

Bible Study: Acts

(Part 9- Chapters 18-19)

by Gary T. Panell

Chapter 18

(1) "The apostle [Paul] left Athens for Corinth [Probably by land, along the isthmus, a distance of about 50 miles], where he awaited the arrival of Timothy and Silas from Macedonia. Corinth was the capital of the Roman province of Achaia. It was situated on an isthmus commanding the sea routes to east and west as well as the land routes to north and south.

"It was a prosperous commercial center, famous for its cosmopolitan character, and notorious for its immorality. According to Strabo, the temple of Aphrodite had a thousand religious prostitutes. The reputation of Corinth is illustrated by the fact that the verb 'to act like a Corinthian' was used of practicing fornication, and the phrase 'Corinthian girls' designated harlots. Little wonder that the Corinthian church was later plagued by problems of immorality.

(You may want to go to our introduction to the [study on First Corinthians](#) for more information on Corinth and the letters of First and Second Corinthians that Paul addressed to the church there.)

(2) "Suetonius (*Life of Claudius* 25.4) tells us that the Jews were indulging in constant riots at the instigation 'of Chrestus,' and Claudius therefore banished them from Rome in A.D. 49. It is possible that Chrestus (meaning 'the useful one') is a Roman misunderstanding of *Christus*, a term that was meaningless to Romans. If so, this means that the gospel of Christ was being preached in the Jewish synagogues in Rome and was meeting such strenuous resistance that Claudius ordered all Jews to leave the city.

"It is not clear whether Aquila and Priscilla were believers before they left Rome. Since nothing is said of Paul's preaching the Gospel to them, they probably had become Christians in Rome. We know nothing about the origin of the Roman church. These two Jews came to Corinth and set themselves up in their trade." (*Wycliffe Bible Commentary*)

"*Pontus*. In the northeastern region of Asia Minor, a province lying along the Black Sea between Bithynia and Armenia. *Priscilla*. The diminutive form of Prisca. Since no mention is made of a conversion and since a partnership is established in work (see v. 3), it is likely that they were already Christians.

"They may have been converted in Rome by those returning from Pentecost or by others at a later time. *Claudius*. Emperor of Rome (A.D. 41-54). *ordered all the Jews to leave Rome*. Recorded in Suetonius (*Claudius*, 25). The expulsion order was given, Suetonius writes, because of 'their [the Jews'] continual tumults instigated by Chrestus' (a common misspelling of 'Christ'). If 'Chrestus' refers to Christ, the riots obviously were 'about' him rather than led 'by' him.

(3) "*tentmaker*. Paul would have been taught this trade as a youth. It was the Jewish custom to provide manual training for sons, whether rich or poor." (*NIV Study Bible*)

Tentmakers. Either manufacturers of heavy cloth from goats' hair, from which tents and other articles were made; or 'leather workers' (Lake and Cadbury). It was customary for Jewish rabbis not to receive pay for their teaching, and therefore Paul who had been reared as a rabbi, had learned the trade of tent making. The apostle did not at once launch into the evangelization of Corinth but joined Aquila and Priscilla in practicing his trade during the week." (*Wycliffe*)

occupation. Paul, in accordance with the practice of many of the Jewish scribes and rabbis, normally tried to provide his own material needs in order not to give occasion for complaint by the churches to whom he was ministering (Acts 20:34; 1 Corinthians 4:12; 1 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:8)" (*The DEFENDER'S Study Bible*) This would be a good thing today for people who are serving the Lord to be 'tent makers' (doing their own trade) to get the Gospel out, why should we always be paid for what we do for the Lord? We will be rewarded in heaven if we are careful to do God's work in God's way today!

Many 'Christians' are getting rich off of the Gospel while at the same time bringing reproach on the name of Christ. Why is this happening? Is it not because people feel like they can make a living out of preaching the Gospel? If this is the attitude, then we know why so many are turned off on the Gospel. [For more on 'tentmaker Christians,' go to our [1 Corinthians Study Part Three](#), Chapter Nine.]

