HOLY SPIRIT IN MANIFESTATION

(Part One)

In most versions of the Bible, the book that follows the Gospel of John is called The Acts of the Apostles. However, the book could have been easily entitled The Acts of the Holy Spirit since much more than apostles’ actions are recorded therein. The book declares the early Christians’ transition from the old covenant to the new covenant. A considerable amount of time was needed for the Jewish believers to accept the reality that they no longer had to live under the Mosaic Law. Jesus also provides additional revelation, which was spoken by his Apostles, that is not recorded in the Old Testament or the four gospels. The changeover from living with Jesus Christ on earth to Christ living within each believer by means of the spirit is also recorded. The power of the holy spirit in the lives of the believers is chronicled as they spread the gospel of the Kingdom throughout the world. In brief, the book of Acts is an inspired historical record of the early development of the Christian Church, including its RISE (growth of knowledge) and EXPANSION (outreach to the world).

Jesus gave much instruction about the holy spirit to his disciples while he was with them in his earthly ministry. Nevertheless, they did not receive or manifest the spirit until ten days after Christ ascended. On the day of Pentecost, the twelve received for the first time the spirit of truth promised by their Lord. Immediately upon receiving it, they spoke in tongues (which is indeed a manifestation of the spirit).

SPEAKING IN TONGUES

Three of the most significant events in the development of the early Church are marked with the manifestation of speaking in tongues. The first is the commencement of the Church on the day of Pentecost. On the day Jesus ascended into heaven, he told his disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father, which was the equivalent of being endued with power from on high. This promise of empowerment was the baptism of holy spirit which would equip them to be witnesses for him throughout the world. Acts chapter one and Luke twenty-four document this information. Ten days after the ascension, Jesus in fact did send forth the promised holy spirit.

Acts 2:4

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Many supernatural things happened on that day, such as a noise like a violent rushing wind filling the temple area and tongues of fire distributing themselves on each one of the apostles; but the thing which God used to mark the importance of this great event was speaking in tongues. The multitudes that gathered after the original outpouring were amazed and perplexed because of the speaking in tongues, not anything else. God’s stamp which signified the beginning of the Church was speaking in tongues.

The second occurrence of this manifestation, recorded in Acts 10 & 11, is regarding the inclusion of the Gentiles as God’s chosen. Peter was told by the spirit to go to the house of Cornelius the centurion. Peter had a problem with this command because, as a Jew, he was restricted in his associating with Gentiles, according to the Law of Moses. Until this time, the only people who accepted that Jesus was the Christ were from Israel. Starting with Abraham, God’s chosen people were always Israel, not the Gentiles. However, after Christ, the call of God expanded to include
the entire world. Peter went to Cornelius’ house and spoke the gospel, which was readily received by everyone present. In the midst of his witness, those listening believed and spoke in tongues.

Acts 10:44-46

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message.

All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.

For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God.

The apostles and brethren in Judea heard that Peter had been with the Gentiles, so they called him in question. All doubts regarding the inclusion of the Gentiles were eliminated when Peter and the Jews who were with him explained that the Gentiles spoke in tongues. The tongues proved to be the undeniable proof that the Gentiles were saved.

The third incident in Acts took place at Ephesus. Apollos brought the message to this area that John the Baptist taught. He did not teach the complete gospel of the Kingdom because he was ignorant of it. After Apollos moved on to Corinth, Paul came to Ephesus and instructed the disciples more fully. When they heard his message, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Note what happened next.

Acts 19:6&7

And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying.

There were in all about twelve men.

Starting with this event and these original 12 men at Ephesus, within two years and three months, we see that “all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks” (according to Acts 19:10). A complete transformation of the society at Ephesus took place.

Acts 19:19 & 20

Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.

So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

Each of these three events was vital to the rise and expansion of the Christian Church, and God marked each with the manifestation of speaking in tongues. Apparently, this evidence of the spirit was very commonplace among the believers in the first century. When Paul wrote the Corinthians, he gave instruction on how to operate this manifestation properly in the Church. It seems everyone in Corinth spoke tongues but did not understand the correct utilization of this manifestation in the Church. Corinthians 12-14 provides much information about this manifestation including the proper use when the Church is gathered together.
THE INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES
Acts has no record of anyone interpreting tongues. However, according to 1 Corinthians 14, instruction is provided that if someone desires to speak in tongues in a Church meeting, he or she should do so only when it is followed by interpretation. The implication is given that any believer who desires to manifest the interpretation of tongues has the ability to do so. The purpose for this manifestation is that the Church may receive edifying, as is stated in 1 Corinthians 14:5. Tongues are an unknown language to the speaker, so the interpretation is the making known of the essence of the message in an understandable language. Since the manifestation of tongues is the speaking of praise or thanksgiving prayer to God, the interpretation will be the same also. The person who speaks in tongues in the Church is commanded to interpret or to speak quietly to him- or herself. Clearly stated is that the person who speaks in tongues is the same one who is to interpret; so, if you do not know how to interpret, either learn or be silent in the Church.

1 Corinthians 14:5&13

Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying.

Therefore let one who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret.

Another manifestation similar to interpretation, but not identical, is prophecy.

PROPHECY
Immediately after receiving the holy spirit, the twelve at Ephesus were able to speak in tongues and prophesy. When Paul visited with Phillip the evangelist, all four of his daughters prophesied, according to Acts 21:9. On the day of Pentecost, Peter explained to the multitude gathered at the temple that what they heard with the outpouring of the spirit was the beginning of what Joel foretold would come.

Acts 2:17 & 18

AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS,’ God says, ‘THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT ON ALL MANKIND; AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHESY, AND YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS, AND YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS;

EVEN ON MY BONDSLAVES, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN, I WILL IN THOSE DAYS POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT And they shall prophesy.

In Joel, the time between the ascension and return of our Lord Jesus is called the last days. During this age, the followers of Christ will be endued with the power of the holy spirit, which (among other things) will enable them to prophesy. Twice in Joel, we are told prophecy is available now. The Bible is filled with prophecy in that all the words therein are inspired by God and written on His behalf. The Scripture is complete; therefore, no prophecy will be given to add thereunto. The prophecy which now is commonly available to all believers is inspired by God for the edification, exhortation, and consolation of the Church (according to 1 Corinthians 14:3).

In the next issue of Glad Tidings, we will review more of the manifestations of holy spirit.