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Who & what is the Holy Spirit?

Scriptus Papers



Biblical perspectives on various topics

Person, Purpose, Presence, Power, Pentecost

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1. What is a 'spirit'?

Scriptus means 'having been written', and this *Scriptus Paper* concerns various questions I have about the Holy Spirit, which you may have too.

The English word "spirit" was borrowed both from the French (*esprit*), and the Latin (*spīritus*), meaning "breath", wind, breeze. By extension it also came to mean immaterial being, the vital principle animating the world, consciousness, and emotion (Oxford University Press). Some people think of the spirit as a presence that's separate from the body, which is why spirit is another word for ghost (vocabulary.com). So, what does the Hebrew Bible (HB) and the New Testament (NT) say?

'Ruach' - HB

'*Ruach*' is the word in the Hebrew Bible for 'spirit', and occurs 378 times. 'Spirit' is by far the dominant meaning among many, and the various meanings may be classified as physical, physiological, emotional or spiritual.

Physical

The base meaning of *ruach* is "moving air" — whether in the form of breath, a breeze, or violent storm winds ([Brown-Driver-Briggs](#)). It is this force rather than the movement that attracts attention ([Olagunju](#)). Agreeing [Hoyle](#) describes the primary significance of *ruah* is 'air in motion', as wind or breath, and its power in manifestation, or energy.

Ruach can refer to the air (Job 41:16), or to a stormy wind, whirlwind or tempest (Isaiah 25:4, Habakkuk 1:11, Psalm 11:6, Ezekiel 1:4). It also refers to compass directions or the four winds (Jeremiah 49:36, Ezekiel 37:9), or to the four sides (*ruach*) of the temple (1 Chronicles 9:24, Ezekiel 42:15-20).

Physiological

Daniel's spirit (*ruach*) was in its sheath (Daniel 7:15). This text views the body as a container or receptacle for the spirit somewhat like a sheath or scabbard is for a knife or a sword. So, *ruach* is the breath as the life-power of animals (Genesis 7:15, Psalm 104:25, 29), and of humans (Isaiah 42:5, Ezekiel 37:5).

Emotional

Ruach may be jealous (Numbers 5:14), violent (Isaiah 25:4), bitter (1 Kings 21:5), angry, frustrated (Proverbs 29:11), like a city breached, without walls (Proverbs 25:29), exalting folly and lacking of understanding (Proverbs 14: 29), troubled by a dream that is not understood (Daniel 2:3). See Psalms 77:2-3, Joshua 2:11, 5:1, and 1 Kings 10:4-5 for other examples.

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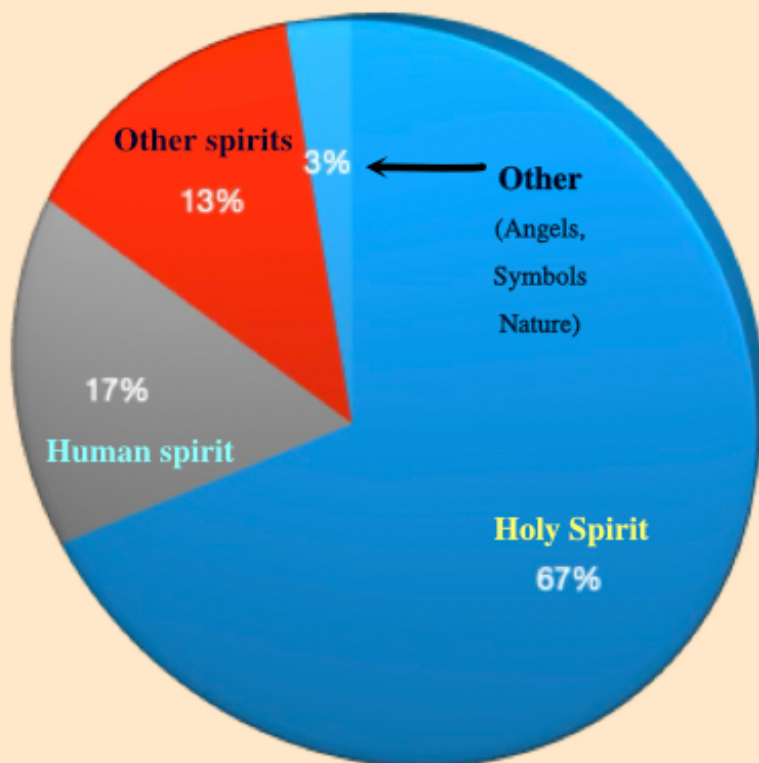


Spiritual

This higher level of *ruach* often designates mental, moral or spiritual states. For example, it is connected to the mind, thoughts, and deceit (Psalm 32:2, Ezekiel 11:5), patience, humility and pride (Ecclesiastes 7:8, Isaiah 57:15), self control, wisdom and skill (Proverbs 17:27, Exodus 28:3, Deuteronomy 34:9), wholeheartedness (Numbers 14:24, Isaiah 26v9).

Pneuma - NT

‘Pneuma’ occurs 359 times in the NT and is mainly translated as ‘spirit’. Like its Hebrew counterpart, pneuma has a basic meaning of ‘air in motion’, or ‘breath’ as something necessary to life. The pie chart below shows that "pneuma" is used predominantly for the Holy Spirit, and much less so for the human spirit and evil or unclean spirits. After these, it is used for angels, as a symbol, and for wind.



Source: Author

2. Is the Holy Spirit a Person?

Holy

Firstly, consider the adjective ‘holy’, which is (*qodesh*) in the HB, a multifaceted word including sacrifice, a gateway, and the power, joy and peace of God. Moreover, the numerical value of *qodesh* is the same for an almond, a metaphor for fulfillment. This looks like progressive steps; sacrifice leads to a gateway, to the power, joy, peace of God and fulfillment with Him ([Bentorah](#)). According to [Abarim Publications](#), *qodesh* coincides with one-ness, wholeness and life, and in the NT, "holy" stems from an ancient Proto-Indo-European root "*kailo*" meaning whole.

These are the characteristics of a person, not the features of an impersonal force or influence.

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Spirit

Secondly consider the word 'spirit'. Linguistically, masculine terminology dominates the Scripture references to God. God is never given a feminine name, or referred to using feminine pronouns. The Bible speaks of the Godhead, including the Holy Spirit, in masculine relational terms.

In Greek, the language of the NT, words are masculine, feminine or neuter and the word for 'spirit' by itself (*pneuma*) is neuter in form. This has led some to conclude that the Holy Spirit is not a person but rather a force, the invisible power and energy by which God is everywhere present. But the gender of a word in Greek or Hebrew has nothing to do with gender identity. For example, 'child' is also neuter in the NT and the same logic would have to argue the proposition that a child is not a person.

A person thinks, feels, and behaves. Using these guidelines, the Holy Spirit meets all the requirements of personhood. For example, the Holy Spirit has cognitive functions because He has knowledge or thoughts (1 Corinthians 2:10–11) and a will (1 Corinthians 12:11). Further, He has emotions for He comforted the early Christians (Acts 9:31), He can be saddened (Ephesians 4:30), quenched (1 Thessalonians 5:19), loved (Romans 15:20), and insulted (Hebrews 10:29). Also, we read of His behaviour-He spoke to Simeon, Philip, Peter and other apostles (Luke 2:25-26, Acts 8:29, 10:19, 11:12, 13:1-3, 15:28, 20:22-23, 22:11), He taught the apostles (John 14:26, 15:26, Ephesians 3:5), He prays for us (Romans 8:26), His power washed us and made us acceptable to God (1 Corinthians 6:11), He creates (Matthew 1:18-20, Luke 1:35), and He raises from the dead (Romans 1:4, 8:11), to name a few.

Finally, Jesus expressed the personhood of the Holy Spirit by using the demonstrative nominative singular masculine pronoun (*ekeinos*, that one, or he) in John 16:13 to refer to the coming Holy Spirit who would guide his apostles into all truth. Without doubt, He is a person.

3. Is the Holy Spirit God?

This question is also related to the 'filioque' controversy (means "and son" in Latin). That is, "from whom did the Holy Spirit proceed, the Father, or the Father and the Son?" The phrase "and son" was added to the Nicene Creed, indicating that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father "and Son." There was so much contention over this issue that it eventually led to the split between the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches in A. D. 1054. The two churches still disagree on the filioque clause.

The Scriptures are clear on this controversy. While humans originate out of the earth (1 Corinthians 15:47), both the Spirit of God and Son of God came not from this world but from the Father (John 14:26, 15:26-28). Further, the Holy Spirit is said to be God (Acts 5:4) and all the attributes of God and Christ are predicated of Him - for example He is eternal (Hebrews 9:14), omnipotent (1 Peter 3:18), omnipresent (Psalm 139:7-10), omniscient (1 Corinthians 2:10-11), creator (Job 26:13, Psalm 33:6, 104:30), and sanctifier (1 Corinthians 1:30, 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 1 Peter 1:2). The answer to the question asked above is clearly 'yes'.

Those who oppose the filioque clause object because they believe the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son makes the Holy Spirit "subservient" to the Father and Son. On this basis, they would also have to object to God being the Head of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:2), and the Son being subject to the Father at the end when Christ delivers the kingdom to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24-28). The solution to this apparent contradiction is to distinguish between equality of essence and functional role.

4. What is the difference between the Holy Spirit and Holy Ghost?

None. In the days of Shakespeare or King James, ghost meant the living essence of a person, and "breath" or "soul" were often used as synonyms of "ghost." During these times, "spirit" normally meant the essence of a departed person or a demonic or paranormal apparition. As language evolved, people started saying "ghost" when speaking of the vision of a dead person while "spirit" became the standard term for life.

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5. How do we distinguish the Holy Spirit from the unholy spirits?

Quite simply, on the basis of their theology. Look at these texts that show a connection between the spirit world and the spoken word, whether good or bad:

For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for he does not give the Spirit sparingly (John 3:34).

Now the Spirit explicitly says that in the later times some will desert the faith and occupy themselves with deceiving spirits and demonic teachings (1 Timothy 4:1).

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to determine if they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world (1 John 4:1).