(4) "The Sabbath he devoted to preaching in the synagogue. An inscription has been found in Corinth dating from the early first century, which reads, 'Synagogue of the Hebrews.'

(5) "Paul apparently planned to return from Corinth to Macedonia and continue his ministry in Thessalonica and Berea after the arrival of Silas and Timothy. The Epistles tell us more about the movements of these two than does Acts. Paul had left them in Berea with instructions to join him in Athens as soon as possible (17:15).

"They did, in fact, join Paul in Athens (1 Thess3:1), apparently bringing word that it was not safe for him to return to Macedonia. He therefore sent Timothy back to Thessalonica [1 Thessalonians 3:1] and Silas to some other city in Macedonia, possibly Philippi.

"Now Silas and Timothy joined him again in Corinth; and when they reported that Paul could not return to Macedonia, he devoted himself with fresh vigor to the evangelization of Corinth. Pressed in the spirit, according to the best texts, should be translated either *was constrained by the word, or was occupied in preaching*. Paul's message was that Jesus was the Messiah." (*Wycliffe*)

"As the New King James Version has it: 'Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified.'" Do we feel that way about getting the Gospel out to the lost around the world? Let this Parable of the *Orange Trees* by John White speak to your heart, then why not pass it on to someone else.

The Parable of the Orange Trees by John White

The harvest was plentiful-but where were the orange pickers?

I dreamed I drove on a Florida road, still and straight and empty. On either side were groves of orange trees, so that as I turned to look at them from time to time, line after line of trees stretched back endlessly from the road-their boughs heavy with round yellow fruit. This was harvest time. My wonder grew as the miles slipped by. How could the harvest be gathered?

Suddenly I realized that for all the hours I had driven (and this was how I knew I must be dreaming) I had seen no other person. The groves were empty of people. No other car had passed me. No houses were to be seen beside the highway. I was alone in a forest of orange trees.

But at last I saw some orange pickers. Far from the highway, almost on the horizon, lost in the vast wilderness of unpicked fruit, I could discern a tiny group of them working steadily. And many miles later I saw another group. I could not be sure, but I suspected that the earth beneath me was shaking with silent laughter at the hopelessness of their task. Yet the pickers went on picking.

ENTERING HOME COUNTY

The sun had long passed its zenith, and the shadows were lengthening when, without any warning, I rounded a curve of the road to see a notice: "Leaving NEGLECTED COUNTY-Entering HOME COUNTY." The contrast was so startling that I scarcely had time to take in the notice. I had to slow down, for all at once the traffic was heavy. People by the thousands swarmed the road and crowded the sidewalks.

Even more startling was the transformation in the orange groves. Orange groves were still there, and orange trees in abundance, but now, far from being silent and empty, they were filled with the laughter and singing of multitudes of people. Indeed it was the people I noticed rather than the trees. People-and houses.

I parked the car at the roadside and mingled with the crowd. Smart gowns, neat shoes, showy hats, expensive suits, and starched shirts made me a little conscious of my work clothes. Everyone seemed so fresh, and poised, and cheerful.

"Is it a holiday?" I asked a well-dressed woman with whom I fell in step.

She looked a little startled for a moment, and then her face relaxed with a smile of gracious condescension. "You're a stranger, aren't you?" she asked, and before I could reply, "this is Orange Day." She must have seen a puzzled look on my face, for she went on, "It is so good to turn aside from one's labors and pick oranges one day of the week."

"But don't you pick oranges every day? I asked her. "One may pick oranges at any time," she said. "We should always be ready to pick oranges, but Orange Day is the day we devote especially to orange picking."

MANUAL SCHOOL AND ORANGE PSYCHOLOGY

I left her and made my way further into the trees. Most of the people were carrying a book, bound beautifully in leather and edged and lettered in gold. I was able to discern on the edge of one of them the words, Orange Picker's Manual.

