

Bible Study: Acts

(Part 12-Chapters 27-28)

by Gary T. Panell

Chapter 27

Hebrews 13:8 says, "Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday, today, and forever." I say that to preface this true story, coming not out of the Old or New Testament, but out of our times. "No rain had fallen for a long, long, time. As a result, the crops were drying up and dying. If rain didn't come soon, there would be no food for the people to eat.

"Days passed and still no rain. Finally, Missionary Orla Spencer Boyer needed to get food for his family. They were missionaries in the northeastern part of Brazil. The food in their home was almost gone. Missionary Boyer knew something had to be done. So he set out on his mule in search of food. He traveled for several days until he found a sack of rice and a sack of beans that he could buy. He loaded up the food on his mule and headed back home.

"As he arrived in the town, he could see the looks on the people's faces as they saw him carrying food on his mule. He had food. They had none. Where could they get food? They had no money and no crops because there was no rain. They would starve. Missionary Boyer knew he didn't have enough food to feed everyone in town. All he could do was pray.

"Missionary Boyer and his family prayed to God for a miracle. Somehow, some way, God needed to provide food for the starving people of this town. As they were praying, Missionary Boyer heard God tell him to put the sack of beans and the sack of rice in the window of his home. He then was to tell the people in the town to come and get what they needed to feed their families. This would mean that his family would have less to eat, but he knew God had spoken and he wanted to obey God.

"The two bags of food weren't enough to feed the whole town, but the missionary trusted God for a miracle. What would God do? As the people lined up at the missionary's house, food was given out to each person. At the end of the day, the sacks were still full! Missionary Boyer could hardly believe his eyes. For hours he had given out rice and beans from the sacks, yet the sacks were still full.

"The next day, people started lining up again for more food. All day long, food was given out to the people. Yet at the end of the day, the sacks were still full! This continued day after day and the sack of rice and the sack of beans never emptied.

"This continued for over a month until the rains came and the crops started to grow again. God miraculously provided for His people. Their lives were spared because God provided food for them to eat. God showed the people of that town that He was real and that He loved them. Many people started to follow Jesus because of the great miracle that happened." (This information was provided by Mark Lemos, missionary to Brazil.)

(1-2) "We shall now trace Paul's journey to Rome (Chapters 27, 28).

["This is the beginning of Paul's fourth trip, which takes him to Rome (see map of Paul's fourth journey). Luke shows a remarkably detailed understanding of ancient seamanship. **Augustan Regiment** was one of five Roman regiments stationed near the seaport city of Caesarea. **Adramyttium** was a seaport of the Roman province of Asia (modern Turkey). The ship Paul boarded was based there. **We put to sea** indicates that Luke was accompanying Paul on his final journey." (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*)

["**we launched**. Luke's description of the sea voyage, storm and shipwreck in this chapter is very realistic, obviously written by an eyewitness. All of its geographical and other references have been determined by authorities to be accurate in description, location and time setting. It has been called perhaps the best record of nautical practice from ancient times.

Aristarchus. (Acts 19:29), as well as Luke, traveled with Paul on this long voyage from Caesarea to Rome. Possibly they were acting as Paul's servants, as this would help assure more considerate treatment of Paul. As a Roman citizen, as well as a highly educated religious leader, it was appropriate, in the eyes of the centurion and ship officers, that Paul have attendants, and this may well account in part for the courtesies he was shown." (*The Defender's Study Bible*)

["Probably Luke has spent the two years of Paul's Caesarean imprisonment nearby, and now he joins those ready to sail. *Centurion named Julius*. Otherwise unknown. Perhaps he was given the specific duties of an imperial courier, which included delivering prisoners for trial. *Imperial Regiment*. The Roman legions were designated by number, and each of the regiments also had designations. The identification "Augustan," or "Imperial" (belonging to the empire), was common." (*NIV Study Bible*)

["Reception of the Gospel in Rome. 27:1-28:31. Luke now relates Paul's journey from Palestine to Italy and his reception in Rome. The fact that Luke tells in detail about this trip shows how important it was for his purpose. The motif of the journey, in Luke's account, is not the initial evangelization of the Roman capital but the rejection of the Gospel by the Jews in Rome and its acceptance by the Gentiles. This brings to a climax one of the central motifs of the entire book-the rejection of Israel and the rise of the Gentile church.

"The account of Paul's journey begins with the third 'we' section. The last 'we' reference was 21:18, when Paul, accompanied by Luke, arrived in Jerusalem; and we must assume that during the two years of Paul's imprisonment, Luke was in the area of Caesarea. Luke now accompanied Paul, along with **Aristarchus** of Thessalonica (see 19:29; 20:4), who had come with the apostle from Thessalonica to Jerusalem. The Roman authorities delivered Paul to a centurion named Julius. The point of embarkation is not mentioned, but it was probably Caesarea. Here they found a coasting vessel from **Adramyttium**, a port of Mysia lying south of Troas in Asia Minor. The course of this ship called for it to sail to the ports along the coast of Asia in route to its home port." (*Wycliffe Bible Commentary*)

(3) "Sidon. Here Paul was allowed to visit his friends." About 70 miles north of Caesarea. ["The first port of call was Sidon of Phoenicia. The centurion **Julius treated** Paul with special kindness, and gave him liberty to go ashore while the ship was unloading and also to visit his friends, who constituted the Christian community in that city, and receive their ministrations." (*Wycliffe*)

(4) ["*the lee of Cyprus*. They sought the protecting shelter of the island by sailing north on the eastern side of the island, then west along the northern side. *winds were against us*. Prevailing winds in summer were westerly." (*NIV Study Bible*)]

(5-6) "Myra. A city on the south coast of Asia Minor, where Paul changed ships.

["*Cilicia and Pamphylia*. Adjoining provinces on the southern shore of Asia Minor. From Sidon to Myra along this coast would normally be a voyage of 10 to 15 days. *Myra in Lycia*. The growing importance of the city of Myra was associated with the development of navigation. Instead of hugging the coast from point to point, more ships were daring to run directly from Alexandria in Egypt to harbors like Myra on the southern coast of Asia Minor. It was considerably out of the way on the trip to Rome from Egypt, but the prevailing westerly wind would not allow a direct voyage toward the west. Myra became an important grain-storage city as well.

"*Alexandrian ship*. A ship from Egypt (with grain cargo, v. 38) bound for Rome. Paul and the others could have remained on the first ship and continued up the coast to Macedonia, then taken the land route over the Egnatian Way across Greece and on to Rome, entering Italy at the port of Brundisium. But Julius chose to change ships here, accepting the opportunity of a voyage direct to Rome. Some suggest that Aristarchus from Macedonia stayed with the first ship and went to his home area to tell of Paul's coming imprisonment in Rome. If so, he later joined Paul in Rome.

(7) "Cnidus. A port on the coast of Asia Minor. The vessel was unable to enter because of contrary winds. ["*Cnidus*. From Myra to Cnidus at the southwest point of Asia Minor was about 170 miles. The trip probably took another 10 to 15 days. *Crete*. An island 160 miles long. Rather than cross the open sea to Greece, the ship was forced to bear south, seeking to sail west with the protection of the island of Crete on the north ('to the lee of Crete'). *Salmon*. A promontory on the northeast point of Crete. *Fair Havens*. *Lasea*. The former was a port about midway on the southern coast of Crete, and the latter was a city about five miles away." (*NIV Study Bible*)]

Crete. An island south of Greece.

(8) "Fair Havens. Here the ship remained for some time. Paul's advice was that they should remain in this harbor during the winter, and so escape a danger which he foresaw.