And, by what yardsticks are they to be tested? John added:

*By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses Jesus as the Christ who has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God, and this is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming, and now is already in the world. They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world's perspective and the world listens to them. We are from God; the person who knows God listens to us, but whoever is not from God does not listen to us...**By this we know** the Spirit of truth and the spirit of deceit (1 John 4:2-6).*

The first yardstick is whether a person's theology honours Christ as the incarnate Son of God. The second yardstick is a commitment to apostolic teaching.

6. What does it mean to resist the Holy Spirit?

The relevant text is Acts 7:51-53:

*You stubborn people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are always **resisting** the Holy Spirit, like your ancestors did! Which of the prophets did your ancestors not persecute? They killed those who foretold long ago the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become! You received the law by decrees given by angels, but you did not obey it.*

Stephen's audience had betrayed and murdered Jesus Christ, the living Word of God, and had received the written word of God in the law of Moses and had not obeyed it. That is, *resisting the Holy Spirit* is done when we resist or disobey the word of God-whether living or written.

7. How can I quench the Holy Spirit?

See I Thessalonians 5:19-20:

*Do not **extinguish (quench)** the Spirit (or put out the Spirit's flame). Do not treat prophecies with contempt.*

Quenching the Holy Spirit is defined by treating the word of God (prophecies) with contempt.

8. Can I insult the Holy Spirit?

*How much greater punishment do you think that person deserves who has contempt for the Son of God, and profanes the blood of the covenant that made him holy, and **insults** the Spirit of grace? (Hebrews 10:29).*

It seems that the recipients of this letter, brought up as Jews and converted to Christianity, struggled to abandon the shadow (temple, animal sacrifices, priesthood, old covenant) after the substance (Christ) had come. These HB rituals were merely a material model of greater spiritual realities in Christ. To leave the shadow, embrace the substance, and then leave it for the shadow again is to treat with contempt the Son of God and the blood of the new covenant. It is equivalent to insulting the Holy Spirit.

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9. What is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, and can it be committed today?

The relevant texts are Matthew 12:22-32, Mark 3:20-30, Luke 12:10-12. Below is the passage from Mark:

*3:20 Now Jesus went home, and a crowd gathered so that they were not able to eat. 3:21 When his family heard this they went out to restrain him, for they said, "He is out of his mind." 3:22 The experts in the law who came down from Jerusalem said, "He is possessed by Beelzebul," and, "By the ruler of demons he casts out demons." 3:23 So he called them and spoke to them in parables: "How can Satan cast out Satan? 3:24 If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom will not be able to stand. 3:25 If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. 3:26 And if Satan rises against himself and is divided, he is not able to stand and his end has come. 3:27 But no one is able to enter a strong man's house and steal his property unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can thoroughly plunder his house. 3:28 I tell you the truth, people will be forgiven for all sins, even all the **blasphemies** they utter. 3:29 But whoever **blasphemes** against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven, but is guilty of an eternal sin" 3:30 (because they said, "He has an unclean spirit") (Mark 3:20-30).*

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, then, is attributing to Satan the miraculous works of Jesus done in the power of the Holy Spirit. That is, they said that Jesus Christ was demon-possessed not Spirit-filled.

Can it be committed today? In a direct sense it cannot because the circumstances under which the sin is described do not exist today - we do not have the opportunity to witness Jesus performing miracles in person. Jesus Christ is not on earth—He is seated at the right hand of God. Secondly, if it were possible to commit this sin after the resurrection of Christ, we would expect the writers of the NT to mention it-and they don't.

Nevertheless, there is a valid counter argument. For example, people today say that Jesus was a madman based on their understanding of the evidence in the NT. They said the very same thing in Jesus' day based not on the written record but on first-hand experience (see v21 above). Does this make people today less culpable than their counterparts of 2000 years ago? If the answer to this is 'yes', then we completely destroy the value of biblical revelation. If the answer is 'no', then we must also allow that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit can be committed today.

10. Am I able to grieve the Holy Spirit?

You certainly can. Ephesians 4:30 reads, "*And do not **grieve** the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*" This verse occurs within a wider passage (v20-32) that is about our thoughts and actions being renewed in relation to each other as a community of Christians.

"Grieve" is deep emotional pain, that can only be felt by a person who loves us. Indeed, what distresses the Holy Spirit of God is the disunity that rips the body of Christ apart through a variety of un-Christian behaviours that are mentioned in the verse to follow-bitterness, anger, wrath, quarrelling, evil, slanderous talk, and these are to be replaced with kindness, compassion, and forgiveness.

Conclusion

Let's leave the concluding statement to AW Tozer:

"Spell this out in capital letters: THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A PERSON. He is not enthusiasm. He is not courage. He is not energy. He is not the personification of all good qualities, like Jack Frost is the personification of cold weather. Actually, the Holy Spirit is not the personification of anything..... He has individuality. He is one being and not another. He has will and intelligence. He has hearing. He has knowledge and sympathy and ability to love and see and think. He can hear, speak, desire, grieve and rejoice. He is a Person."

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Every time we say, "I believe in the Holy Spirit," we mean that we believe that there is a living God able and willing to enter human personality and change it (J B Phillips)

1. What is the role of the Holy Spirit after Christ's ascension?

After Christ's ascension, the Spirit's ministry was to be universal, involving the Godhead, God's people, and God's world:

- For God's people the Spirit was to be another paraclete (*advocate*) to ENCOURAGE them in place of Christ (John 14:15-21). On the sheer weight of reference numbers this is the most important purpose;
- For the world order the Spirit was to EXPOSE its sin in rejecting Christ while accepting the ruler of the world (John 16:8-11), and
- For God, the Spirit was to EXALT the Son and the Father in receiving from the Godhead divine truth and revealing it to the apostles (John 16:12-16).

2. Is the relationship of the Spirit to God's people different than before?

In the HB, the Spirit *filled* Bezaleel (Exodus 31:3; 35:31), He *came upon* others (Numbers 24:2; Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 1 Samuel 10:10; 16:13; 2 Chronicles 15:1), and He was *in* Joshua (Numbers 27:18), and *in* Daniel (Daniel 4:8; 5:11-14; 6:3). All of these functions also describe the relationship of the Spirit to New Testament (NT) Christians.

On the night before He died, the Lord spoke to His apostles about the Spirit replacing Him as another *advocate*. The Spirit, He said, "abides (present) with you and will be (future) in you" (John 14:17, 15:26; 16:7-8, 13). This revelation flagged a change in the relationship of the Spirit to God's people before the ascension of Christ and afterwards.

For example, the Spirit empowered Samson but later left him (Judges 13:25; 16:20), and Saul (1 Samuel 10:10; 16:13-14); David too, was fearful that this departure might happen to him and requested; "*Do not reject me! Do not take your Holy Spirit away from me*" (Psalm 51:11). As NT believers enjoy the permanent presence of the Holy Spirit, they do not need to make such a prayer.

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3. If the Spirit guides His people into all truth, why are there doctrinal disagreements?

Firstly, note that the promise of the Spirit's guiding into all truth was given to the apostles who received the doctrines of the NT (John 16:13). That does not include all believers, whose responsibility is to:

1. *Remember* such apostolic teachings (Jude 17).
2. *Retain* a spiritual disposition as 1 Corinthians 2:15 confirms:
The one who is spiritual discerns all things, yet he himself is understood by no one.
3. *Request* spiritual insight as Ephesians 1:17-19 says:
I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you spiritual wisdom and revelation in your growing knowledge of him, – since the eyes of your heart have been enlightened – so that you may know what is the hope of his calling, what is the wealth of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the incomparable greatness of his power toward us who believe, as displayed in the exercise of his immense strength.

Thus, doctrinal disagreements will never be caused by the Spirit's inadequate guidance, but by the saints' inadequate knowing and following.

4. Does the anointing of the Holy Spirit mean that no other Bible teacher is needed?

The relevant passage is 1 John 2:18-27:

2:18 Children, it is the last hour, and just as you heard that the antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have appeared. We know from this that it is the last hour. **2:19** They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us, because if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us. But they went out from us to demonstrate that all of them do not belong to us.

2:20 Nevertheless you have an anointing out from the Holy One, and you all have seen.

2:21 I have not written to you that you do not know the truth, but that you do know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

2:22 Who is the liar but the person who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This one is the antichrist: the person who denies the Father and the Son.

2:23 Everyone who denies the Son does not have the Father either. The person who confesses the Son has the Father also.

2:24 As for you, what you have heard from the beginning must remain in you. If what you heard from the beginning remains in you, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father.

2:25 Now this is the promise that he himself made to us: eternal life.

2:26 These things I have written to you about those who are trying to deceive you.

2:27 Now as for you, the anointing that you received from him resides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things, it is true and is not a lie. Just as it has taught you, you reside in him.

Firstly, let's identify the 'Holy One' Who does the anointing (v20). 'Holy One' occurs eight times in the NT. The first in line were the unclean spirits, demons who asserted that Jesus of Nazareth was **the Holy One of God** (Mark 1:24, Luke 4:34), and then the disciples (John 6:69), and then Peter and Paul (Acts 2:27, 13:35). Also, the Lord used the descriptor of Himself (Revelation 3:7), as did an angel (Revelation 16:4). Moreover, the One Who does the anointing is Christ (*christos*), the Anointed One.

And you (plural), John's believing readers have (present) an anointing (*chrisma*), from the Anointed One, and it resides in them. But what is the anointing that resides in believers?

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4. Anointing of the Holy Spirit continued

The anointing resident is not identified. However, we know that the Holy Spirit is one resident (John 14:15, 1 John 4:12-13;), and the Lord Himself is another (John 14:20, 1 John 2:6), and the Father is another (John 14:23, 1 John 4:12-14), in order that we *might be filled with all the fulness of God* (Ephesians 3:19).

Finally, what is the truth that they don't need further teaching about? The text above is specific: *Who is the liar but the person who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This one is the antichrist: the person who denies the Father and the Son* (2:22). And, of course, if John was saying that no one should teach his readers apart from the Holy Spirit, then why did he send them this letter that is full of teaching? This obvious contradiction should caution us against interpreting the texts to mean that the Holy Spirit does away with the need for human teachers.