By and by I noticed that seats had been arranged around one of the orange trees, rising upward in tiers from the ground. The seats were almost full- but, as I approached the group, a smiling, well-dressed gentleman shook my hand and conducted me to a seat.

There, around the foot of the orange tree, I could see a number of people. One of them was addressing all the people on the seats and, just as I got to my seat, everyone rose to his feet and began to sing. The man next to me shared with me his song book. It was called *Songs of the Orange Groves*.

They sang for some time, and the song leader waved his arms with a strange and frenzied abandon, exhorting the people in the intervals between the songs to sing more loudly. I grew steadily more puzzled. "When do we start to pick oranges?" I asked the man who had loaned me his book.

"It's not long now!" he told me. "We like to get everyone warmed up first. Besides, we want to make the oranges feel at home." I thought he was joking- but his face was serious. After a while, a man took over from the song leader and, after reading two sentences from his well-thumbed copy of the *Orange Picker's Manual*, began to make a speech. It wasn't clear whether he was addressing the people or the oranges.

I glanced behind me and saw a number of groups of people similar to our own group gathering around an occasional tree and being addressed by other men. Some of the trees had no one around them. "Which trees do we pick from?" I asked the man beside me. He did not seem to understand, so I pointed to the trees around us. "This is our tree," he said, pointing to the one we were gathered around.

"but there are too many of us to pick from just one tree," I protested. "why, there are more people than oranges!" "but we don't pick oranges," the man explained. "We haven't been called. That's the Head Orange Picker's job. We're here to support him.

Besides, we haven't been to college. You need to know how an orange thinks before you can pick it successfully-orange psychology, you know. Most of these folk here," he went on, pointing to the congregation, "Have never been to Manual School."

"Manual School," I whispered. "What's that?" "It's where they go to study the Orange Picker's Manual," my informant went on. "It's very hard to understand. You need years of study before it makes sense." "I see," I murmured. "I had no idea that picking oranges was so difficult."

WILL THE REAL ORANGE PICKERS PLEASE STAND UP?

The man at the front was still making his speech. His face was red, and he appeared to be indignant about something. So far as I could see there was rivalry with some of the other "orange-picking" groups. But a moment later a glow came on his face.

"But we are not forsaken," He said. "We have much to be thankful for. Last week we saw *three oranges brought into our baskets*, and we are now completely debt-free from the money we owed on the new cushion covers that grace the seats you now sit on."

"Isn't it wonderful?" the man next to me murmured. I made no reply. I felt something must be profoundly wrong somewhere. All this seemed to be a very roundabout way of picking oranges.

The man was reaching a climax in his speech. The atmosphere seemed tense. Then, with a very dramatic gesture, he reached two of the oranges, plucked them from the branch, and placed them in the basket at his feet. The applause was deafening.

"Do we start on the picking now?" I asked my informant.

"What in the world do you think we're doing?" he hissed. "What do you suppose this tremendous effort has been made for? There's more orange-picking talent in this group than in the rest of Home County put together. Why, thousands of dollars have been spent on the tree you're looking at now."

I apologize quickly. "I wasn't being critical," I said. "And I'm sure the man must be a very good orange picker-but surely the rest of us could try. After all, there are so many oranges that need picking. We've all got a pair of hands, and we could read the *Orange Picker's Manual*."

"When you've been in the business as long as I have, you'll realize that it's not as simple as that," he replied. "There isn't time, for one thing. We have our work to do, our families to care for, and our homes to look after. We..."

But I wasn't listening. Light was beginning to break on me. Whatever these people were, they were not orange pickers. Orange picking was just a form of entertainment for their weekends. I tried one or two more of the groups around the trees.

Not all of them had such high academic standards for orange pickers. Some held classes on orange picking. I tried to tell them of the trees I had seen in Neglected County but they seemed to have little interest.

"We haven't picked the oranges here yet," was their usual reply.

A CALL FOR WORKERS

The sun was almost setting in my dream and, growing tired of the noise and activity all around me, I got in the car and began to drive back along the road by which I had come. Soon all around me again were the vast and empty orange groves.