(9) ["The Fast is a reference to the Day of Atonement in late September or early October. It was already past, which was a way of saying winter's dangerous sailing weather was about to begin. The dangerous period for sailing began in mid-September and lasted until early November. After that, all navigation on the open sea halted until winter was over. (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*)]

["The 'fast' mentioned here is probably that associated with the Day of Atonement in October (Leviticus 23:26-32). Sailing after that date on the Mediterranean was hazardous at best, and Paul's advice was wise." (*The Defender's Study Bible*)]

(10-11) ["I perceive. In addition to his natural wisdom and traveling experience, Paul had, by God's grace, the gift of prophecy, and they should have heeded him. (*The Defender's Study Bible*)]

(12-14) [*Phoenix*. A major city that served as a wintering place, having a harbor with protection against the storms. '*northeaster*.' A typhoon-like, east-northeast wind (the Euroquilo), which drove the ship away from their destination. (*NIV Study Bible*)]

The master of the ship did not accept this advice, but attempted to reach the port of Phenice. Their attempt was thwarted by a storm which arose. Paul's prediction was fulfilled. For fourteen days and nights they were driven about until they came to the Island of Melita.

[**'tempestuous wind**. The 'tempestuous' (literally 'typhonic') wind was not unusual for that time of year. It was characterized by fierce whirling of the clouds and ocean, its name meaning literally 'north wind-east wind.' They had been trying to sail along the coast of Crete to reach the harbor of Phenice (Phoenix), but the sudden storm drove them out into the open sea." (*The Defender's Study Bible*)]

(15-16) [*Cauda*. About 23 miles from Crete. This provided enough shelter to make preparation against the storm. *to make the lifeboat secure*. A small boat was being towed behind the ship. It was interfering with the progress of the ship and with the steering. It may also have been in danger of being crushed against the ship in the wind and the waves. It had to be taken aboard (v. 17).

[*"As they came opposite a small island called Cauda (other manuscripts read Clauda), they found it necessary to pull on board the small boat that was carried in tow behind the ship. By this time, this little boat was so waterlogged that it was secured only with difficulty."* (*Wycliffe Bible Commentary*)]

(17) *passed ropes under the ship*. Probably crosswise, in order to keep the ship from being broken apart by the storm. *Syrtis*. A long stretch of desolate banks of quicksand along northern Africa off the coast of Tunis and Tripoli-still far away, but in such a storm the ship could be driven a great distance. *sea anchor*. Lowered apparently to keep the ship from running onto the sandbars of Syrtis, but the Greek for this expression should perhaps be rendered 'mainsail.' (*NIV Study Bible*)]

(18-19) [*"It was common for a ship's crew in a storm, in order to make the craft more buoyant, to throw virtually everything but the passengers overboard. They later disposed of their cargo and remaining food (v. 38)."* (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*)]

[*"throw the cargo overboard*. To lighten the ship. They kept some bags of grain, however (see v. 38). *ship's tackle*. Spars, planks and perhaps the yardarm with the mainsail attached. At times these were dragged behind, serving as a brake." (*NIV Study Bible*)]

(20-25) **"before Caesar**. Once before Paul had received this direct assurance from God that he would bear witness at Rome (Acts 23:11). Furthermore, the angelic messenger assured him that all on board would also be saved from death. It is often that God will spare the ungodly because of godly men in their midst (Genesis 18:23-32; 2 Thessalonians 2:6-8). **(25) I believe God**. It is important to 'believe God,' not just to 'believe in God' (James 2:19). To 'believe God,' of course, means to believe God's Word." (*The Defender's Study Bible*)]

(26-27) [*fourteenth night*. After leaving Fair Havens. *Adriatic Sea*. The sea between Italy, Malta, Crete and Greece. In ancient times the Adriatic Sea extended as far south as Sicily and Crete (see NIV text note). Its extent now has been considerably reduced. *sensed*. By the sound of breakers." (*NIV Study Bible*)]

(28) ["Measures and weights in the N.T. are based upon Hebrew, Greek, and Roman usage; e.g. 'reed' (Gk. *Kalamos*) is a unit of measurement employed by the Israelites in O.T. times (Ezek. 40:5, Heb. *Kaneah*); 'furlong' (Gk. *Stadion*) is distinctly a Greek unit; whereas the N.T. 'pound' (Gk. *litra* from the Latin *libra*) is a Roman measure that was considerably lighter than the U.S. pound weight. New Testament standards of measurement can be ascertained with reasonable accuracy. See next page for tables. {Acts 27} The unit of linear measurement in N.T. times was the cubit, approximately 18 inches in length. The table: 4 cubits = 1 fathom, or about 6 feet; 6 long cubits (Ezekiel 40:5) = 1 reed (measuring), or about 10 feet; 400 cubits = 1 furlong, or about 600 feet. (*New Scofield Reference Edition*)]

(29-32) ["Without a port for the ship, the sailors felt their chance for survival was better in the single lifeboat, unencumbered by the many passengers. If the sailors had been allowed to desert the ship in seeking to save themselves, the passengers would have been unable to beach the ship the following day." (*NIV Study Bible*)]

["Now everyone believed Paul (see vv. 10, 11, 21). The Roman **centurion** and his **soldiers** assumed command of this nonmilitary vessel." (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*)]

["This time the centurion insisted that Paul's advice be followed. The sailors were apparently, ostensibly to help orient the casting of the anchors, preparing to use the dinghy to get to shore, leaving all the rest to fend for themselves, whereas the skills of these sailors would be needed to get the ship closer to shore the next day. **39. a certain creek.** The small bay on the island of Malta where the ship finally grounded, behind a small island where 'two seas met' (Acts 27:41), has been called St. Paul's Bay since that time." (*The Defender's Study Bible*)]

(33-43) ["No provisions had been distributed nor regular meals eaten since the storm began. Paul gave two good examples: He ate food for physical nourishment and gave thanks to God. To give thanks before a meal was common practice among God's people (see Luke 9:16; 24:30; 1 Timothy 4:4-5). *276 of us on board.* To note the number on board may have been necessary in preparation for the distribution of food or perhaps for the coming attempt to get ashore. The number is not extraordinary for the time. Josephus refers to a ship that had 600 aboard (*Life*, 15).]

["They threw overboard the remaining bags of wheat (see v. 18), which had probably been kept for food supply. The lighter the ship, the farther it could sail in to shore. In order to lower the stern rudders into place so the ship could be steered toward the sandy shore. Ancient ships had a steering oar on either side of the stern. If a prisoner escaped, the life of his guard was taken in his place. The soldiers did not want to risk having a prisoner escape. Once more the centurion is to be admired for stopping this plan and trusting the prisoners." (*NIV Study Bible*)]{We know God was protecting Paul all the way! G. T. Panell}

["The soldiers guarding the prisoners wished to follow the traditional Roman discipline and kill their charges rather than risk the escape of any of them. But the centurion, who had become favorably disposed toward Paul and did not wish to see his death, forbade their doing this. Rather, he ordered all to escape to the shore either by swimming, by floating on planks, or by being carried on the backs of some of the crew (the Greek is, **on some of those from the ship; those** may be either neuter or masculine). Thus all safely reached the land." (*Wycliffe*)]

(44) [Thus, all 276 men on the ship were saved (Acts 27:37), just as God had promised through Paul (Acts 27:24, 34); but the ship and its cargo were lost, just as Paul had warned (Acts 27:10). God keeps His Word!" (*The Defender's Study Bible*)]

Chapter 28

This is probably as good a place as any to write about Bible translation and the need for it as the Gospel goes out into all the world. "Cameron "Cam" Townsend was born in California in 1896. At the age of twelve he joined the Presbyterian church in which he was raised. Afterward his father, who was deaf, took him out into the barn and questioned him about his faith. Cam wrote out the answers so his father could be satisfied that his son had a personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

"In 1917 Townsend went to Guatemala to sell Spanish Bibles to the Cakchiquel Indians. "But Townsend soon realized that the Cakchiquel Indians had no use for Spanish Bibles and were often offended by his efforts to sell them. One day an Indian asked him, 'If your God is so smart, why hasn't he learned our language?'