5. What is praying in the Spirit?

'Praying in the Spirit' is mentioned twice. Ephesians 6:18 says:

*And **pray in the Spirit** on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.*

This means that praying in the Spirit is being comprehensive in terms of occasions and needs.

Jude 20-21 says:

*But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and **praying in the Holy Spirit**, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.*

Notice that prayer is flanked on the left by faith, and on the right by hope and love. This means that praying in the Spirit is biblical (according to the faith of Jude 3) on the one hand, and practical on the other.

6. What are we to understand by the leading of the Spirit?

The relevant texts are:

*Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan River and was **led by the Spirit** in the wilderness* (Luke 4:1).

Jesus modelled perfectly the fullness and the leading of the Holy Spirit. One cannot imagine being led without the fullness, nor the converse of being filled by the Spirit and not led (see questions 9 and 10 in Part 4 for information on our role in being filled). Being 'led', Jesus was under the controlling influence or direction of the Holy Spirit, and was not passively carried away by the Spirit (as Philip was in Acts 8:39) into the desert but was led to go there under His own steam.

*But I say, live by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh. For the flesh has desires that are opposed to the Spirit, and the Spirit has desires that are opposed to the flesh, for these are in opposition to each other, so that you cannot do what you want. But if you are **led by the Spirit**, you are not under the law* (Galatians 5:16-18).

In the Galatian letter Paul addressed the theological problem of Christians who had received the Holy Spirit by faith but wanted to perfect their faith by the works of the law, which he equated to the lust or works of the flesh. It would be contradictory of the Spirit who had led them to faith at the start of their Christian lives, to then turn around and lead them to the works of the law to finish their Christian lives. Thus to "live or walk by the Spirit," (v16), to be "led by the Spirit" (v18), and the "fruit of the Spirit" (v22-23) are closely related if not identical.

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6. leading of the Spirit continued

*For all who are **led by the Spirit of God** are the sons of God. For you did not receive the **spirit of servitude** leading again to fear, but you received the **Spirit of adoption**, by whom we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself bears witness to our spirit that we are God's children (Romans 8:14-16).*

Notice the contrasts here. Firstly, the Spirit of God and the Spirit of adoption versus the spirit of servitude. Servitude (*douleia*), means the function, status and activities of a servant.

'Adoption' (*huiiothesia*) is a composite noun, the first noun is (*huios*), meaning son and (*huiiothesia*) means son-establishing ([Abarim Publications](#)). The crucial difference between a natural son and an adopted son is that the first one is origin-oriented whereas the second one is destination-oriented. We all come from earth but people whose attentions remain on earth are very much aware of their name, their home city, their family, their gene pool, skin tone, native language, nation, flags, fatherland; all that. These people hold that brothers are people one shares a womb with, and norms and slogans and fashions. People whose attentions span into the heavens, however, can't care less where anybody comes from, whose womb they gestated in and who with, what language they speak, what food they fancy, where their tax money goes to die, or what their forefathers were up to.

In the Roman worldview, sonship did not primarily point backward to begetting, but forward to inheritance, and transmission of power often through adoption. For emperors, who had trouble propagating through natural begetting, they adopted their sons as 'sons of God'. Far from being second-class family members, they were pivotal and often favoured. Whether Augustus, Nero, Trajan, or Hadrian, adopted sons such as these were affiliated into their roles and accepted as natural members of the ruling "dynasty" ([Peppard](#)).

So, to be an adopted son in that world was far better than being a servant, hence the Spirit of adoption is Spirit who makes favoured sons of the Living God. These are also 'children' (*teknon*), meaning more generally offspring or posterity (Matthew 3:9, Acts 2:39, Romans 9:7). This word is also used for "spiritual" children: people who someone brought into life by bringing them to the Lord (Matthew 9:2, 1 Timothy 1:18, 1 Corinthians 4:17). This means that these "children" acknowledge their "father", which leads the Bible authors to speak of them as children of God (John 11:52, Romans 8:16, Ephesians 5:1).

In sum, The leading of the Spirit of God is not confined to the few, but available to all members of God's family. That is, it seems to be characteristic of the children of God and is not some special gift reserved for extra special holiness but available to all in the family.

7. Does the Holy Spirit communicate to us through an inner voice, feelings or emotions?

When Christians must make decisions that are not directly addressed by the Word, they are free to make their best choice, guided by the Word.

See the previous question and answer where Paul reminds us that we have to be rational, intelligent Christians first and foremost, ahead of being emotional ones. That is, some religious practices may suit our emotions but if our mind is not in control then it's not acceptable. If you think that God speaks through emotions or feelings, you may be rather uncertain of what He is communicating because emotions and feelings are volatile, up one day and down the next. Indeed, you may be fooled by your dreams, feelings, and emotions, all of which can be manipulated, even affected by what we eat.

I have given them your Word (John 17:14), said the Lord, and that should be sufficient. See also 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

Next, we'll discuss the Holy Spirit's Presence.

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The Holy Spirit - Presence



We do not need to wait for the Holy Spirit to come.
He came..He has never left (John Stott)

1. Why is it important to know that we have received the Holy Spirit?

This knowledge provides assurance that we are God's children, for without the Spirit we do not belong to God at all (Romans 8:9; Galatians 4:6; Jude 19). Moreover, as Christians we would not know anything about God without His Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:9-12).

2. When and how do we receive the Holy Spirit?

Paul said to the Ephesians: *"Did you **receive the Holy Spirit on believing?**"* (Acts 19:2).

This link between believing and receiving is clear. He wrote later to them:

*Having **heard** the word of truth, the good news of your salvation, you **believed** in Christ, you were **sealed** for the Holy Spirit by His vow, who is the collateral of our shareholding, until the redemption of the purchase, to the praise of his glory* (Ephesians 1:13-14).

The seal (*sphragis*) was a wax blob impressed with a distinctive symbol that would secure a message and confirm its authenticity, or the instrument with which to make such an imprint, which was commonly a signet-ring that an authoritative person would wear on his person. Especially when administration and communication began to dominate all forms of government and trade, the king's seal quite literally held the realm together. Someone who bore the imprint of the seal was obviously assigned an office of great importance, but someone who carried the instrument with which to place such seals upon approved goods and people, had the king's power to assess and select, to accept and reject, to assign and destroy ([Abarim Publications](#)).

But seals also were associated with protection from the spirit world. Ephesus, the capital city of pro-consular Asia had the temple of Artemis one of the seven wonders of the ancient world and was preoccupied with the black arts. The worship of Artemis included prostitution and mutilation, making the residents vulnerable to false magicians and to demonic penetration. She was the home of criminals and the temple possessed the right of asylum. Artemis their goddess was girded with the "Ephesian Letters" which were spoken or copied onto "amulets" (seals) and such charms were carried about and were guaranteed to protect from demonic powers, bring protection on journeys, bring children to the childless and success in love or business. From all over the world people came to buy these magic 'seals'.

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2. Receive the Holy Spirit continued

These Ephesians once had a fear of the supernatural world, but Paul reminds them that in Christ they have something superior to magical arts to defend against the spiritual war going on around them. God has given His seal, His Spirit, both as a mark of authentic ownership and to protect His people, and we have no need to fear the evil "powers."

It seems from the way Paul wrote, that the Holy Spirit has a relationship of personal interest to the believers and the sealing was done for the Spirit, authenticating or certifying them to be of His heritage. Although others would see that the sealing was done for Christ. Moreover, the Holy Spirit of 'promise' (*epaggelia*), means a vow. There's no such thing as "not keeping" an *epaggelia*, for it's a binding declaration of intent.

The Holy Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance. An earnest is something given to guarantee the fulfilment of the whole (compare 2 Corinthians 1:22). It was also a sample of what was to come. The trader would provide a sample which demonstrated the quality and type of what was being sold, and this could then be compared with the goods that finally arrived. But if the so contracted supplier fails to complete the transfer, this collateral is lost to the winds and sands, forever untraceable and never to be recovered. The 'inheritance' (*kleronomia*), is a shareholding, the dividend that one shareholder receives.

In sum, the Ephesians heard, believed and were Spirit sealed. Thus the Holy Spirit within us and upon us is the sample of what our future inheritance will be in a spiritual life to come, and is the proof that we are His.

Peter said: ***Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).***

Peter adds two things - repentance and baptism. Let's deal with repentance first, because Paul always linked repentance and believing in his preaching as indivisible components, two sides of the one coin (Acts 20:21). This is seen in his preaching to the Athenians, where Paul preached repentance, and some believed (Acts 17:30-34). Repentance is toward God about sin, and faith is viewed in relation to the Lord Jesus.

[Ferguson](#) suggests that in grammatical terms, repent and believe both function as a synecdoche — the figure of speech in which a part is used for the whole. Thus, repentance implies faith and faith implies repentance. One cannot exist without the other.

'Repentance' (*metanoeo*), to change the mind, but specifically not from one feeling into another feeling, but rather from one logically derived conclusion to another one. Traditional translations commonly interpret repent to imply guilt, regret and punishment, whereas (*metanoeo*) rather considers the adoption of a superior system of formal thought over an inferior one ([Abarim Publications](#)).

So, what of baptism, which is 'in the name' (*epi*) meaning on, upon or unto, emphasising the arrival at a boundary. In two other references to being baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 8:16, 19:5), 'in' is (*eis*), and describes the arrival at a certain point in time, or describe the final result of a process. In one other reference (Acts 10:48), 'in the name of Jesus Christ', 'in' is (*en*) and expresses a situation either inside something or endowed with something, but always at rest. For example, it is used whenever we're in a place or building, amidst a multitude, in someone's presence, enveloped by something, in a certain time period, or in a certain situation. So, 'in Christ' refers to the environment in which we perform our faith; our believing is done within the reality of Christ ([Abarim Publications](#)).

In brief, we have a progression from motion towards a goal, arriving, and then inside, in each case the goal is Christ. Accordingly, Peter's *be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ*, is connected to the forgiveness of sins and receiving the Holy Spirit, which is the same as *in the one Spirit being baptised into one body* (1 Corinthians 12:13), and being *baptised into Christ*, which is being *baptised into his death*, and being *clothed with Christ* (Romans 6:3, Galatians 3:27).