But there were changes. Something had happened in my absence. Everywhere the ground was littered with fallen fruit. And as I watched it seemed that before my eyes the trees began to rain oranges. Many of them lay rotting on the ground.

I felt there was something so strange about it all, and my bewilderment grew as I thought of all the people in Home County. Then, booming through the trees, there came a voice that said, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers."

And I awakened-for it was only a dream! About the author: John White is former associate professor of psychiatry at the University of Manitoba. His many books include *The Fight, The Cost of Commitment and Daring to Draw Near* (InterVarsity Press, 1979). His latest book is *When the Spirit Comes with Power* (InterVarsity Press, 1988).

(6-7) Some versions have 'Titius Justus,' I will go with the KJV and the NKJV when there are differences with the other versions. Both the KJV and the NKJV use only 'Justus.' I believe 'Titius' may have been added as a sort of clarification, but later it became part of the text in some versions. Also you may notice a difference in spelling of Titus, in the NIV, etc. they spell his name with an extra 'i' after the second 't,' 'Titius.'

When it comes to the spelling of names, this may vary from country to country or language to language, and it is not an error in the Bible. For example, my middle name is Thomas in English, but in Spanish it is Tomás, same name different spelling, I answer to both.

"*Titius Justus*. Titius was a common Roman name. Justus is used to distinguish him from the Titus [For those who have Titius Justus in their Bibles- G.T. Panell] of 2 Corinthians 2:13; 7:13-14; 8:16,23. *worshiper of God*. Like Titus [Paul's companion missionary], an uncircumcised Gentile, but attending the synagogue.

(8) "*Crispus*. Paul baptized him (1 Corinthians 1:14). *synagogue ruler. believed and were baptized*. The response to the Gospel, a process going on daily, as the tense of the Greek verbs indicates." (*NIV Study Bible*)

Paul didn't baptize a lot of believers, evidently others did this. This shows that baptism is not a part of salvation or else Paul would have finished the job when he led someone to the Lord.

Water baptism is extremely important and a command of the Lord that should be obeyed, but it is not part of salvation. Paul let the other leaders do the baptizing while he preached and taught the Word. Also by Paul not baptizing many people, prevented Christians from 'admiring' him too much.

Paul did not want to cause divisions in the Church by Christians thinking of one leader as more important than another. Christ didn't want divisions in the true Church, and neither should we! (And that doesn't just mean no divisions in our local churches or denominations, it means in the whole Catholic Church (Universal Unseen Church) see our article *The Holy Catholic Church*.) Paul writing to the Corinthians later said: "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?"

St. Paul says, "I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, lest anyone should say I had baptized in my own name. Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other. For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect." (1 Corinthians 1:13-17)

(9) "*in a vision*. Paul had seen the Lord in a resurrection body at his conversion (9:4-6; 1 Corinthians 15:8) and in the temple at Jerusalem in a trance (22:17-18). Now he sees him in a vision (see 23:11). (*NIV Study Bible*) This vision helped Paul to stay in spite of those that were against him.

(10) "much people. Many Corinthians did, indeed, accept Christ during the year and a half that Paul preached there (Acts 18:11). It is significant, however, that the Lord already knew them and regarded them as His own people before they became believers. Although they eventually believed on Christ as a free choice by their own wills, the Lord had already prepared them to do this through their

circumstances and by the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit (John 16:7-11; Acts 13:48; Galatians 1:15)." (*The DEFENDER'S Study Bible*)

(11) At this same time Paul passed through the neighboring districts of Achaia (2 Corinthians 1:1).