"That question burned in his mind until he determined to translate the gospel of Mark into Cakchiquel himself. With that task completed, Townsend proceeded to translate the rest of the New Testament. Upon its completion in 1929, the Cakchiquels exclaimed, 'Now God speaks our language.'" This gave Cam the motivation to translate the Bible into yet another language.

"A prominent Mexican educator visited Townsend and was impressed by what he had done for the Indians. After returning to Mexico, he wrote to Townsend saying, 'Come to Mexico. Our revolutionary leaders will help you.'

"But illness interrupted-Cam contracted tuberculosis, and his wife developed a life-threatening heart condition. They returned to California to recuperate.

"Once Townsend had recovered, L. L. Legters, a missionary friend, urged him to go to Mexico, where at least fifty Indian tribes had no Bible in their language. Then news came from Mexico that a new Socialist president had confiscated all religious property and ordered all foreign missionaries to leave the country.

"Legters traveled to New Jersey to America's Keswick, a Bible conference, where on August 10, 1933, there was a day of prayer for Mexico and Townsend's vision for translating the Bible into tribal languages there. When Addison Raws, Keswick's director, announced that the leaders would be fasting for the day, no one went to the dining hall. Legters and his wife prayed all night in the auditorium.

"Those at Keswick were so sure that God would answer their prayers that they encouraged Townsend and Legters to go immediately to Mexico and ask permission to do their Bible translation work. They later learned that at the same time, a group at Keswick in England was praying for the Indians of Mexico.

"Cam sent his wife to stay with her parents while he and Legters headed for the Mexican border. When they were denied entry, Townsend brought out the letter from the Mexican educator, and they were allowed to enter.

"Through an amazing series of contacts Townsend met Mexico's director of rural education in Mexico City, who gave Townsend permission to study Mexico's rural education system for six weeks and was pleased with the analysis Cam wrote.

"So sure were Townsend and Legters that Mexico would be open to them that they organized a three-month translation school in a barn in Arkansas for training Bible translators. They called it 'Camp Wycliffe,' naming it after John Wycliffe, the first translator of the bible into English. The three students and four faculty members sat in the barn on nail kegs.

"The Townsends went to Mexico in 1935 with their students and began to translate the Bible into tribal languages. Wycliffe Bible Translators grew to become the largest independent Protestant mission agency in the world. At the time of Townsend's death in 1982 half of the world's five thousand languages still did not have any portion of Scripture, but half did-because of Cameron Townsend." (*The One Year Book of Christian History* by E. Michael and Sharon Rusten)

Question: How did the different languages come about?

This is a great Bible question, and it has its answer from the book of Genesis. "Now the whole earth had one language and one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. Then they said to one another, 'Come, let us make bricks and bake *them* thoroughly.' They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. And they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top *is* in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.'

"But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. And the LORD said, 'Indeed the people *are* one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. 'Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.'

"So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth." (Genesis 11:1-9)

"**11:7 confound their language. [KJV]** [Confuse NKJV] In some inexplicable manner, God altered the brain/nerve/speech apparatus of the Babylonian rebels to give each family unit (possibly the seventy families of Genesis 10) its own distinctive vocabulary/phonology complex. With all this, however, they all remained truly human, unchanged in basic thought processes or moral character.

"Further, their distinctive languages were still sufficiently alike that they could, with time and much effort, learn to speak each other's languages. For some time, however, they could no longer communicate between families and, therefore, they could no longer cooperate. They were thus forced to obey God's earlier command to scatter abroad and to fill the earth with different nations and governmental units.

"**11:9 Babel.** The Hebrew word *babel* means 'mixed' or 'confusion.' It was associated by the writer with the 'babble' of sounds which was the last memory held by all who scattered from the city. The word 'babble' is an example of onomatopoeia, a word which imitates an actual sound, and thus is essentially

the same in all languages. The name Babel, therefore, does not really mean 'gate of God,' as later apologists claimed, but 'confusion.'" (*The Defender's Study Bible*, Dr. Henry M. Morris)

It is interesting to think about the almost full circle that we have come to today. The world today is using English as a world language. With computers English can be translated into many languages of the world. We will see a one world government develop, along with, a one world economy, and also a one world religion, Revelation 17-19. This is what happened before the Tower of Babel. After the confusion of the languages by God, the people had trouble understanding each other and so separated by families and language groups.

"As populations grew, some tribes eventually reached into every part of the world. In some instances they traveled by land bridges (Bering Strait, Malaysian Strait) which existed for perhaps a millennium during the Ice Age which followed the Flood. In other cases, they established colonies through sea exploration (the Phoenicians for example).

"All carried essentially the same Babylonian culture and pagan religion with them, unfortunately, so that Babylon is called in the New Testament "the mother of harlots and abomination (that is, "idolatry") of the earth" (Revelation 17:5).

"At the same time, they also carried a faint remembrance of the true God and His promises, especially remembering the divine judgment of the great Flood in their traditions. Each retained knowledge of God and could see evidence of Him in both the creation and their own natures (John 1:19; Romans 1:20; 2:13-15) so they were inexcusable in their almost universal descent into the religious morass of evolutionary pantheism, astrology, Spiritism, polytheism and, finally, atheistic materialism." (*The Defender's Study Bible*)

Even though there may have only been about 70 languages to begin with, these languages became even more varied as people moved to isolated places separated from each other. There are more than 6000 (6,913) languages in the world today. More than 2,400 have some of the Bible, but of those, only 426 languages in the entire world have the Old Testament as well as the New Testament. What will it take for the whole world to have the whole Word? It will take: prayer, people, training and financial resources. This is a job for the whole Church!

"In 1999 Wycliffe came up with Vision 2025-to start a bible translation 'in every language that needs one' by 2025.[They] have a new program, developed by one of [their] entrepreneur linguists in Papua New Guinea, called Adapt It. This program helps translate from one language to another closely related language. Instead of having a translator go through all of the exegesis, background, and training in order to get a good first draft, the software helps to generate a first draft. If the grammar is very similar, a translator can be trained to make substitutions. .

If you want to be a part of getting the Bible into every language of the world, you can find out more about how to do this on Wycliffe's website, WycliffeInternational. www.wycliffe.net

(1-2) ["*Malta*. Known as Melita by the Greeks and Romans. It was included in the province of Sicily and is located 58 miles south of that large island. 'barbarians'; all non-Greek-speaking people were called this by Greeks. Far from being uncivilized tribesmen, they were Phoenician in ancestry and used a

Phoenician dialect but were thoroughly Romanized. *raining and cold*. It was the end of October or the beginning of November." (*NIV Study Bible*)

["After coming ashore, they discovered that the island was called Melita (*AV*; modern *Malta*, *RSV*, {*NIV*, *NKJV*}) lying about a hundred miles directly south of Sicily. Melita (the Canaanite word for 'refuge') was inhabited by people of Phoenician extraction. **2**. From the Roman and Greek point of view, everyone who spoke a foreign language was called a barbarian. **Barbarous people** (*AV*) has no reference to fierce character or primitive culture, but merely indicates that their language (Phoenician) was not Greek or Latin. Since it was raining and cold, these natives showed **no usual kindness** by building a fire so that the chilled and soaked travelers might warm themselves." (*Wycliffe*)

(3-6) ["**bundle of sticks**. It is interesting that, out of the 300 or so people who must have been enjoying the fire, it was Paul who took it upon himself to gather sticks to keep it burning. Among these sticks, however, was a venomous snake (the exact species is in dispute) which had been torpid from the cold, looking much like another stick. The heat energized the snake, so that it suddenly bit Paul." (*The Defender's Study Bible*)

["The natives interpreted this event in terms of their own superstition. They concluded that Paul actually was a murderer; and although he had escaped death in the sea, the goddess of justice, *Dike*, had now wrought a proper fate upon him. When Paul shook the snake off into the fire without injury, the natives decided that they had been completely wrong. Instead of a victim of the gods, he was himself a divine being who could not be hurt by ordinary human misfortunes." (*Wycliffe*)

felt no harm. (*AV*) '**suffered no harm**'(*NKJV*) Christ has promised missionaries in such verses as Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:18 and Luke 10:19 to protect His missionaries as they go out with His message. Does that mean that they will never have any harm come to them, no, but often He does protect them in a supernatural way until it is His time for them to go home to be with Him. When this happens it means His work for them on earth is done, and they go to a far better place, where they will be rewarded for their faithfulness to Him. St. Paul's protection from the snake's bite was certainly a sign to the people of his godliness and a fulfillment of Mark 16:18 and Luke 10:19.