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3. Do we have to ask the Father for the Holy Spirit in order to have his presence with us?

This would appear to be so as the following statement of Jesus to His disciples suggests:

*If you then, although you are evil, know how to **give good gifts** to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father **give the Holy Spirit** to those who ask him (Luke 11:13).*

If we just focus on the words 'give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him' it would seem right to conclude that we should ask the Father for the Holy Spirit. However, the text of Luke 11:13 itself gives a clue as to the meaning, because 'give the Holy Spirit' in line two is the parallel of 'give good gifts' in line one. This is confirmed by examining the parallel narrative on the same topic in Matthew 7:11:

*If you then, although you are evil, know how to **give good gifts** to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven **give good gifts** to those who ask him (Matthew 7:11).*

In this case, 'give good gifts' in line one is repeated in line two instead of 'give the Holy Spirit'. In sum, *good gifts* are the equivalent of *the Holy Spirit*; thus, what we are to ask for are the good gifts of God. This interpretation is confirmed by studying the wider topic of prayer; nowhere else in the NT are we instructed to ask the Father for the Holy Spirit because there is no need to ask for someone that Christians, by definition (Romans 8:9), already possess.

4. What does it mean that the Holy Spirit is our Paraclete?

The Greek word "*parakletos*" is found in [John 14:16, 26](#); [15:26](#); [16:7](#), and [1 John 2:1](#). The history of the term in the whole sphere of known Greek and Hellenistic usage outside the NT yields the clear picture of a legal adviser, helper or advocate in the relevant court (Word Biblical Commentary). Leon Morris observes that, in modern times comfort has come to have a meaning like consolation. It points to making the best of a difficult situation, whereas the idea in *parakletos* is providing the assistance that will deliver them from the difficult situation.

As Jesus met with His disciples in the upper room, He stated: "*My children, I will be with you only a little longer . . . where I am going you cannot come.*" His disciples were overtaken by a sense of bereavement but the Lord gave them great encouragement: "*And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another ('allos' another of the same kind) 'parakletos' to be with you into the age . . . the Spirit of Truth*" (John 13:33).

After assuring them that He would not leave them as orphans, He said, *I will come to you* (v18). The futuristic present tense of the verb describes what is going to take place in the future as though it were already occurring. The result is an emphatic statement of reassurance of His continued presence with them.

However, Jesus clearly says that the *parakletos* is the Holy Spirit. He hints at the identity of this *parakletos* in John 14:17, by saying, you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. Christ has been a *parakletos* to them while He was with them in the flesh. After His resurrection, the Holy Spirit would fulfill the same role by living within them. The visible has been being replaced by the invisible.

5. What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

It was John the Baptist who declared that the Lord was mightier than he because while John baptised only in water, Christ would baptise in the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:8). Indeed, such a baptism marked Him out as the Son of God (John 1:33-34).

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5. Baptism of the Holy Spirit continued

Thus the baptism of the Holy Spirit may be defined as that work of the Son of God Who in the sphere of the Spirit places the believer into union with Christ and with other believers in the body of Christ at the moment of salvation:

*“For we were all **baptised** by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink” (1 Corinthians 12:12-13).*

While [Romans 6:1-4](#) does not mention specifically the Spirit of God, it does describe the same event:

*“What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don’t you know that all of us who were **baptised** into Christ Jesus were **baptised** into his death? We were therefore buried with him through **baptism** into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”*

The following facts are necessary to help solidify our understanding of Spirit baptism. Firstly, nowhere in Scripture are believers told to be baptised with, in or by the Spirit, or in any sense to seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This indicates that all believers have had this experience.

*There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, **one baptism** (Ephesians 4:4-5).*

Spirit baptism is the reality for every believer, just as “one hope” and “one faith” are as well.

Next, we’ll discuss the Holy Spirit’s Power.

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The best defence is a good offence.
The devil may have better tricks, but we have better weapons.

Introduction

The English translations of the following NT texts link power with the Holy Spirit.

*And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with **power** (dunamai) from on high (Luke 24:49).*

*But you will receive **power** (dunamai) when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the farthest parts of the earth (Acts 1:8).*

*Our message of the good news came to you not in word only, but also in **power** (dunamai) and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction (1 Thessalonians 1:5).*

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the **power** (dunamai) of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13).*

Your idea of power could be something like the images at right because 'power' in the texts above is (dunamai), the root of some English words such as "dynamic," and "dynamo". It immediately gets us thinking of force or might.

However, (dunamai) emphasises ability and possibility, not force or might. "Power" is too strong an English word for it. Power and the use of powerful force are conveyed by the verb (ischuo), mastery or control would be covered by (krataioo), actual doing or working by (energeo) and prevailing by (nikao) ([Abarim Publications](#)).

Dunamai essentially describes "something that can be done" or "something for which the opportunity exists". It's a "can do" word, within the range of abilities or opportunities of some doer, whether because of personal skill, agility, some inferred authority or autonomy, sheer lack of resistance from the environment or an opportunity offered by that environment. So, the appropriate image is the one at the top of the page.



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Those texts again

Let's consider each of those texts more deeply.

*And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been **clothed** with **power** (dunamai) from on high (Luke 24:49).*

'Clothed' is (*enduo*), meaning to plunge into, commonly used to describe the getting into clothes or a particular outfit, with the implication of also getting into the office, purpose or duties that these particular garments signify: a wedding outfit (Matthew 22:11), a prophet's hairy mantle (Mark 1:6), a royal purple robe (Mark 15:17), a soldier's armour (Romans 13:12), or any unspecified usefulness (2 Corinthians 5:3). In Galatians 3:27, Paul writes explicitly that whoever is baptised in Christ has clothed himself in Christ.

In antiquity, one's clothing signified one's profession, which was or course very handy in a world without phonebooks or Google Search, and the rare folks that didn't work with their hands but rather worked with scriptures all day (doctors, chroniclers, scribes, historians), likewise dressed the part. When considered in connection with Luke's verse, the Holy Spirit is the Christian's signature clothing provided by heaven.

*But you will receive **power** (dunamai) when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my **witnesses** in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the farthest parts of the earth (Acts 1:8).*

Witnesses (*martus*), were not merely formal testimonies, but also the embodiment of what they conveyed to others. Christians display heaven's clothing, so too they incarnate Christ Himself in their witness.

*Our message of the good news came to you not in word only, but also in **power** (dunamai) and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction (1 Thessalonians 1:5).*

The sequence here is word, power, Spirit and conviction, or carried to fullness. That is, conviction was not a process, but rather the end of a process, the goal of "achieved fullness".

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the **power** (dunamai) of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13).*

The Christians life is one of God-provided hope, facilitated by the skills, knowledge, abilities and opportunities that the Spirit enables. Given that introduction, here are some specific questions.

1. What are spiritual gifts?

They are described four books, which in order of their writing are 1 Corinthians 12-14, Romans 12:1-8, Ephesians 4:1-16, and 1 Peter 4:8-11.

1 Corinthians 12 prefaces the subject with this: *Now concerning spiritualities (pneumatikos), I do not want you to be without reasonable understanding.* 'Pneumatikos' denotes an entity that has, lives by or serves the spirit.

Paul refers to gifts (*charisma*) of the Spirit numerous times in these two chapters. The verbal form of *charisma* means to rejoice or be glad, and originally described the formation of a social network, and expresses the security that comes from connectedness and diversity. This is reinforced by gifts being for the benefit of all the church (12:7), meaning to bring together, converging and being connected.

Then in Romans 12, Paul prefaces the subject of gifts with a warning not to look down on others, nor to elevate your thinking about yourself, according to the measure of sureness that God has given each one. Then in Ephesians 4, Paul prefaces the subject of gifts by encouraging the believers to keep the church together and ensure its social cohesion in peace. Interestingly, Paul uses a different word for 'gifts' here than in the other texts. 'Gifts' (*dōma*) originates from (*demō*), meaning "to build" or "to construct" and refers to the roof of a house (Matthew 24:17, Mark 13:15, Luke 5:19, 17:31, Acts 10:9), and housetops (Matthew 10:27). This fits with Paul's purpose for gifts, which is to build up the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12). Finally, in 1 Peter 4, Peter prefaces the subject of gifts by exhorting his readers to keep their love for one another fervent.



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2. How many spiritual gifts are there?

A wide variety of spiritual gifts is listed in Romans 12:1-8; 1 Corinthians 12-14; Ephesians 4:7-16; 1 Peter 4:10,11, which are summarised in the table below, along with the date of writing, who gave the gifts and for what purpose. Those items marked red are what I think are repeats, but you made find others.

	1 Corinthians 12-14	Romans 12:1-8	Ephesians 4:1-16	1 Peter 4:8-11
Date	AD 54-55	AD 56-57	AD 60-62	AD 64-65
Giver	Holy Spirit	God	Christ	God
Purpose	To bring the body together	Serve one another	To build the body to the unity of the faith	Serve one another and glorify God
1	Word of wisdom	Prophecy	Apostles	Serving
2	Word of knowledge	Ministry	Prophets	Speaking
3	Faith	Teacher	Evangelists	
4	Means of healings, remedy, medicine	Exhorter (Implore, comfort, encourage)	Pastor-teachers	
5	Operation of power, might or strength (Miracles)	Giver or sharer		
6	Prophecy (one who speaks for another)	Leader		
7	Separation or dissolution of spirit	Compassionate		
8	Family, race, people tongue, language			
9	Interpretation, explanation of tongue			
10	Apostles			
11	Prophets			
12	Teachers			
13	Powers			
14	Healings			
15	Helps (rendering assistance to the poor and the sick)			
16	Steering, pilotage, directorship, government			
17	Tongues			

The total number of gifts add to 32, but subtracting repeats leaves 25, but I've been conservative in identifying repeats.

However, even if the final number was 20, that's still a diverse array of talent given to the church.

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3. Are spiritual gifts the same as natural talents?

I think that some are and others not. Consider the following:

Notice in the table above that apostles are listed among the gifts, and these gifted men were instructed to heal all manner of diseases and illnesses and even raise the dead (Matthew 10:1, 8). Obviously, the ability to heal all manner of sickness and raise the dead was not a natural talent but a manifestation of the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit.