(12) God protected Paul even as He said He would in the vision (18:9-10) even by using a unsaved ruler. "Gallio. The brother of Seneca, the philosopher, who was the tutor of Nero. Gallio was admired as a man of exceptional fairness and calmness. From an inscription found at Delphi, it is know that Gallio was proconsul of Achaia in A.D. 51-52. This information enables us to date Paul's visit to Corinth on his second journey as well as his writing of the Thessalonian letters." (*NIV Study Bible*)

"Gallio's name, as proconsul of Achaia, has actually been found on an inscription at Delphi in Central Greece. He was a son of the famous rhetorician Lucius Junius Gallio and brother of the equally famous philosopher Seneca, and was appointed proconsul of Achaia by the emperor Claudius about A.D. 51. Corinth was the capital of Achaia, which included southern Greece, south of Macedonia." (*The DEFENDER'S Study Bible*)

(13-16) "*contrary to the law*. The Jews were claiming that Paul was advocating a religion not recognized by Roman law as Judaism was. If he had been given the opportunity to speak, he could have argued that the Gospel he was preaching was the faith of his fathers (see 24:14-15; 26:6-7) and thus authorized by Roman law." (*NIV Study Bible*)

(17) "Sosthenes evidently became a Christian believer, for he later joined with Paul in addressing the first epistle to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 1:1). He had succeeded Crispus, who had also become a Christian, as chief ruler of the synagogue (Acts 18:8). When Gallio summarily rejected the Jews' complaint against Paul (Acts 18:16).

(18) "*shorn his head*. [hair cut off] For some reason, Paul had apparently taken a Nazarite vow, not cutting his hair until the duration of the vow was finished. Possibly it was a vow of thanks for God's promise of protection (Acts 18:10). Although this was strictly a Jewish institution (Numbers 6), Paul often made an effort to retain his Jewish identity, hoping thereby to reach the Jews more effectively (1 Corinthians 9:19,20; Acts 16:3; 21:18-26)." (*The DEFENDER'S Study Bible*)

"*Priscilla and Aquila*. The order of the names used here (but cf. v.2) may indicate the prominent role of Priscilla or her higher social position (see Romans 16:3; 2 Timothy 4:19)."

Cenchrea is where the seaport was, near Corinth, so Paul could sail from there to Ephesus. At some point a church was started there as well. "I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea." (Romans 16:1)

(19) "*Ephesus*. Leading commercial city of Asia Minor, the capital of provincial Asia and the warden of the temple of Artemis (Diana).*Paul left Priscilla and Aquila*. They would give valuable aid upon Paul's return, providing advice as to where and how the work there could be started." (*NIV Study Bible*) Paul first went to the synagogue as was his custom. He started with those who should have received the message first, but this was not always the case. Jesus is the Messiah whether the Jews received Him or not, but they were always given that opportunity. [Look at our link [Jews for Jesus](#) and see how the work among Jews is still continuing today. One day they will receive the message!]

(20-21) "Aquila and Priscilla separated from Paul at Ephesus and took up residence there. Paul engaged in a short ministry in the synagogue but refused to tarry. The words, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem, are lacking in the majority of texts; but apart from this explanation, the reason for Paul's haste in returning to Palestine is unexplained." (*Wycliffe*) As you might know, I strongly disagree with those who would clip out part of Scripture and think that the manuscripts that do this are the best. (For more on this look at our articles *In Defense of Mark 16:9-20; John 8:1-11, and Is There Even One Mistake In the Bible?*)

(22-23) Caesarea was the Roman capital of Palestine, and a good harbor to go up to Jerusalem. "These two brief verses summarize a long journey from Ephesus to [Israel] and return. The church that Paul greeted was most certainly the church in Jerusalem, although this city is not mentioned. However, Antioch had sponsored the mission, and he spent some time in that city." (*Wycliffe*)

"greeted the church. Could refer to a congregation in Caesarea, but the explanation that 'he went up' makes it more likely that it was the church in Jerusalem, some 2,500 feet above sea level." (*NIV Study Bible*)

This is the beginning of Paul's Third Missionary journey. " *region of Galatia and Phrygia*. The same route he had taken when starting on his second missionary journey, but in the reverse order (16:6). The use of the phrase may indicate the southern part of Galatia in the Phrygian area." (*NIV Study Bible*)

The Third Mission: Asia Minor and Europe. 18:23-21:17. Paul returned to Asia on what we call his third missionary journey, first traveling through the Phrygia-Galatia region, which he had visited on his second missionary journey (16:6)."