["The **signs** accredit the gospel message and cannot be limited to the apostolic age, any more than the Lord's commission to carry the gospel throughout the world. The signs, therefore, confirm the ministries of Christ's ambassadors in every generation. Casting out demons, speaking in tongues, and healing all appear in other passages in the NT, and there is no scriptural warrant for their cessation before the Lord returns. Taking up **serpents** does not refer to handling snakes in religious ceremonies, but casting them away without being harmed (see Acts 28:3-6).

["The Greek verb *airó*, 'take up,' can also mean 'remove,' 'take away,' 'cast away.' See Matthew 14:12; Luke 11:52; 1 Corinthians 5:2; Ephesians 4:31. Similarly, a servant of the Lord may look for divine protection in matters pertaining to food and drink. Many missionaries have testified to God's miraculous protection in heathen territories, where they experienced no ill effects from impure food and drink." (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*) Our second son Michael Panell, should have died when we were on the mission field, except for God's intervention in a sickness that he had while we were in Trinidad.

["**to swell up**. The usual medical term for inflammation; it is used only by Luke in the NT *said he was a god*. Parallel to the Lystrans' attempt to worship Paul and Barnabas (14:11-18).

(7-9) ["*Publius*. A Roman name, but the first name and not the family name. It must have been what the islanders called him. *chief official*. The 'first man' of Malta, a technical term for the top authority. Luke's designation is accurate here, as elsewhere, even though the Greek term used is not a common one. Cf. also 'proconsul' (Greek *anthypatos*, 13:7), 'Magistrates' (Greek *strategoi*, 16:20), 'city officials' (Greek *politarch*, 17:6), 'officials of the province' (Greek *Asiarchon*, 19:31). (NIV Study Bible)

["Publius was the highest ranking Roman official on the island." (New Spirit Filled Life Bible)]

["Miracles in N.T. times authenticated the witness of God's messengers." (Scofield)] And I would like to add, miracles today, authenticate the message and messengers! They are part of the blueprint of the book and we are to trust God by faith to do the same things He did back then, in fact we may even see greater things because of Jesus words: "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it." (John 14:12-14)

Question: Isaiah 53:5 says that by His stripes we are healed. I've heard many pastors state this is the biblical basis for God's physical healing to us, while others say that this particular passages is referring to spiritual healing. I know, and scripture confirms, that God can heal us, but is the context of this verse physical or spiritual? Both are true but I believe using the verse in the correct context is dividing the word of truth.

I would agree with the "stripes" as being for both our salvation and our physical healing. The reason for this is because the context is clearly speaking of salvation through His death on the cross, but the verse is also used in the New Testament as fulfillment of the ministry of the Messiah in the area of physical healing. I would like to quote from the New Spirit Filled Life Bible; I would highly suggest this as a wonderful study Bible. There are many other good ones, but I would highly recommend this one. Here is what it has to say about the verse in question:

"Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He *was* wounded for our transgressions, *He was* bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed." (Isaiah 53:4-5)

"Healing Prophesied Through Christ's Atonement, DIVINE HEALING. Isaiah 53 clearly teaches that bodily healing is included in the atoning work of Christ, His suffering, and His cross. The Hebrew words for "griefs" and "sorrows" (v.4) specifically mean physical affliction. This is verified in the fact that Matthew 8:17 says this Isaiah text is being exemplarily fulfilled in Jesus' healing people of human sickness and other physical need.

Further, that the words "borne" and "carried" refer to Jesus' atoning work on the cross is made clear by the fact that they are the same words used to describe Christ's bearing our sins (see v. 11; also 1 Peter 2:24). These texts unequivocally link the grounds of provision for both our salvation and our healing to the atoning work of Calvary. Neither is automatically appropriated, however; for each provision—a soul's eternal salvation or a person's temporal, physical healing—must be received by faith. Christ's work on the cross makes each possible; simple faith receives each as we choose.

Incidentally, a few contend that Isaiah's prophecy about sickness was fulfilled completely by the one-day healings described by Matthew 8:17. A close look, however, will show that the word 'fulfill' often applies to an action that extends throughout the whole church age. (See Isaiah 42:1-4; Matthew 12:14-17)" (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*)

"When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: '*He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses.*'" (Matthew 8:16-17)

There are many other verses that speak of healing and the gifts to be used in the Church, but I hope this helps as far as healing being in "His stripes." The stripes include both salvation and physical healing!

(11) "Melita. Paul remained on this island for three months

(12) "Syracuse. A town on the eastern shore of the island of Sicily. The ship remained here three days.

(13) "Rhegium. A town at the extreme end of the Italian mainland.

"Puteoli. One of the leading ports of Italy. Here Paul found some brethren.

(14-15) "**Appii Forum, the "Three Taverns"** Two villages where the Roman brethren came to meet Paul. [**with them seven days.** As he had done at Sidon at the beginning of the journey (Acts 27:3), the centurion graciously allowed Paul to spend time with the Christian brethren at Puteoli, on the bay of Naples in southern Italy, near the end of the journey (Acts 28:13). It is possible that they wanted Paul to spend a week with them so he could address the local congregation on the Lord's Day.

["At Puteoli, they left the ship and continued the rest of the way to Rome on the Appian Way, an important Roman road leading to the Appii Forum, a marketing center some forty or so miles south of Rome (Acts 28:15). There some of the Roman Christians had come to meet Paul. They had undoubtedly read his Roman epistle, which had been sent to them some three years previously, and were eagerly anticipating his coming. They did not know he would be coming as a prisoner, of course, but were nevertheless glad to be identified with him, and Paul was encouraged and thankful." (*The Defender's Study Bible*)]

(17-20) "Rome. The first thing that Paul did after arriving at Rome was to call the Jewish leaders in order that he might clear himself from the charge against him, and to obtain a friendly hearing. It was his last recorded attempt to win the Jews. Notice the result of his preaching to them (28:24-28; compare Matthew 13:13-15; John 12:40; Matthew 21:43)."

[There were a number of Jewish synagogues in Rome, but since Paul was a prisoner, even though he enjoyed some freedom, it was not convenient for him to visit them. Therefore he called the leaders of the Jews together that he might present his case to them. He claimed that he had violated none of the Jewish customs and as an innocent man was delivered prisoner into the hands of the Romans.

["In spite of the fact that the Romans had wished to release him, the Jews had opposed their decision, and so Paul had felt that his only way of escape was to appeal to Caesar. However, Paul did not desire to make any accusation against the Jews for their treatment of him. He was a prisoner only because of **the**

hope of Israel. By this, he meant that his Christian faith was the true fulfillment of the hope of God's people.

[(21-23) "The Jewish leaders declared that they had received neither letters nor emissaries from Jerusalem charging Paul with any evil. Furthermore, they implied that they were not familiar with the **sect** to which Paul belonged but had only heard that it was strongly criticized everywhere. F. F. Bruce (*Commentary on Acts*) logically suggests that at this point the Jewish leaders were telling less than the whole truth. It would have been impossible for them to have been unfamiliar with the Christian church in Rome, since we know from Paul's letter to the Romans that a vigorous church existed there (see also 18:2). Furthermore, it was highly unlikely that word would not have reached the Roman Jews from Jerusalem, because constant communication was sustained. However, it was apparent that no sound case could be registered against Paul, and the Jews therefore felt it the better part of wisdom to dissociate themselves entirely from Paul's case and thus avoid incurring the wrath of the Roman government."