On the other hand, some of the gifts in the table above are also possessed by non-Christians, and we would describe them as natural talents. For example, the world has gifted teachers, and gifted leaders in business and government, and there are compassionate non-Christians who give their time, talents, and possessions for many good causes.

These are God-given skills and dispositions; nevertheless, because they are non-Christians they are not in the body of Christ and are not exercised in the spiritual sphere or through any spiritual motivation. That is, God does not always make the distinction between natural and spiritual gifts; for example, God prepared both Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:5) and Paul (Galatians 1:15-16) for later ministry before they were born. Quite probably, the natural skills that God moulded into their dispositions before they were born were later developed and used in their respective spiritual ministries.

In sum, the 'what' (spiritual gift or natural talent) may be the same in some cases but the 'where', 'why' and 'how' of spiritual gifts are different. Where? God has placed people with these gifts in the church, the body of Christ. Why? For the glory of God and for the service of the body so that the body reaches maturity in Christ. How? Spiritual gifts are the energetic workings of God and the exhibition of the Spirit.

4. Are some spiritual gifts temporary and others permanent?

Gifts were given to support the Lord's people until:

...you do not lack any spiritual gift as you wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He will also strengthen you to the **end**, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:7-8).

The "end" (*telos*) does not emphasise the sudden termination of a process but represents a transition between two progressive realms. But the question remains, do some gifts cease operations before then while others do not?

We would not expect to find an explicit statement by the apostles in the NT about the temporary nature of some gifts because they anticipated the Lord's return in their lifetime (John 21:22, 1 Thessalonians 4:15). Secondly, there has been no consensus on the answers people give to this question, but they usually fall into two categories; cessationists or noncessationists. The former believe that some gifts that functioned in the early church no longer operate today. My take on this difficult and controversial issue is as follows.

The biblical record shows that God used men as vehicles of His supernatural power during particular periods for the specific purpose of authenticating a new message and messengers. That is, their use as vehicles was discreet, not continuous. For example, Moses was enabled to perform miracles to authenticate his ministry before Pharaoh (Exodus 4:1-8); Elijah was given miracles to authenticate his ministry before Ahab (1 Kings 17:1; 18:24); Jesus and the apostles were given miracles to authenticate their ministry before Israel (Acts 2:22, 4:10, 16).

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4. Gifts temporary versus permanent continued

The gift of apostleship was limited to men who witnessed the resurrection of Christ (Acts 1:21-22, 2:32, 3:15, 4:33, 5:32, 10:39-41, 13:31-32; 1 Corinthians 9:1, 15:8). Obviously, if being an eyewitness were a requirement then the gift was temporary until eyewitnesses died out. Indeed, Paul knew he was the last apostle (1 Corinthians 15:8; 3:10).

In addition, apostleship was a package of gifts involving preaching and powers (Matthew 10, 2 Corinthians 12:12). After the ascension of Christ, the performance of miracles, wonders, and signs was exclusive to the apostles (Acts 2:43, 4:33, 5:12, 8:17, 13:4-12, 14:1-20, 16:16-18, 19:6, 11-20, 20:7-12, 28:1-6, 7-10), or their delegates (Acts 6:8, 8:4-8). If so, then miracles, wonders and signs were temporary until the apostles died out. History, I think confirms this; where, for example, is the evidence that the apostolic gift of raising the dead (Matthew 10:8), has continued for the last 2000 years?

A more potent argument for the cessation of the miraculous and sign gifts revolves around their being targeted to a specific ethnic group. It is stated clearly that Jesus did miracles, wonders, and signs as proof to the Jews that he was accredited by God (Acts 2:22). After all, Israel were God's people and it was to them that Christ came. The need for such displays of power to stimulate faith seemed to be part of the Jewish national psyche since Moses, as Paul and the gospel writers assert (1 Corinthians 1:22, Matthew 12:38-42, 16:1-4, Mark 8:11-13, John 2:18). Specifically, the gift of tongues was a sign to unbelieving Jews (1 Corinthians 14:21-22), who because of their rejection of God were taken captive by foreigners whose language they did not understand (Deuteronomy 28:49, Isaiah 28:11-13).

Consistent with this, the performance of miracles, wonders, and signs by the apostles was directed mainly to a Jewish audience. In contrast, God's historical witness to Gentile nations was not by the supernatural but the natural-the rain, the seasons, food and joy (Acts 14:16-17). The point of this observation is that while the gospel was 'to the Jew first' (Romans 1:16), with increasing Jewish rejection and Gentile inclusion (Acts 13:46, 18:6, 28:28), the miraculous gifts were withdrawn.

Such withdrawal explains why the letters to churches (apart from Corinthians and Hebrews 2:3-4) omit reference to the miraculous gifts. In addition, it accounts for the apostle Paul being unable to heal himself (2 Corinthians 12:7-9), or his sick colleagues - Epaphroditus, Timothy, and Trophimus (Philippians 2:26-27; 1 Timothy 5:23; 2 Timothy 4:20). The reasons for Paul's "failures to heal" are 1) the gift was never intended to make every Christian well, but to authenticate apostleship; and 2) the authority of the apostles had been sufficiently proved, making further miracles unnecessary.

Moreover, Hebrews 2:3-4 suggests that the miraculous and revelatory gifts had ceased:

The great salvation was first communicated through the Lord and was confirmed to us by those who heard him, while God confirmed their witness with signs and wonders and various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

That is, the eyewitnesses were gifted with signs and wonders; once they were dead, so were these gifts. See Galatians 3:5, possibly the earliest writing of Paul, when miracles were still taking place: "Does God then give you the Spirit and work miracles among you do by your doing the works of the law, or by believing what you heard?"

Finally, history indicates that tongues did cease. Tongues are not mentioned at all by the Post-Apostolic Fathers. Justin Martyr, Origen, Chrysostom, and Augustine considered tongues something that happened only in the earliest days of the Church. Also, current observation confirms that the miracle of tongues has ceased. If the gift were still available today, there would be no need for missionaries to attend language school.

5. Are the gifts of the Spirit the same as the fruit of the Spirit?

No. Gifts are divine bestowals; fruit is human behaviour (Galatians 5:22; John 15:1-11).

6. How do I discover what spiritual gift I have?

Consider the following texts:

As each one received a gift (1 Peter 4:10),

Do not neglect the spiritual gift in you, which was given to you accompanied by prophecy when the elders laid hands on you (1 Timothy 4:14),

Because of this I remind you to rekindle God's gift that is in you through the laying on of my hands (2 Timothy 1:6),

For by the grace given to me I say to every one of you not to think more highly of yourself than you ought to think, but to think with sober discernment, as God has distributed to each of you a measure of faith (Romans 12:3).

Firstly, every Christian receives a gift from God, so He wants you to know what it is. Secondly, a comparison of the texts in Timothy and Romans 12 indicates that in determining what gift you have, the evaluation of others is more reliable than your own opinion, because others are more objective. In the case of Timothy, his gift was the subject of a prophecy and identified by the elders and Paul.

7. Is it true of spiritual gifts that it is 'use it' or 'lose it'?

It seems so, because Timothy was instructed to rekindle God's gift, which had fallen into disuse because he had failed to follow Paul's previous challenge not to neglect his spiritual gift.

8. As gifts are given by God why were the Corinthians were told to desire the greater gifts?

Gifts are given according to the will of God (Hebrews 2:4), and the Corinthians were told to eagerly desire the greater gifts (1 Corinthians 12:31). This seems to be a contradiction, which needs an explanation.

1 Corinthians 14:1 touches the nub of the issue at Corinth: '*...desire eagerly spiritual matters in order that you may prophesy*'. They had a penchant for matters of the spirit (14:12), particularly tongues, and Paul reminded them that in God's order of ranking tongues was to put them on the bottom of the list (12:28). So the instruction to 'eagerly desire the greater gifts' is not so much an indication that they could get the gifts they wanted and didn't have, because as a church they had them all (1:7), but rather a challenge to their wrong priorities; they needed to get God's perspective on spiritual gifts.

9. What is the fullness of the Spirit and why is it important?

See the following table for the list.

Reference	Occasion
Luke 1:15	John the Baptist-fitness for ministry
Luke 1:41	John the Baptist's mother-stimulus for worship
Luke 1:67	John the Baptist's father-enabling prophecy
Luke 4:1	Jesus-leading in ministry
Acts 2:4	Baptism in the Spirit
Acts 4:8, 31, 7:55, 13:9	Stressful, emergency ministry situations
Acts 6:3-5, 9:17, 11:24	The Seven, plus Saul, plus Barnabas-fitness for ministry
Acts 13:52	Joy for a persecuted Christian community
Ephesians 5:18	The essential dynamic of Christian life-corporately and individually

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9. Fullness of the Spirit continued

Notice these texts:

*...be **filled** into (eis) all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:19).*

‘Filled’ is passive, it is done not by the Christian or by the Ephesian believers but by an unnamed agent. *Pleroo* in Ephesians is always used in connection with a member of the Trinity. The explicit content of (*pleroo*) is God’s fullness (Net Bible Notes). A motive preposition such as (*eis*) describes a motion into, and Christ does the filling, as He is the agent filling ‘all things’ in 4:10.

*(Christ)...ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might **fill** all things (Ephesians 4:10).*

*...be **filled** (en) in the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).*

The particle (*en*) is used whenever we're in a place or building, amidst a multitude, in someone's presence, enveloped by something, in a certain time period, in a certain situation, or in a certain way. Our preposition generally expresses a situation either inside something or endowed with something, but always at rest. Again, ‘filled’ is passive, it is done not by the Christian or by the Ephesian believers but is done within the environment of the Spirit by Christ Himself, as He is the agent filling ‘all things’ in 4:10.

Filled here is (*pleroo*), meaning to make full or complete: to fill a hollow thing with something, to keep a promise, to substantiate a prophecy or to accomplish a previously proclaimed objective. That is, to inflate something that came into the world flat and empty; wholly there but not yet endowed with volume and structure — like any organism that grows from a genetically complete seed. Accordingly, being "filled" with the spirit may not be like filling a vessel with liquid, but rather building a building according to a blueprint. The word is passive indicating someone else does the filling ([Abarim Publications](#)).