(24-25) "Luke now interrupts his record of Paul's travels to relate an incident that took place in Ephesus. Jewish pilgrims who came to Jerusalem during the days of our Lord's ministry heard John the Baptist preach that the Messiah was soon to come.

"They recognized in the person and the works of Jesus the fulfillment of the Old Testament Messianic prophecies. Such pilgrims would carry back home a report of the preaching of John and the life and ministry of Jesus, although they would not know of his death and resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

"The eloquent Apollos had accepted this good news about Jesus; and since he was mighty in the Scriptures, he was able to present the Messiahship of Jesus effectively to Jews." (*Wycliffe*) "The N.T. Scriptures were not then written; thus the O.T. is referred to here." (*New Scofield Reference Edition*)

"*Alexandria*. In Egypt. It was the second most important city in the Roman empire and had a large Jewish population." (*NIV Study Bible*) "Notice the preparation for Paul's three years' ministry in this town (18:24). Apollos, a cultured Alexandrian Jew, had been preaching John the Baptist's message, thus paving the way for Paul's fuller revelation of Christ and His salvation." (*Through the Bible Book By Book Part III by Myer Pearlman*)

"The references Paul makes to Apollos in 1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:4 indicate that later he became well known to the Corinthian church." (*NEW SPIRIT FILLED LIFE Bible*)

"This man was instructed. Apollos is said to have been 'mighty in the Scriptures,' (Acts 18:24) 'fervent in the Spirit' (undoubtedly referring to the indwelling Holy Spirit), 'instructed in the way of the Lord' (directly or indirectly instructed by John the Baptist), and teaching 'diligently the things of the Lord.' Even though he knew 'only the baptism of John,' he had surely believed all that John had taught, and-like the disciples of John who became the first disciples of Christ-was 'prepared for the Lord' (Luke 1:17), needing only the up-to-date instruction of Priscilla and Aquila to know 'the way of God more perfectly' (Acts 18:26) and then to become a mighty preacher like Paul.

"There is no indication that he-unlike the disciples of John at Ephesus (see notes on Acts 19:1-7)-had to be rebaptized, for he had already accepted by faith the coming one as preached by John. He then went on to Corinth, in Achaia, and continued with great success the work begun there by Paul (Acts 18:27,28; 1 Corinthians 3:5,6)." (*The DEFENDER'S Study Bible*)

I would have to say, in all candor, that we are not told whether Apollos was rebaptized or not, he may have been, but it just doesn't give us those details. Later, we will find in chapter 19 it does say that these other disciples of John were rebaptized. We dare not assume things and make arguments from silence; to go down that road would be to fall into all sorts of pit falls, for example, believing that when it says the whole family was baptized, that there were infants baptized. So, we don't build arguments from silence, but where the Bible is silent we need to be as well when it comes to the basics of the faith.

(26-28) "When Priscilla and Aquila met him [Apollos] in Ephesus, they enlightened him more accurately about the Christian gospel, which included Christ's death and resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit.. When he wished to go to Achaia, Aquila and Priscilla sent letters of recommendation for him, and he was able to reinforce Paul's work in Corinth, refuting the Jews by proving that Jesus was the Messiah. That some of the Corinthian Christians formed a party claiming Apollos as their leader (1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:4) was probably not due to any improper conduct on his part." (*Wycliffe*)

I like how Apollos was teachable, for if someone corrected him on the teaching of the Word, and were able to show him from Scripture where he was wrong, he was 'all ears.' Evidently he believed all he knew up to this point about Christ, but he didn't know all the details. We should be open to what others are teaching if it agrees with the Bible, even if we were not taught this in our church or denomination. For example, I was not taught about the Holy Spirit's gifts and power for us today, so when I learned that this was part of Scripture, and for us today, I had to change my beliefs and my teaching in this area.