[(24-31) "The reaction of the Jewish leaders at Rome to Paul's message was the same as he had everywhere met. Some believed, but the majority rejected his message. Seeing this, Paul quoted from Isaiah 6:9, 10, which describes the dullness and the spiritual hardness of God's people. Their plight is hopeless, and they are unable to turn to God to be healed.

["The book of Acts comes to a climax with this statement: *The salvation of God is now sent to the Gentiles, who will listen to the message.* The last eight chapters of the book of Acts—over a quarter of the book—are devoted to a record of Paul's experiences in Jerusalem and of his journey to Rome. The question arises: Why did Luke devote so much space to these events when his earlier narrative passed over other equally important events with the barest summary?

["The answer must be that one of Luke's major purposes was to show that just as the Jewish nation rejected Jesus as her Messiah and sent him to a cross, so the leaders of the Jews, both in Jerusalem and in Rome, confirmed their apostate character by rejecting the greatest figure of the apostolic church and his gospel. On the other hand, everywhere Paul went, he was received by the Gentile worshipers in the synagogues and was extended the protection of the Roman authorities. This keynote of the obdurate character of Israel and the responsiveness of the Gentiles is summarized in Acts 28:25-28. These words stand as a formal pronouncement of the divine displeasure for the rebelliousness of Israel. Henceforth the Gospel was to find lodging among the Gentiles. Israel's rebellion was complete." {Until the end of Tribulation} (*Wycliffe Bible Commentary*)]

["*unto the Gentiles.* Once again Paul announced that since the Jews had rejected the offer of salvation, it would go to the Gentiles. It seems somewhat symbolic that Paul has by this time preached the gospel all the way from Jerusalem to Rome, the greatest city in the world at that time, and that the account ends at this point. He had always gone first to the Jews, only to find again and again the Gentiles were the ones who responded. It was said of Jesus that 'He came unto his own, and his own received him not' (John 1:11). The same had been proved true of His gospel.

["**they will hear.** This has been a wonderfully fulfilled prophecy. The Gentiles, in practically every nation, have received the gospel gladly in substantial numbers. The Christians of the first century, beginning with the apostles, were largely Jew, but this soon changed. Ever since, it has been the Gentile churches and missionaries who have been spreading the gospel." (*The Defender's Study Bible*)]

"Dr. Griffith-Thomas notices God's providence in Paul's imprisonment in the following way:

1. He was safe from all the Jews.
2. He became conspicuous to all Philippians 1:12, 13.
3. He had an opportunity of witnessing to the soldiers who guarded him.
4. He was visited by friends from various churches. (Philippians 2:25; 4:10).
5. He was able to write some of his choicest epistles: Philippians, Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians.

["It has been much disputed whether Paul endured two Roman imprisonments from A.D. 60 to 68, or one. The tradition from Clement to Eusebius favors two imprisonments with a year of liberty between them. It has been pointed out that the leaving of Trophimus sick at Miletus (2 Timothy 4:20) could not have been an occurrence of Paul's last journey to Jerusalem, for then Trophimus was not left (Acts 20:4; 21:29); nor could it have been on his journey to Rome to appear before Caesar, for then he did not touch at Miletus. To make this incident possible, there must have been a release from the first imprisonment and an interval of ministry and travel." {possibly to Spain as well} (*Scofield*)]

During Paul's first imprisonment in Rome we believe he wrote what are called the 'prison epistles, these are Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians.

"From tradition and some references, it has been concluded that Paul was released for about a period of two years (see Philippians 1:24-26; 2:24; Philemon 24; 2 Timothy 4:17), and then was rearrested and finally executed during the persecution of the Christians by Nero. During this period of liberty it is believed that he wrote the epistles to Timothy [1 Timothy] and Titus."

It is believed that St. Paul was executed by being beheaded, there are two reasons for this belief, that I know about. One, it was against the Roman law to crucify a Roman citizen, so he could not have been crucified. St. Peter asked to be crucified upside down because he felt unworthy to be crucified in the same manner as Christ, but this shows that he was not a Roman citizen. Reason number two, we believe Paul was not crucified but beheaded, and that is because of the reference to his death in 2 Timothy, known to be the last book written by Paul before he was killed, in it he tells Timothy, his long time disciple and companion, "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand." (2 Timothy 4:6) This seems to indicate decapitation.

The following excerpt is taken from The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, First Edition, article "*Paul the Apostle*." ["When Paul writes again to Timothy he has had a winter in prison, and has suffered greatly from the cold and does not wish to spend another winter in the Lamartine (probably) prison (2 Timothy 4:13, 21). We do not know what the charges now are. They may have been connected with the burning of Rome. There were plenty of informers eager to win favor with Nero. Proof was not now necessary. Christianity is no longer a religion under the shelter of Judaism. It is now a crime to be a Christian. It is dangerous to be seen with Paul now, and he feels the desertion keenly (2 Timothy 1:15ff; 4:10). Only Luke, the beloved physician, is with Paul (2 Timothy 4:11), and such faithful ones as live in Rome still in hiding (2 Timothy 4:21). Paul hopes that Timothy may come and bring Mark also (2 Timothy 4:11).]

["Apparently Timothy did come and was put into prison (Hebrews 13:23). Paul is not afraid. He knows that he will die. He has escaped the mouth of the lion (2 Timothy 4:17), but he will die (2 Timothy 4:18). The Lord Jesus stood by him, perhaps in visible presence (2 Timothy 4:17). The tradition is, for now Paul

fails us, that Paul, as a Roman citizen, was beheaded on the Ostian Road [way] just outside of Rome. Nero died June, 68 AD, so that Paul was executed before that date, perhaps in the late spring of that year (Or 67). Perhaps Luke and Timothy were with him. It is fitting, as Findlay suggests, to let Paul's words in 2 Timothy 4:6-8 serve for his own epitaph. He was ready to go to be with Jesus, as he had long wished to be (Philippians 1:23)"]

I also like the way St. Paul finished his life, he lived for the Lord Jesus Christ right up to the very end, being a honor and glory to God. Here are some of his last words to Timothy and to us before he went home to be with the Lord. By the way, you may want to read the rest of 2 Timothy since this is his last book to the Church. May these words be ours as well, when we get ready to meet the Lord Jesus Christ. "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing." (2 Timothy 4:7-8)

"Review the chapters of The Acts of the Holy Spirit:

1. Power.
2. Pentecost.
3. Peter and John.
4. Priest and prayer.
5. Punishment.
6. Poor Christians.
7. Persecuted Stephen.
8. Philip.
9. Paul's conversion.
10. Peter's vision.
11. Peter's explanation.
12. Peter's imprisonment.
13. Paul's first missionary journey.
14. Paul's return.
15. Paul at Jerusalem.
16. Paul's second journey.
17. Paul at Athens.
18. Priscilla and Aquila.
19. Paul's third journey.
20. Paul in Europe.
21. Paul's arrest.
22. Paul's staircase address.
23. Paul's escape.
24. Paul before Felix.
25. Paul before Festus.
26. Paul before Agrippa.
27. Paul shipwrecked.
28. Paul at Rome.

(All the quotes in this section that are not bracketed are taken from *Part III New Testament Gospels and Acts, Through The Bible Book by Book* by Myer Pearlman)

I feel it is only fitting here to give an exhortation to be filled with the Holy Spirit. We could do this from the material written by Bill Bright of Campus Crusade for Christ, who did an excellent job when he was alive on spreading the need for the 'filling' for power to do evangelism. The tract he wrote on this subject is called *Have You Made the Wonderful Discovery of the Spirit-Filled Life?*

However, I believe the one that has been, probably the best example of the filling of the Holy Spirit in action, and being used of the Lord greatly in our generation in the power of the Holy Spirit, is Billy Graham. Since he has been so mightily used in the area of evangelism, I would like for him to explain to you how you too can be filled to overflowing with the Holy Spirit, and how you too can be used of the Lord to evangelize the lost in the power of the Holy Spirit.