10. How and why can I be filled with the Spirit?

The relevant text is Ephesians 5:18-21:

*And do not get drunk with wine, which is debauchery, but be **filled** by the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music in your hearts to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for each other in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.*

Notice this about Paul’s instruction:

1. It is not addressed to individuals but the church in its sharing of congregational life. That is, we should do it in fellowship with our Christian community.
2. ‘Filled’ is present, passive, and imperative. So, this is not a one-off act but constant action.
3. As ‘filled’ is passive, it is done not by the Christian or by the Ephesian believers but is done within the environment of the Spirit by Christ Himself, as He is the agent filling ‘all things’ as we noted in 4:10.
4. Filled’ is also an imperative - it’s a command not an option as we are to make ourselves available to the Spirit's transforming work, as he moulds us into Christ's likeness. This fulness is in contrast to 'being full of booze' so characteristic of the Dionysian festivals which celebrated the consumption of alcohol. The same principle applies to any substance abuse that dominates and controls our society-alcohol, drugs, food, nicotine, caffeine. In effect God commands us to get our highs on the Spirit.

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10. Filled with the Spirit continued

A helpful comparison can be made with the parallel text in Colossians 3:16 where "Be filled by the Spirit" is replaced with "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly". That is, the two phrases mean the same thing. To be filled by the Spirit, therefore, is to be filled with Christ, and the way to achieve that is to read, feed, and heed His Word.

Following the command to be filled, Paul gives five action words here that summarise the importance of the Spirit's infilling: (1) speaking; (2) singing; (3) making music; (4) giving thanks; (5) submitting. That is, being filled we will live lives of joyful singing, thanksgiving, and submission, and the rest of the Ephesians letter teaches that relationships within marriage, the family and the workplace will be different.

11. What are we to understand by the sword of the Spirit?

The relevant text is Ephesians 6:10-18:

*6:10 Finally, be strengthened in the Lord and in the strength of his power. 6:11 Clothe yourselves with the full armor of God so that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens. 6:13 For this reason, take up the full armor of God so that you may be able to stand your ground on the evil day, and having done everything, to stand. 6:14 Stand firm therefore, by fastening the belt of truth around your waist, by putting on the breastplate of righteousness, 6:15 by fitting your feet with the preparation that comes from the good news of peace, 6:16 and in all of this, by taking up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation and **the sword of the Spirit, who is the spoken word of God.** 6:18 With every prayer and petition, pray at all times in the Spirit, and to this end be alert, with all perseverance and requests for all the saints.*

Here the Christian's enemy is identified as 'the schemes of the devil', 'the world-rulers of this darkness' who are evil spirits that rule over this darkened world. They are 'spiritual forces of evil in the heavens', which describes the non-human nature of these foes and the locality from which they originate.

Christians are to be a resistance movement against this spiritual onslaught, and Paul paints a metaphor of battle preparedness based on the attire of a Roman soldier. There is the belt that is truth, the breastplate, the shield which is the Roman soldier's large rectangular wooden shield about 1.2 m high covered with leather on the outside. Before a battle in which flaming arrows might be shot at them, the soldiers wet the leather covering with water to extinguish the arrows.

Then there is the sword, the Roman gladius, a short sword about 60 cm long, used for close hand-to-hand combat. This is the Christian's only offensive weapon. The rest of the armor is defensive and cannot be used for attack. In v17, "who" is neuter so as to agree with "Spirit" not "sword". It is the Spirit Who is the Word, in this case the spoken word. That is, the sword is the "Spirit-Word", the uttered word given life by the Spirit.

Both "praying" and "being alert" are connected with all of the preceding instructions and are the means through which the prior instructions are accomplished.

Next, we'll think about the Spirit and Pentecost.

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The Holy Spirit - Pentecost

5



... and began to converse to other tongues
... and began to converse to other tongues

Introduction

Just as a strong wind will blow through an open window and stir things up in a house, the Holy Spirit will blow new life into your church (or your life) if you give Him access.

Calvary without Pentecost would not be an Atonement to us. But Pentecost could not be without Calvary. Calvary is the possibility of Pentecost, and Pentecost the realisation in human spirits of Calvary.

(R.C. Moberly).

*When the day of **Pentecost** had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent **wind**, and it **filled** the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a **tongue** rested on each of them. All of them were **filled** with the Holy Spirit, and they began to speak in other **tongues** as the Spirit enabled them (Acts 2:1-4).*

*Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this **sound** (phone) the crowd **gathered** and was **bewildered**, because each one heard them speaking in their own **native dialect (dialektos)**. Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own **native dialect (dialektos)**? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in **our own languages** (glossa) we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." All were **amazed** and **perplexed**, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine" (Acts 2:5-13).*

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1 What happened at Pentecost?

Pentecost (50th), is the Greek name of the feast that is called in the Hebrew Bible: the Feast of Weeks (Exodus 34:22, Deuteronomy 16:10), of Ingathering (Exodus 23:16) or of First Fruits (Numbers 28:26). This festival was to be celebrated seven weeks (or on the fiftieth day) after Pesah or Passover, and was the most significant and festive of the agricultural year. This feast was fulfilled in *Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. So then, let us celebrate the festival* (1 Corinthians 5:7-8).

The 'they' of 2:1, were about 120 believers mentioned in 1:15. The word **sound** (*echos*), from which we get our English word echo, mostly referred to the sound of spoken words, or trumpets. The sound was carried by a violent (*biaios*) wind ([Abarim Publications](#)), compared with the soft whisper when Elijah had met the Lord (1 Kings 19:12).

The sound filled (*pleroo*) the house just as the Spirit filled (*pleroo*) the believers. Also, the tongues (*glossa*) as if fire parallel the tongues (*glossa*) of the believers. But why sound and fire at all? Couldn't the Spirit have filled the believers without these? Yes, certainly, so again, why?

The sound and fire were for the human senses of hearing and seeing. They made the invisible filling, visible and audible to the crowds at Jerusalem (2:5ff), as the historian Josephus wrote that for this feast enormous amounts of Jews trekked to Jerusalem. During times of upheaval, this massive gathering of (mostly armed) Jews caused understandable levels of concern with the Romans.

Sound in the sense of physically vibrating air is mostly expressed by the noun *phone*. However, the word that Luke chose here is *echos*, which means to relay by sound, or any kind of verbal teaching or information spread by word of mouth.

A good example of *echos* is found in the debate between the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers and Paul about his preaching of Jesus and the resurrection in Athens. They asked him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? It **sounds** (*echos*) rather strange to us, so we would like to know what it means" (Acts 17:18-20).

So we can see here that *echos* is not about physically vibrating air but about Paul's verbal teaching. Accordingly, the **sound** (*echos*) that **filled the house** was a supernatural visitation of the Holy Spirit, and a representation that just as He **filled the house** He would fill the disciples to enable them to be *echos*, vehicles of the message of Jesus and the resurrection. Moreover, it is the sound of wind, for it was used in the Hebrew Bible as a symbol of God moving, as in *The Lord glided on the wings of the wind* (Psalm 18:10, 104:3). Wind (*pnoe*), is also the parent of *pneuma*, commonly translated with "spirit", "wind", or "air in motion", "breath", or "violent winds".

Tongues of fire

Fire like wind was symbolic of the divine Presence, as when the Lord appeared to Moses in a flame of fire out of a bush (Exodus 3:2), or the likeness of burning coals of fire in the middle of the living creatures (Ezekiel 1:13), or the day of the Lord's coming, when He will be like a refiner's fire (Malachi 3:2-3). Further, one mighty flame as of fire, divided into tongues of smaller flames, though originally one, the tongues rested on each of the disciples. This was not a demonstration of crowd-pleasing pyrotechnics but rather of a diversification of intellectual leaning: *"for the Holy Spirit will teach you what to say"* (Luke 12:12, 21:15).

Normally, Jerusalem was a city of 100-200,000 people. Three times a year on the pilgrim festivals of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles, Jerusalem's population swelled to 1 million, although the exact number depends on the source of population estimates ([Jewish Virtual Library](#)).

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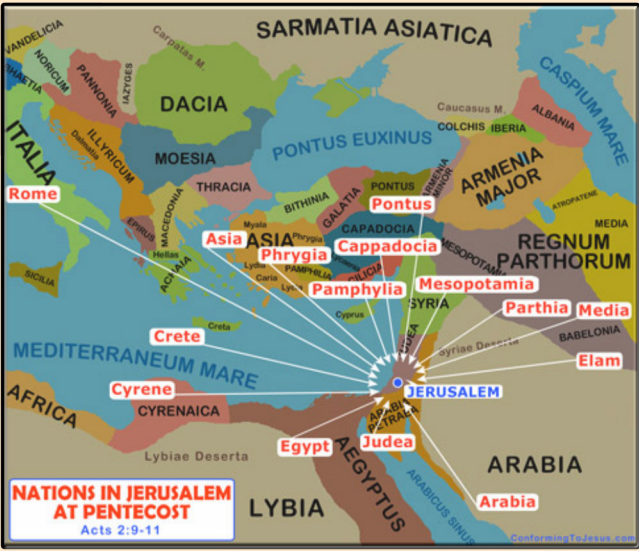
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Tongues as dialects

The places from which the visitors came are shown on the map here. The important question to be answered is: *In what dialects did these visitors converse with one another?*

The languages spoken in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus were Greek, Aramaic, Hebrew or Latin (Luke 23:38, John 19:20). Aramaic is a Semitic language originating in the middle Euphrates. In 800-600 BC it spread from there to Syria and Mesopotamia. But the Lord, along with His disciples probably were multilingual and spoke Hebrew, Greek, and Latin as well.



On the other hand, Judaism of the Diaspora had come to differ in character from that of the people of the native land, and the most striking difference was that they had forgotten the language of Judaism (Hebrew). Diaspora Judean groups mostly, if not all, spoke either Aramaic or Greek as their native language. If they were from the west of Jerusalem they would speak Greek or Roman, and if from the east, we would expect them to speak Aramaic.

