW WERE THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS RECEIVED?

An apostle chose the Christian who would receive a spiritual gift (miraculous power from the Holy Spirit). **Then the apostle laid his hands on the person, and the Holy Spirit gave him special power called a gift.** The gift from the Spirit was then used to teach the New Law of Christ to others. After the Christian had received power from the Spirit, he could not give the power to anyone else.

---

**T**he Holy Spirit only gave a gift through an apostle's touch. The power could not be received any other way.

How do we know the apostles were the only ones who had the power to give the gifts to others? We learn it by studying examples of how this was done. In Acts 8:3-20, Philip, who was not an apostle, had been given the ability to perform miracles. He went to Samaria to preach. Multitudes listened to him because of the signs and wonders that he performed before their eyes. Philip healed the sick and lame. He caused unclean spirits to come out of some. Many men and women were baptized because they could see from the miracles he was performing that the message he preached was from God, (read verse 12). There was a man in Samaria named Simon, who was a magician. He had been deceiving the people with his amazing magical tricks for a long time. Simon saw the difference between the real miracles Philip performed and his fake ones. It caused Simon to believe in Christ, and he was baptized. He followed Philip, watching the miracles he performed, (read verse 13). The apostles, who were in Jerusalem, heard of what Philip had done among the people at Samaria and how many had obeyed the gospel. They sent Peter and John, who were apostles, to Samaria. They laid their hands on some of the Christians so they could receive gifts from the Holy Spirit. Simon, the magician, observed there was only one way to receive the spiritual gifts; by an apostle laying his hands on a Christian, (read verse 18). Simon was rebuked for trying to buy the ability to give the gifts to others. (Work Sec. 16.)

## 17. THE APOSTLES DIED

The apostles died about the close of the first century. After their death, the gifts slowly faded away because the source of getting the gifts had stopped. Christ never chose other apostles to take their place. To be an apostle, one must have been personally chosen by Christ and have been an eye witness of His resurrection (read Acts 1:21-22). These were the credentials of an apostle. When men claim to be apostles today, they are laying claim to a position that Christ alone can delegate. There is no need for apostles today. The original apostles fulfilled their mission, which was to guide the infant church to maturity in knowledge. The Bible is God's complete revelation, containing all of Christ's new law. It is able to build and instruct the church in the same way the apostles did. **There are no apostles today!** Just as the function of an apostle was temporary, spiritual gifts were also temporary until the church could have the complete Bible as a guide. Men claim

to be apostles today for pre-eminence.

We learn what happened to the spiritual gifts when the whole will of God was written down.

**I Corinthians 13:8-10. Love never fails: but 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: For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.** In these verses, notice that the three gifts which represent all the rest, prophecy, knowledge, and tongues, will be done away. When would this happen? When the perfect came. To learn the correct definition of the word perfect in the Scriptures, we should turn to a Greek lexicon (dictionary) to define it. Why a Greek dictionary? Because the language in which this scripture was originally written was Greek, and we want to know the exact meaning of how Paul was using the Greek word **perfect**. It tells us the word **perfect** means: **brought to its end, finished, complete, full grown, adult, mature**. Paul was referring to the completed work and knowledge of the Bible. What is the perfect? The word perfect here is used to refer to completed knowledge (**the finished Bible**). With the gifts, the young church had partial knowledge, not the whole law of Christ.

**B**ut when the Bible was completed, they had it all.

Now, we have the complete word of God in the 21st century because of what they did in the first century with the help of the spiritual gifts. So here we have the evidence.

Christians of the first century knew that spiritual gifts were only temporary, never meant to be permanent. All of the knowledge contained in the Bible proves its truth. Spiritual gifts were once used to prove the truth but are no longer needed for that purpose. Books of the New Testament written in the year A.D.90, such as 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, and Revelation written in A.D.96, have no record of spiritual gifts being practiced or performed in the churches. This seems to indicate gifts had already ceased by this time. When men claim to speak in tongues, by the power of the Holy Spirit, it is a denial of the power the Bible has to teach all the truth. The apostle Paul said the gifts would cease when the Bible was complete and now that it has been, we are assured it is everything we need for complete instruction in righteousness, 2 Timothy 3:16-17. *If you deny this evidence, you deny the power and validity of the Bible.* (Work Section 17).

## 18. WHO SHOULD YOU BELIEVE?

---

People who believe in miracles today are deceived by a lie. Hindus don't believe in Jesus, yet they speak in the same kind of ecstatic utterances called tongues that many churches do. They claim that Krishna gives them the power to do this. Is this proof that Krishna is correct? No! Such claims mean nothing! The same is true of modern day testimonies of tongue speaking and accounts of personal experiences with the Holy Spirit. I have a collection of newspaper articles, books and pictures with information exposing the phony practices of these people. It is sad, the number of people who died of disease after being healed by a so-called miracle. People who died after drinking poison trying to prove they had a spiritual gift. The saddest of all, are children who were pronounced cured by a miracle. The parents stopped medical treatment, and the children died, all to prove their faith in this doctrine. Are you aware that Satan works false miracles and lying wonders? He uses people's ignorance of the Bible to trick them into believing his lies and rejecting the truth. Each time you accept a lie and practice it, you push the possibility of seeing the truth further away from your sight.

**For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds, 2 Corinthians. 11:13-15.**