"While still a young student in Bible school in Florida, a preacher asked him [Billy Graham], 'Young man, have you been baptized with the Holy Spirit?'

"Billy replied, 'Yes sir.'

"'When were you baptized with the Holy Spirit?' the preacher asked. Billy Graham replied, 'The moment I received Jesus Christ as my Savior.' Although the preacher disagreed with him, the reply states Billy's basic and ongoing conviction. He holds that the baptism of the Holy Spirit, although it was initiated at Pentecost, becomes the experience of all who have received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. He contends that all true believers are baptized in the Spirit, and he quotes as a scriptural reference 1 Corinthians 12:13: 'For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.'

THE INFILLING

Billy Graham goes on to point out that there are additional experiences of the Holy Spirit, in particular being 'filled with the Spirit' (Ephesians 5:18). Graham expresses his position as 'one baptism but many fillings.' that is to say, when a person is saved they are baptized in the Holy Spirit. But the fact that the Ephesians 5:18 passage is a present imperative implies that God expects and commands people to experience the Spirit's continuing fullness. Billy grants there may be some differences in opinion that are merely semantic, but this particular approach he contends is foundational to the inner work of the Holy Spirit in believers.

"He lays much importance on the infilling of the Spirit for believers. In stressing being Spirit-filled he goes so far as to say, 'I think it proper to say that anyone who is not Spirit-filled is a defective Christian. Paul's command to the Ephesian Christians, 'Be filled with the Spirit,' is binding on all of us Christians everywhere in every age.'

"Why should it not be seen as an option? Because in the final analysis being filled with the Spirit is no more or no less than complete surrender to Christ's Lordship in daily living.

HOLINESS

"As is clear, Graham argues that any believer who does not walk in the Spirit's fullness becomes a defective Christian. This is predicated upon the fact that Paul's admonition in Ephesians 5:18 is a command. To fail here creates a pattern of carnality in the Christian's life. The devotional life tends to be erratic, the Word of God becomes neglected, prayer is a chore, and as with Lot in Sodom, sensitivity to

sin is bludgeoned, with known sins remaining unconfessed. He concludes, 'There are no exceptions. We must conclude that since we are ordered to be filled with the Spirit, we are sinning if we are not filled. And our failure to be filled with the Spirit constitutes one of the greatest sins against the Holy Spirit.'

"Not only are these realities evident in the epistles of Paul, but the Lord Jesus Christ emphasized these principles as well. In our Lord's dialogue with the woman at the Samaritan well, He said he would impart to believers a well of water springing up to life (John 4:13-14). In John 7, Jesus went on to say in verse 38, 'He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.' As Billy Graham puts it, 'This is not a pond of water, but an ever-flowing spring.'

"The purpose behind all this rests in the fact that when believers are filled with the Holy Spirit they become a vessel of blessing to the world. And whether that service is large or small in the eyes of the world, God smiles upon it.

REASONS

It is clear, according to Billy Graham, that God fills His people with the Spirit for a purpose. This purpose essentially centers in serving Jesus Christ. In the case of the evangelist it is to empower the proclamation of the gospel for salvation. Graham often quotes Paul's statement to the Corinthians: 'And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God' (1 Corinthians 2:4-5).

Billy Graham grants the possibility to seek the fullness of the Holy Spirit for the wrong reasons, such as self-enjoyment of self-glorification. The ultimate and final purpose of the Spirit's infilling for any believer is that his or her service might be effective and bring honor and glory to Jesus Christ. The Westminster Confession has it correct: 'The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.' The Lord Jesus Christ Himself said, 'He [the Holy Spirit] shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you' (John 16:14). The Holy Spirit does not even glorify Himself; He glorifies Jesus Christ.

"Given this, Billy Graham asks; Why do we need the fullness of the Holy Spirit? He answers, 'Because only in the power of the Spirit can we live a life that glorifies God. The Holy Spirit becomes the Agent whereby a person can bring glory to God through a life of effective service, evangelism, and holiness.

"Little wonder Graham also says, 'I am convinced that to be filled with the Spirit is not an option, but a necessity. It is indispensable for the abundant life and for fruitful service. The Spirit-filled life is not abnormal; it is the normal Christian life. Anything less is sub-normal; it is less than what God wants and provides for his children.

[HOW TO BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT]

"[Billy Graham's] answer is embodied in three concepts: *understanding*, *submission*, and *walking by faith*. Understanding serves as the first step in being filled with the Spirit- understanding that God has given His Holy Spirit and deeply desires His people to be filled with all His fullness. Furthermore, one must recognize that such a blessing is not a mere option, but a command. Not only that, it must be clearly grasped that unconfessed sin cannot be tolerated. Indeed, Billy Graham says, 'Before we can be filled with the Holy Spirit we must deal honestly and completely with every known sin in our lives.' He

goes into considerable detail in this respect. Sin has to be dealt with in the area of the offense through confession, restitution, and a genuine broken spirit before God. The entire process of seeking the Spirit's fullness reduces itself to this: Who controls life, self or Christ? Anything less than absolute submission to Christ is sin and must be confessed and forsaken before the richness of the Holy Spirit will be experienced. This leads to the second point-submission.

"Billy Graham sees two steps in the concept of submission. The first step centers in the area of confession and repentance as stated above. Anything in which the Holy Spirit has been grieved must be acknowledged and surrendered to God so that the blood of Christ may cleanse that particular sin ["If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."] (1 John 1:9).

In the second step, we must yield ourselves utterly and completely to the will of God. Paul points this out very clearly in Romans 12:1-2: 'I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.' Billy saw this clearly in the little Welsh hotel with Steven Olford [when he was initially filled with the Holy Spirit.]

"Graham holds that surrender is a definite and conscious act on the part of the believer in obedience to the Word of God. In one sense, this act constitutes the heart and essence of the entire human-divine encounter. To be filled with the Spirit means to be dominated by the Spirit, and that means being in submission to Him in all things. In a word, obedience assumes a central place in the Christian's life. Right there the third prerequisite arises.

"The Bible tells us that cleansed, obedient believers walk by faith. Billy Graham sees this as essential to the Spirit-filled life. Moving into the Spirit's fullness does not necessarily mean copious quantities of agonizing and interceding and pleading with God. Rather it rests upon reaching out in faith and bidding Him to fill us. Graham puts it this way,

'Now when we yield ourselves to Christ and follow Him as Lord of our lives, we know that something has happened. The Holy Spirit has taken over our lives, to guide and empower us. We are now to walk by faith, reckoning ourselves to be dead to sin and alive to God. We are filled with the Holy Spirit; now we are to live in light of this truth. This is not pretending; it is acting on God's promise.'

"Billy Graham stresses that the experience rests in faith upon one's identification with Christ in death and resurrection. Quoting Paul, he states that we are to 'consider [ourselves] to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus' (Romans 6:11). Paul brings this all together in Galatians 2:20 when he says, 'I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.'

"In concluding his emphasis on the faith aspect of the Spirit's fullness, Graham points out that if we are knowledgeable and understanding of our needs, and have every known sin confessed and are submitted to God, then we can reach out in faith and say, 'I know I am filled with the Holy Spirit.' And that is not presumption, it is simply taking God at His Word (Luke 11:13) 'If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!'