However, Hebrew remained the sacred language of scholars for religious usage. This change of language, both at home and in the Diaspora, was not without far-reaching effects upon public worship. The ancient custom of reading the Hebrew scriptures in the temple or synagogue necessitated a translation into the Aramaic which the people understood ([Hans Lietzmann](#)).

So, the table below might be the clearest way to summarise the linguistic picture.

Jewish identities	Languages spoken
Temple and religious leaders	Hebrew
Domestic Jews	Mainly Greek, and Aramaic; some Latin
Diaspora Jews from eastern empire	Mainly Aramaic
Diaspora Jews from western empire	Mainly Greek and Latin

Other tongues

‘Other’ here is *heteros*, which means other or another, but in the sense of "one of another kind" or "one of another personality". One of the same kind would be described by the adjective *allos*, and a same one, or one with whom one is joint, is described by *homos*. English makes no or little distinction between *heteros* and *allos* and translates both with "other", and although there is some overlap, in Greek these differences can be profound.

For example, rather mysteriously, after His resurrection Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene in one form and to the travellers to Emmaus in another sort of form (Mark 16:12). So, ‘other tongues’ were different languages or dialects in which the disciples conversed.

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Tongues continued

The text suggests that the speakers of the “other tongues” were speaking the native languages of the crowd, which means that the “other tongues” must have included Aramaic and Greek the native languages of Judea. Hebrew, the “Holy Tongue”, the religious language, the literary language of Jews, was retained by the Judean people for worship.

Hebrew as the “Holy Tongue,” was the language that the Diaspora Judeans didn’t understand, but both domestic and Diaspora Judeans expected to hear it in the Temple activities during the feast of Pentecost. The crowd (the holy people of God 2:5) had gathered in the holy land, in Jerusalem (the holy city), at the Temple (the holiest place on earth), hearing trained priests (the holy men) to be conducting the worship in Hebrew on a holy day ([Zerhusen](#)).

Word got around, however, that some Galileans, who spoke Aramaic were conversing privately with the Diaspora about God’s deeds of power. That is, the disciples of Jesus began to converse in “other tongues”, meaning “other than Hebrew” (the “Holy Tongue”), with a boldness and authority given by the Holy Spirit.

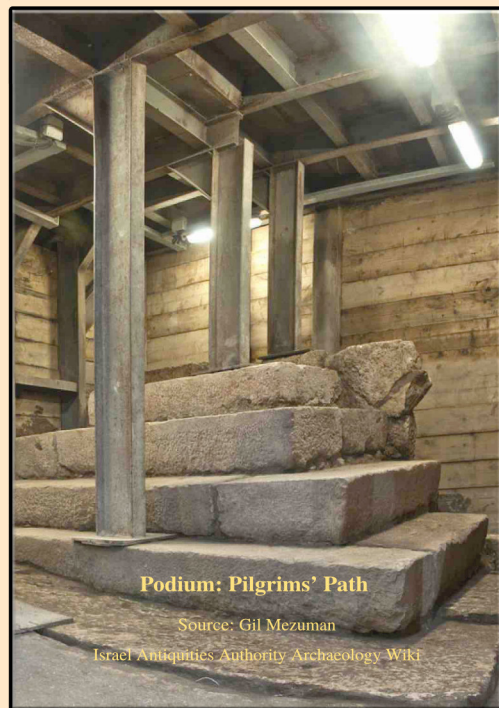
So, Acts 2:4 could be translated: “They began to speak in languages other than Hebrew, as the Spirit kept giving bold, authoritative, inspired speech to them.” The notion that they spoke languages foreign to them but known to the Diaspora is not supported by the text and is alien to historical facts.

The grapevine spread this news and it drew a crowd to the Pilgrim’s Path leading from the Pool of Siloam to the temple to see what was going on (see top graphic). What they heard was new to them, while some put it down to too much alcohol. At this point, Peter, the first of the apostles took to the podium, likely the one pictured here and addressed the crowd publicly in defence.

Peter was unknown to the crowd, and brushed off as a mere ‘Galilean’ with no credibility, unlike the Hebrew-speaking rabbis who spoke at the temple. He gained gravitas, however, by quoting the Hebrew prophet Joel, and King David.

Standing alongside him with the other apostles, he told his audience:

- They were in the last days in which God promised to pour out His Spirit upon His people without distinction, and they shall prophesy (that means to pass on information from God or about Him Who they would represent).
- The last days would end with the coming of the Lord’s great and blazing day, and everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.
- Jesus of Nazareth was a man attested to you Israelites by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through Him as you know. He was handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, and you crucified Him, but God raised Him from the dead.
- Further, David prophesied of the resurrection of the Messiah, and all of us are witnesses to it.
- Therefore exalted at the right hand of God, He has poured out the Holy Spirit, that you both see and hear about today.
- Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.



Podium: Pilgrims' Path

Source: Gil Mezman

Israel Antiquities Authority Archaeology Wiki

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Tongues continued

At hearing this the audience became debilitatingly, depressingly disturbed and asked of Peter and the other apostles, "what should we do?" Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit". So those who welcomed his message were baptised, and that day about 3000 persons were added. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and the prayers.

Conversed to other tongues

The words 'other tongues' in the expression *they began to speak with other tongues* (Acts 2:4) is in the dative case, which is the case of personal interest, pointing out the person to or for whom something is done. When it refers to a person, it indicates the one who is affected by the action, and usually translated "to," so *they began to speak to other tongues*.

The noun tongue (*glossa*) originates in the Proto-Indo-European root "glogh", meaning thorn, pointy end or projected thing. This connection probably lies in the wounding effect a volley of words may have. Words can penetrate a person, make the person bleed in a mental way and even cause a person to succumb. The Hebrew word for mouth is (*peh*), which was also used to describe the edge of a sword (Proverbs 5:4). Unsurprisingly, then, the White Horseman of John's vision has, instead of a tongue, a sword sticking out of his mouth, with which He rules the nations (Revelation 19:15). Additionally, the Hebrew word for Law is Torah, which comes from the verb (*yara*), which describes the shooting of many arrows, and Paul promised that the "shield of conviction" would extinguish the flaming darts of the slanderer (Ephesians 6:16).

A tongue is like a sword because nominal reasoning, the art of giving words or names to things, allows a mind to distinguish between items that would otherwise blend together. This is why it is important that Adam's most defining deed was in having distinguished animals, he named them (Genesis 2:19-20), and to know that the Hebrew word for 'to distinguish' is *bin*, which is also the verb for to understand, because all understanding starts with being able to tell differences. In the context of Acts 2, then, 'tongues means distinguishable languages or dialects spoken in a skilful, persuasive way.

So, the biblical activity of glossolalia, or "speaking in tongues," has nothing to do with uncontrolled blabbering or pretending to communicate with angels, or talking in languages that you have never learned, or talking to God in a language that suggests that you might be holier than others. No, it's conversing in a language known to both speaker and hearer with content and manner empowered by the Spirit.

2 Are tongues in 1 Corinthians 12-14 the same as in Acts 2?

Most of the ideas in this section are taken from [Zerhusen](#).

As a major seaport city, Corinth would have a constant influx and varied mix of visitors, travelers, temporary residents, freedmen, and slaves. Visitors, travelers, and temporary residents would come from all over the Roman Empire bringing their non-Greek native languages with them. Freedmen and slaves would also come from areas where Greek was not the native language and another language would be their native or first language.

All kinds of languages met at commercial Corinth with its harbours on two seas, and difference of language was a frequent barrier to common action. Moreover, it was well known how exasperating it could be for two intelligent persons to be unintelligible to one another. Visitors from other linguistic backgrounds could not comprehend the Corinthian speech any more than the Corinthians understood theirs. Also, a church tends to reflect its environment. As the city of Corinth was a highly multilingual environment, we would expect to see this reflected in the church.



1 Corinthians 12-14 and Acts 2 continued

A common position among scholars is to view the problem tongues of Corinth as “ecstatic utterances” (*ekstatikos*). However, *ekstatikos* does not appear in 1 Corinthians 14, nor is there any reference to the emotional or mental state of the tongue-speaker. Moreover, word studies have shown that in none of the texts about tongues (*glossa*) does *glossa* ever denote non-cognitive utterance. The ecstatic utterances of the pagan religions prove less suitable a set of parallels for the Corinthian experience than was once thought. Paul is only concerned with whether or not the problem tongue is interpreted.

Further, the term interpretation (*diemeneuo*), used frequently in connexion with glossolalia in 1 Corinthians, normally refers to translating a language when used in such a context.

Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians 14: Similarities and Differences

Similarities

In both situations the speakers of the problem languages spoke languages with which they were most familiar (Acts 2: Aramaic and Greek, languages known and understood by the disciples; 1 Corinthians 14: the native languages/first languages/languages of the heart, known and understood by the language-speaker. In both situations the speaking of languages most familiar to the speakers caused problems (Acts 2: by speaking in Aramaic and Greek the disciples violated the Jewish diglossia; 1 Corinthians 14: by speaking in their native languages (without translation) the language-speakers edified themselves but not the group).

Differences

The cultural-geographical contexts for Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians 14 were very different. The language-speakers in Acts 2 (the disciples of Jesus) found themselves in a thoroughly Judean cultural context in Jerusalem. The setting for the 1 Corinthians 14 language-speakers was Greek culture at the major seaport city of Corinth. Since everyone in Acts 2 shared the same native languages (i.e., Aramaic, Greek, possibly Latin), translation (i.e., interpretation) was not necessary. In contrast, at Corinth where multiple languages converged, Greek was the lingua franca and people do not share the same native languages. In the city of Corinth (including the church) translation was necessary and became a major issue in Paul’s discussion (1 Corinthians 14).