Thank God for men like Apollos in our day also, who can share the facts of God's Word and show how it is not like the myths of men or of demons. We have men like Walter R. Martin (who is with our Savior) and his *The Kingdom of the Cults*, Josh McDowell, and his books *Evidence that demands a Verdict* and *Handbook of Today's Religions* (along with Don Stewart), and Dr. Henry M. Morris (who has gone on to be with our Lord Jesus Christ), and of course his sons and the *Institute for Christian Research* (ICR). There are, of course, many others that God has gifted as Apollos was in the area of Christian apologetics. (See our links for a site on Christian apologetics.)

Chapter 19

(1) "Ephesus was the greatest commercial city in Asia Minor, the capital of the province of Asia with a busy harbor on the western coast. Its ruins are still beautiful and a great tourist attraction today." (*NEW SPIRIT FILLED LIFE Bible*)

"Paul traveled from Galatia to Ephesus, following the higher road, which was more direct than the trade route that followed the valleys through Colosse and Laodicea. In Ephesus he found disciples who had the same partial knowledge of Jesus as Apollos had had. "There is no good reason for rejecting the usual meaning of disciples: believers in Jesus.

(2) "The apostle recognized that the disciples' knowledge of Jesus was incomplete. He therefore asked, Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? (*RSV, [NKJV, NIV, NASV]*) The Greek participle is *having believed*, and it is capable of being translated either *since ye believed (AV)* or *when you believed (RSV, [NKJV, NIV, NASV])*. Their answer must mean that they had heard no distinctively Christian truth about the Holy Spirit, for any one familiar with the Old Testament would have heard about the Holy Spirit." (*Wycliffe*)

"not so much as heard. This admission proves that the Ephesian disciples had not heard the message of John directly, since John had certainly preached about the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11; John 1:32-34) and was himself 'filled with the Holy Ghost' (Luke 1:15).

(3) "*John's baptism*. Here Paul simply assumed the disciples had been baptized since they had believed and were disciples. In the New Testament, baptism always immediately follows saving faith, and is then followed by discipleship.

"This is the only case mentioned in the New Testament of anyone being 'rebaptized.' Not even Apollos, who also had known 'only the baptism of John' until Aquila and Priscilla gave him further instruction (Acts 18:25,26), needed to be rebaptized.

"Presumably the difference was that the Ephesian disciples had been baptized by one or more of John's disciples after the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost when Christ's disciples first began to baptize 'in the name of Jesus Christ' [But they did not know the whole message.-comment by G.T. Panell] (Acts 2:38). (*The DEFENDER'S Study Bible*)

It is hard for us in our culture, today, to image that people could be so in the dark about someone as important as Jesus the Messiah, because there are so many ways of communication (almost instantaneous) now, but remember at that time they had only 'word of mouth' or 'snail mail.'

"Paul remedies this by rebaptizing them in water (the only such account in the NT) and by leading them into a fuller experience with the Holy Spirit (v.6) An obvious parallel to the Day of Pentecost, the Spirit's fullness is displayed by their speaking in tongues and prophesying." (*NEW SPIRIT FILLED LIFE Bible*)

By the way, there are those who make a whole case for another denomination, believing that we are to only baptize in the name of Jesus only. They miss the point, it was not that they did not baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as they were commanded to do by Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20. The point is that these disciples had been baptized before in the name of the Father, but now they needed to be baptized in Jesus' name, as well, which is why Jesus' name is mentioned and not the Holy Spirit's.

"The answer indicated that they [these second-hand disciples of John] were in the dark in regard to the baptism in the Holy Spirit, as many Christians are today. And after Paul baptized them in water and laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them and *they spoke with tongues and prophesied (Acts 19:1-7)*.

"Suppose somebody had come along shortly after this and asked these twelve men the same question, do you suppose they would have been confused and unable to answer it? If they had been asked how they knew they had received the [baptism of the] Holy Spirit, would they not have answered. 'We spoke with other tongues [and prophesied] as the Spirit gave us utterance'?"