"In light of all these truths concerning the work of the Holy Spirit, the evangelist sets out his understanding of the wonder biblical truth that God by the Spirit lives within all believers and leads them into godliness, spiritual maturity, and effective service. And that surely relates to evangelism." (*The Evangelist* by Lewis A. Drummond)

Billy Graham does not claim to speak in tongues, but he does claim that the Filling of the Holy Spirit is for us today. How could he be so used of the Lord unless he was filled with the Holy Spirit? On the other hand, so many are taught against speaking in tongues, that many people will not even entertain the thought that God would do such a thing for them. My mother-in-law was just such a person; she was filled with the Holy Spirit and used mightily of the Lord. She even spoke in tongues to begin with, but stopped doing this because she was taught that it was wrong. So some Christians may not speak in tongues because they think it is wrong.

There may be many other reasons why a person who is filled with the Holy Spirit may not speak in tongues. However, Christians need to realize that this gift is available to all believers today, and they should not be afraid of it. I am not speaking of that gift that is used in the church that must be interpreted. Only some have the gift of speaking in tongues that needs to be interpreted. I have never had this gift as of today, but I do pray in tongues at times to the Lord.

The reason we know that this gift of tongues and interpretation is not for everyone is because Scripture says so: "Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? (1 Corinthians 12:29-30) The obvious answer is, "No." If you want more on this subject look at our 1 Corinthians 12-14 study.

Often in these lessons when I speak of "tongues" I am speaking of the "tongues as a prayer language" to be used in private. "What is *the conclusion* then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding." (1 Corinthians 14:15)

"But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit." (Jude 20)
"Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit *is*, because He makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*." (Romans 8:26-27)

Paul also told the Corinthians that he spoke in tongues more than all of them, but this was in private (his prayer language). "I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all; yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue." (1 Corinthians 14:18-19) He concludes that chapter with: "Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order." (1 Corinthians 14:39-40)

Let's not lose sight of the fact that the filling of the Holy Spirit, whether one speaks in tongues or not, is given to a believer to be used powerfully as a witness for the LORD. The reason I have emphasized the Filling so much in these studies is because I believe that it is what is missing today in the Church! If we are to reach the world for Christ, in fulfilling His command to Go into all the world with the Good News of His death and resurrection, we must be filled, to be effective. We are told that 97 percent of

Christians are not witnessing, why is this? I believe it is probably because 97 percent of Christians are not filled with the Holy Spirit, and until that happens we will not reach the world for Christ!

It is said that if one Christian would reach two other people for the Lord in a year, then train them to evangelize at least two other people, and train them to do the same, the world would be won within something like ten years. The only problem is most Christians are afraid to witness to begin with. Why is this? I believe it is because they are not filled with the Holy Spirit so they are afraid, because they do not have the Lord's power to help them. So here are some closing thoughts to think about as we use the book of The Acts of the Holy Spirit as our 'blueprint' for revival!

Here are some quotes you might be interested in from Mark Cahill's book *One Thing You Can't Do In Heaven*. "**I Am Just Lazy**-Believe it or not, this is one of the reasons people give for not witnessing. How do you think God feels when we say we are lazy, while multitudes of people die and go to Hell every single day? As a Christian, what is more important than seeing those in your family, your school, your city, your state, your country, and your world coming to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ?

"Yet, according to Zondervan Church Source, 97 percent of church members have no involvement in any sort of evangelism. A survey by *Christianity Today* found that only 1 percent of their readership had witnessed to someone 'recently.' Does anything strike you as being wrong with this picture? This does not sound like the people I read about in the New Testament who had so much zeal that they were willing to die for our Lord.

"Probably the reason most people don't share their faith is that they really don't have any faith to share. Charles Spurgeon said, 'Have you no wish for others to be saved? Then you are not saved yourself. Be sure of that.' Please let the Lord strike an evangelistic zeal in your heart. Being lukewarm is not of the Lord."

"Samuel Chadwick (1860-1932) wrote, 'Why does the church stay indoors? They have a theology that dwindled into a philosophy, in which there is no thrill of faith, no terror of doom and no concern for souls. Unbelief has put out the fires of passion, and worldliness garlands that altar of sacrifice with the tawdry glitter of unreality.'

My Friend

My friend, I stand in judgment now,
And feel that you're to blame somehow.
On Earth I walked with you day by day,
And never did you point the way.

You knew the Lord in truth and glory,
But never did you tell the story.
My knowledge then was very dim;
You could have led me safe to Him.

Though we lived together here on Earth,
You never told me of the second birth.

And now I stand this day condemned,
Because you failed to mention Him.

You taught me many things, that's true;
I called you 'friend' and trusted you.
But I learn now that it's too late,
And you could have kept me from this fate.

We walked by day and talked by night,
And yet you showed me not the light.
You let me live, and love, and die,
You knew I'd never live on high.

Yes, I called you 'friend' in life,
And trusted you through joy and strife.
And, yet, on coming to this dreadful end,
I cannot, now, call you 'my friend.'

"I would sooner bring one sinner to Jesus Christ than unravel all the mysteries of the divine Word, for salvation is the one thing we are to live for."

"If there be any one point in which the Christian church ought to keep its fervor at a white heat, it is concerning missions. If there be anything about which we cannot tolerate luke warmness, it is the matter of sending the gospel to a dying world."

"Every Christian is either a missionary or an impostor." Charles Haddon Spurgeon

"I had the opportunity a couple of years ago to speak at a missions conference at Biola University in Los Angeles. It was a great time, with many folks challenged by the messages God had me deliver. One day during lunch, some students invited me to sit with them. After we chatted a while, one of the girls said, 'Mark I heard everything you said today, but I am just going to share my faith by my actions.'

"When people say that, I tell them, 'Oh, you must be thinking of Romans 1:16, 'I am ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.'"

"They usually respond, 'but that isn't what the verse says.' That's true-the verse actually states, '...I am *not* ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first, and also for Greek.' When we don't want to talk about our faith, it is usually because we are ashamed of what people might think of us. However, God commands us to stand for Him and never be ashamed of Jesus.

"I asked each of those students how they got saved. Their answers were what I expected: 'My parents led me to Jesus.' 'I heard about Him at a revival meeting and made a commitment.' 'I was at church one Sunday and surrendered my life to the Lord.' 'A friend led me to Christ.'

"I then said, 'Each one of you has just admitted that you are now a Christian because someone verbally told you about Jesus. Yet you want to come up with a new way to share your faith where you don't have to use words?' suddenly they all realized the importance of speaking boldly about what they believe.

"When preaching and private talk are not available, you need to have a tract ready. Get good striking tracts, or none at all. But a touching gospel tract may be the seed of eternal life. Therefore, do not go out without your tracts." Charles Haddon Spurgeon

"A tract-a presentation of the Gospel on a small piece of paper, postcard, booklet, etc.-is one of the most important ways you can share your faith. Many lost people have a Bible but never read it, yet they will read something about Jesus that is not very long. Tracts are an effective way for the lost to hear Scripture, and are often used by God to give people an interest in reading His Holy Word. They're a great way to plant seeds of the Gospel! Handing out tracts is also a very simple way to get started in witnessing. Shy people may want to begin by distributing tracts and then progress to verbal witnessing as their confidence builds." (*One Thing You Can't Do In Heaven* by Mark Cahill) By the way we have tracts on both our websites that you can print free. Look at the tract section of Bible-Christian.org

In Romans 10:8-14 Paul tells us: "But what does it say? 'The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart' (that is the word of faith which we preach); that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

"For the Scripture says, 'Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.' For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek [Gentile], for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For 'whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.' How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?."

"Oswald J. Smith said, "Oh my friends, we are loaded down with countless church activities, while the real work of the church, that of evangelizing the world and winning the lost, is almost entirely neglected!"

The key to mission strategy, according to the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, is: "Namely the planting of a church within every people group. Only when this is done can the Gospel reach every person." (*Operation World* by Patrick Johnstone)

"Thirty years ago, crusades began to wane, and personal evangelism came to dominate our thoughts. A church that wanted to reach out would typically offer a class on how to use the 'Four Spiritual laws' or Evangelism Explosion to witness to friends and strangers.