The Judean crowd of Acts 2 learned and spoke Aramaic and Greek as their native languages, rather than the “local languages” (e.g., Lycaonian, Demotic Egyptian, etc.), that persisted in more remote areas of the Roman Empire. The situation in Corinth, with regard to the more remote “local languages,” was exactly the opposite of the Acts 2 setting. At Corinth, while everyone knew Greek, people came from all over the Roman Empire bringing their non-Greek native languages with them. These languages ranged from widely spoken languages such as Aramaic to more remote “local” languages like Lycaonian or Demotic Egyptian. An important difference is also the intended direction of the languages. In Acts 2 Luke describes the language-speaking as prophesying, which is directed not towards God but to people; in 1 Corinthians 14 Paul says the language-speaking was worship, which is directed not to man but to God. We can see the similarities and differences of Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians 14 in the following diagram:

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1 Corinthians 12-14 and Acts 2 continued

ITEM	ACTS 2	1 COR 14
1. Language known and understood by language-speaker	Yes	Yes
2. Problem caused by languages?	Violation of diglossia	Untranslated languages
3. Cultural geographical context	Judean crowd in Jerusalem	Greek seaport city
4. Necessity of language translation?	Not necessary	Absolutely necessary
5. Language speakers/hearers shared the same native languages?	Yes	No
6. Spoke "local languages" as native languages?	No	Yes
7. Problem languages?	Languages other than Hebrew	Languages other than Greek (Left untranslated)
8. Languages directed towards whom?	Men (i.e., prophesying function)	God (i.e., worship function)
9. Group norm violated by problem languages	Violation of Judean Diglossia	Violation of group edification

3 Are tongues in Acts 10 and 19 the same?

Here we should also briefly discuss the languages of Acts 10 and 19. In both Acts 10 and Acts 19 we have new converts (Cornelius and his household in Acts 10, and John's disciples in Acts 19), who spontaneously begin to "speak in languages." In neither situation is there a language barrier. All present when the languages are spoken are believers; so the languages do not serve an evangelistic purpose. The languages were also not spoken for the purpose of private prayer.

An important question here is, "With what language would a new convert spontaneously begin to praise God?" The answer (which lines up well with 1 Corinthians 14) is that the language speakers would spontaneously praise God in the languages with which they were most familiar (i.e., native or first languages).

It should be observed that in neither passage is any amazement or ridicule (as in Acts 2) expressed in reference to the language speaking. Only in Acts 10 is amazement mentioned, and the amazement is in reference to Gentiles receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit: "And the faithful of the circumcision were amazed, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Gentiles also" (Acts 10:45). The reception of the Spirit, not the language speaking, was the cause of the amazement. So we can conclude that in Acts 10 and Acts 19 (as in

1 Corinthians 14), people felt moved to praise God from the heart in languages with which they were most familiar.

4 Was Joel's prophecy in Acts 2:17-21 completely fulfilled at Pentecost?

...this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out 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. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.

*And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of **the Lord's great and glorious day**. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved (Acts 2:17-21).*

For Peter, Pentecost occurred in 'the last days' (Acts 2:17). The *terminus a quo* (beginning) of the last days was the first coming of Christ (Hebrews 1:2), and the *terminus ad quem* (ending) is the second coming (Acts 2:20).

'Portents' were attention grabbers or omens. For example, in the Hebrew Bible, Isaiah saw that the day of the Lord was near when He would use the Medes to destroy Babylon, which He described in celestial phenomenon. The stars in the sky and their constellations would no longer give out their light; the sun was to be darkened as soon as it rises, and the moon would not shine, and He would shake the heavens, and shake the earth loose from its foundation, because of the fury of the Lord of Heaven's Armies, in the day He vents his raging anger (Isaiah 13:6-22)

Similarly, in using the king of Babylon to judge Pharaoh king of Egypt, the Lord said: *When I extinguish you, I will cover the sky; I will darken its stars. I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon will not shine. I will darken all the lights in the sky over you, and I will darken your land* (Ezekiel 32:1-11).

Some assert that these celestial phenomenon are just symbolic Jewish idioms, not literal. That is, the sun and stars did not literally go dark when Babylon and Egypt fell over. The prophets used figurative language. However, God sent literal darkness over Egypt in the time of Moses, so we have to be careful in being dogmatic. So, others are more cautious and suggest that these events were not just literal occurrences but also symbolic representations of God's actions and the spiritual state of the people concerned.

It's noticeable that Peter didn't say that the Pentecost was the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy. The outpouring of the Spirit was, but the portents were not. Instead, Peter said *this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel*.

The Lord's great and glorious day was yet future to Peter, when *the great day of the one seated on the throne and the wrath of the Lamb has come* (Revelation 6:16-17), when the rider on a white horse judges and makes war, and from his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; he will tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name inscribed, "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Revelation 19:11-16).

In brief, Peter did not see the coming of the Holy Spirit only as just a joyous day for God's people, but he saw it in the broader framework of the entire last days. In the light of that, the encouragement is for *everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved*.

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5 Is the gift of tongues always the evidence of being filled by the Spirit?

It seems not. The 120 believing disciples (Acts 1:15) received the Spirit and the gift of tongues after waiting, but on the same day 3000 others believed and received the Spirit simultaneously without receiving the gift of tongues (Acts 2:37-41). This is consistent with later apostolic teaching about the body of Christ; just as a body has a variety of organs and parts with different functions, so Paul asked rhetorically, *'not all speak in tongues, do they?'* (1 Corinthians 12:30). The unspoken but obvious answer is 'no'.

However, being filled by the Spirit is open to all Christians because it is demanded of them all (Ephesians 5:18), and the evidence will be seen in every aspect of our lives-worshipful churches, loving husbands and submissive wives, obedient children, sound parenting, mutually respectful employees and employers, and Christian warriors that stand their ground (Ephesians 5:18-6:23).

6 Wasn't Joel's promise universal to all mankind without exception?

No, because the text delimits the promise to all flesh without distinction, not to all without exception. There are no social distinctions between child and parent, young and old, men and women (v17-18), or between Jews and Gentiles (v38-39), but there are spiritual exceptions of repentance (v38) and faith (v41).

7 What was Montanism?

From roughly 150 AD onwards, mister Montanus and two accompanying prophetesses named Prisca and Maximilla claimed succession of Philip of Caesarea and his four prophesying daughters, and operated ecstatically in the grip of the Holy Spirit. Montanism proved attractive enough to grow into a massive movement but by that time the church had begun to be abducted by people who were much more interested in their own power than in any news from the divine, and ruled him a heretic and Prisca and Maximilla uppity goodies and dangerously reminiscent of the dubious priestesses of pagan traditions.

Montanism took a few centuries to die out and humanity had to wait for more than a millennium until the concrete cast of formality had cracked enough to let some free will and religious spontaneity and originality seep through.

Modern Pentecostalism is a Christian movement that emphasises the working of the Holy Spirit. Although this Pentecostalism is a fairly recent invention (it emerged in the United States in the early 20th century), its prime tenet is as old as Christianity itself and was predated by a movement out of Phrygia: then called the New Prophecy and now mostly referred to Montanism, after main man Montanus, a recent convert with little to no Christian theological training and the unyielding conviction that he was a prophet and was receiving messages from the Holy Spirit.

8 What is the Latter Rain Movement?

The Latter Rain Movement is an influence within Pentecostalism which teaches that the Lord is pouring out His Spirit again, as He did at Pentecost, and using believers to prepare the world for His Second Coming. The term "latter rain" was first used early in the history of Pentecostalism, when David Wesley Myland wrote a book called Latter Rain Songs in 1907. Three years later, Myland wrote The Latter Rain Covenant, a defense of Pentecostalism in general.

The name comes from Joel 2:23, *"Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for He hath given you the former rain moderately, and He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month."* Pentecostals interpreted the "rain" in this verse as an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The "latter rain" (the end-times outpouring) would be greater than the "former rain."

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8 Latter Rain Movement continued ?

In 1948, a “revival” broke out in Saskatchewan, Canada, and the teachings of the Latter Rain movement were clarified. Those involved in the revival were convinced that they were on the verge of a new era, one in which the Holy Spirit would demonstrate His power in a greater way than the world had ever seen. Not even the age of the apostles, they said, had witnessed such a movement of the Holy Spirit.

Latter Rain teaching is characterised by a highly typological hermeneutic. That is, the Bible is interpreted in a symbolic, extremely stylised manner. An emphasis is placed on extra-biblical revelation, such as personal prophecies, experiences, and directives straight from God. Many in the Latter Rain Movement also teach the doctrine of “the manifest sons of God.” This is a heretical doctrine which says that the Church will give rise to a special group of “overcomers” who will receive spiritual bodies, becoming immortal.

However, on April 20, 1949, the Assemblies of God officially denounced Latter Rain teaching as heresy, nearly splitting the denomination in the process. Other established Pentecostal groups have passed similar resolutions. Today, the term “latter rain” is rarely used, but the theology of Latter Rain continues to exert an influence. Most branches of the Charismatic Movement adhere to Latter Rain teaching. Modern movements such as the Brownsville/Pensacola Revival, the Toronto Blessing, and the “holy laughter” phenomenon are a direct result Latter Rain theology.

Conclusion

In this Part 5, ‘The Holy Spirit - Pentecost’, we have examined what happened at Pentecost, outpouring of the Spirit, the matter of tongues there, and in Acts 10, and 19, and in 1 Corinthians 12-14. It’s unlikely that at Pentecost the ‘other tongues’ were languages the disciples never knew. As in the other NT references to tongues, they were ordinary languages needing to be interpreted. What made Pentecost special was the Spirit’s enablement to dialogue with any of the languages present and present the wonderful works of God in a powerful and effective way.

We also looked at being ‘filled with the Spirit’, and modern Pentecostalism.

Conclusion to the complete paper

We have concluded that the Holy Spirit is an individual Person. He has will, intelligence hearing, knowledge, sympathy, love, sight, desire and ability to think, speak, grieve and rejoice.

He has a purpose for God’s people, namely to encourage them in place of Christ (John 14:15-21). For the world His purpose is to expose its sin in rejecting Christ. His purpose for God, is to exalt the Son and the Father.

His presence is with and in God’s people. And, while the Holy Spirit is not just a force, He has power, He is a "can do" being, within a range of abilities and skill, agility, that He makes available to God’s people to facilitate their Christian lives.

Finally, at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was outpoured enabling the disciples to dialogue with any of the languages present and present the wonderful works of God in a powerful and effective way.

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