"Crusades haven't disappeared, and churches still teach personal witness. But today, church planting is the default mode for evangelism. Go to any evangelical denomination, ask them what they are doing to grow, and they will refer you to the church planting office. I have talked to Southern Baptists, General Conference Baptists, the Evangelical Free Church, the Assemblies of God, the Foursquare Church, the Acts 29 network, and a variety of independent practitioners and observers. I quit going to more because they all said the same thing: 'We're excited and committed to church planting. It's the cutting edge.'" (*Go and Plant Churches of All Peoples* by Tim Stafford Christianity Today September 2007)

I believe this is what is taught in The Acts of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). We are to do all sorts of evangelism, but the main goal of the Church is to plant churches at home and aboard!

K.P. Yohannan in his book *Revolution in World Missions* says this: "A declining interest in missions is the sure sign that a church and people have left their first love. Nothing is more indicative of the moral decline of the West than Christians who have lost the passion of Christ for a lost and dying world.

"The older I become, the more I understand the real reason millions go to hell without hearing the Gospel. Actually, this is not a mission problem. As I said earlier, it is a theological problem—a problem of misunderstanding and unbelief. Many churches have slipped so far from biblical teaching that Christians cannot explain why the Lord left us here on earth.

"The purpose of your life as a believer must be to obey Jesus when He said, 'Go into all the world, and preach the gospel.' That is what Paul did when he laid down his arms and said, 'Lord, what do You want me to do?'

"If all of your concern is about your own life, your job, your clothes, your children's good clothes, healthy bodies, a good education, a good job and marriage, then your concerns are no different from a heathen's in Bhutan, Myanmar or India.

"Every Christian should know the answers to the following three basic questions about missions in order to fulfill the call of our Lord to reach the lost world for His name.

1. **"One, what is the primary task of the Church?** Each of the four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—gives us a mandate from our Lord Jesus, the mission statement of the Church, known as the Great Commission. See Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:47; and John 20:21.

"The Great Commission reveals the reason God has left us here in this world, the main activity of the Church until Jesus returns as the King of kings is to gather us to Himself. He desires us to go everywhere proclaiming the love of God to a lost world. Exercising His authority and demonstrating His power, we are to preach the Gospel, make disciples, baptize and teach people to obey all the commands of Christ.

"This task involves more than handing out leaflets, holding street meetings or showing compassionate love to the sick and hungry, although these may be involved. But the Lord wants us to continue as His agents to redeem and transform the lives of people. Disciple making, as Jesus defined it, obviously involves the long-time process of planting local churches.

"Note too that the references to the Great Commission are accompanied by promises of divine power. The global expansion of the Church obviously is a task for a special people who are living intimately enough with God to discern and exercise His authority.

2. **"Two, who is a missionary?** A missionary is anyone sent by the Lord to establish a new Christian witness where such a witness is yet unknown. Traditionally defined missionary activity usually involves leaving our own immediate culture for another, taking the Gospel to people who differ in at least one aspect—such as language, nationality, race or tribe—from our own ethnic group.

"For some reason, many North Americans have come to believe that a missionary is only someone from the West who goes to Asia, Africa or some other foreign land. Not so. When a former Hindu Brahmin crosses the subtle caste lines of India and works among low-caste people, he should be recognized as a missionary just as much as a person who goes from Detroit to Calcutta.

"Christians in the West must abandon the totally unscriptural idea that they should support only white missionaries from America. Today it is essential that we support missionaries going from South India to North India, from one island of the Philippines to another or from Korea to China.

"Unless we abandon the racism implied in our unwritten definition of a missionary, we never will see the world reached for Christ. While governments may close the borders of their countries to Western missionaries, they cannot close them to their own people. The Lord is raising up such an army of national missionaries right now, but they cannot go unless North Americans will continue to support the work as they did when white Westerners were allowed.

3. **"Three, where is the mission field?"** One of the biggest mistakes we make is to define mission fields in terms of nation states. These are only political boundaries established along arbitrary lines through wars or by natural boundaries such as mountain ranges and rivers.

"A more biblical definition conforms to linguistic and tribal grouping. Thus, a mission field is defined as any cultural group that does not have an established group of disciples. The Arabs of New York City, for example, or the people of the Hopi Indian tribe in Dallas are unreached people groups in the United States. More than 10,000 such hidden people groups worldwide represent the real pioneer mission fields of our time.

"They will be reached only if someone from outside their culture is willing to sacrifice his or her own comfortable community to reach them with the Gospel of Christ. And to go and do so, that person needs believers at home who will stand behind him [her] with prayers and finances.

"The native missionary movement in Asia—because it is close at hand to most of the world's unreached peoples—can most easily send the evangelists. But they cannot always raise the needed support among their destitute populations. This is where Christians in the West can come forward, sharing their abundance with God's servants in Asia.

"Missionary statesman George Verwer believes most North American Christians are still only playing soldiers. But he also believes, as I do, that across America individuals and groups want to arouse the sleeping giant in our nation to support the missionaries needed for Asian evangelization. We should not rest until the task is complete.

"You may never be called personally to reach the hidden peoples of Asia; but through soldier-like suffering at home, you can make it possible for millions to hear overseas. Today I am calling on Christians to give up their stale Christianity, use the weapons of spiritual warfare and advance against the enemy. We must stop skipping over the verses that read, 'If anyone desires come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me,' and 'So likewise, whosoever of you does not forsake all that he has, cannot be My disciple' (Matthew 16:24; Luke 14:33).

"Were these verses written only for the native missionaries who are on the front lines being stoned and beaten and going hungry for their faith? Or were they written only for North American believers comfortably going through the motions of church, teaching conferences and concerts? Of course not. These verses apply equally to Christians in Bangkok, Boston and Bombay.

Says Verwer, 'Some missionary magazines and books leave one with the impression that worldwide evangelization is only a matter of time. More careful research will show that in densely populated areas the work of evangelism is going backward rather than forward.'

"In view of this, our tactics are simply crazy. Perhaps 80 percent of our efforts for Christ-weak as they often are-still are aimed at only 20 percent of the world's population. Literally hundreds of millions of dollars [if not billions] are poured into every kind of Christian project at home, especially buildings, while only a thin trickle goes out to the regions beyond. Half-hearted saints believe by giving just a few hundred dollars they have done their share. We all have measured ourselves so long by the man next to us we barely can see the standard set by men like Paul or by Jesus Himself.

"During the Second World War, the British showed themselves capable of astonishing sacrifices (as did many other nations). They lived on meager, poor rations. They cut down their railings and sent them for weapons manufacture. Yet today, in what is more truly a (spiritual) World War, Christians live as peacetime soldiers. Look at Paul's injunctions to Timothy [and us] in 2 Timothy 2:3-4: "You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier." We seem to have a strange idea of Christian service. We will buy books, travel miles to hear a speaker on blessings, pay large sums to listen to a group singing the latest Christian songs-but we forget that we are soldiers.

"Day after day I continue with this one message: Hungry, hurting native missionaries are waiting to go to the next village with the Gospel, but they need your prayer and financial support. We are facing a new day in missions, but it requires the cooperation of Christians in both the East and West." (*Revolution in World Missions* by K. P. Yohannan)

If you would like a copy of this book, or more on Gospel for Asia and other mission groups, go to our links on Bible-Christian.org

I do believe we will see an 'End Time Revival' and many will be brought into the Kingdom of Christ. The LORD Jesus Christ will come back for a glorious Church as He said He would! Thanks to the wonderful work of the Holy Spirit in believers' lives, this cleansing is taking place. "...Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish." (Ephesians 5:25b-27)

"The LORD bless you and keep you;
The LORD make His face shine upon you,
And be gracious to you;
The LORD lift up His countenance upon you,
And give you peace." (Numbers 6:24-26)

For more information: bible-christian.org