"IN THE GREAT REVIVAL IN SAMARIA, there is no mention of the believers speaking in tongues, but *something so wonderful happened to them that Simon the sorcerer offered a sum for the power of bestowing the Holy Spirit [Acts 8:18]*. If there had been no more evidence than the feeling of joy, it is not likely that Simon would have offered money for this power rather than the gift of healing. Moreover, *they had 'great joy' before they received the Spirit [filling] (Acts 8:8)*. Hence, we believe that the experience of the disciples at Samaria in receiving the Holy Spirit was the same as that of the disciples at Jerusalem and Ephesus." (*Bible Doctrines* by P.C. Nelson)

Accounts in Acts Are Being Rediscovered and Applied

By Paul Walker

"The Book of Acts provides five accounts of people receiving the fullness or infilling or baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4; 8:14-25; 9:17-20; 10:44-48; 19:1-7). In these accounts five factors are manifest: 1) There was an overwhelming inbreaking of God's presence experienced by all who were present. 2) There was an evident transformation in the lives and witness of the disciples who were filled. 3) That which was experienced became the impetus for the growth of the church, as 'daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ' (Acts 5:42).

"4) The immediate evidence in three of the five accounts was glossolalia: 'For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God' (Acts 10:46). [*Glossolalia* is a coined term derived from the Greek *glossa* ("tongue") and *laleo* ("to speak").] 5) The ultimate purpose of this experience was empowered witnessing (Acts 1:8) and a deeper dimension of Christian commitment for the achievement of happiness (Ephesians 5:19), gratitude (Ephesians 5:20), humility (Ephesians 5:21), and fruitfulness (Galatians 5:22,23)

"Together, the above facts demonstrate what the present Pentecostal/Charismatic renewal is experiencing through the Holy Spirit at work in the church. [I believe God wants to do this work in every believer no matter what church or denomination they attend. This needs to happen for the great end-time revival to take place, see John 17 and Ephesians 5.-comment by G.T. Panell]

"The problem is that too frequently the elements of this renewal are misunderstood or misapplied for lack of a Biblical understanding of 'tongues' and the function of the gifts of the Spirit. Although there are varying theological and ethical viewpoints among some in the Neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic movement, a common bond of unity in the Spirit-filled renewal is the practice of 'speaking in tongues' in prayer and worship, together with an acceptance and welcoming of the operation of the Holy Spirit's gifts in their midst.

"Thus, to fully understand this phenomenon, it is necessary to see the Pentecostal/Charismatic view as they have learned to implement the Book of Acts' manifestation of the Holy Spirit's power-workings, applying the controls taught in 1 Corinthians 12-14." (*NEW SPIRIT FILLED LIFE Bible*)

This information is taken from the article *What Really Unites Pentecostals?*

Tidings by Ted Olsen

December 2006 issue of Christianity Today

"The charismatic gift was at the center of Charles Parham's Bible school revival in 1901 and William Seymour's Azusa Street phenomenon in 1906. It is, after all, one of the main reasons for the name *Pentecostals* (see Acts 2). But in an October [2006] survey from the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, at least 40 percent of Pentecostals in six of the ten countries surveyed said they had never prayed or spoken in tongues.

"Only half of U.S. Pentecostals had spoken in tongues.

"That's not to say that tongues have ceased. Expect to hear much about tongues-or at least the phrase 'a private prayer language'-[at] the Southern Baptist Convention's June [2007] annual meetings. Following the International Mission Board's ban on missionary candidates who practice a private prayer language, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary has told staff they may not 'endorse in any way, advertise, or commend' charismatic practices, 'including [a] private prayer language.' [The mission board we went out under said basically the same thing. -Comment G.T. Panell]

"The lone board member to vote against the policy-with 36 votes in favor-was Dwight McKissic, whose August [2006] seminary chapel service message ignited the controversy after he said he sometimes prays in a private prayer language. As a tongues-speaking member of a denomination not historically identified with Pentecostalism, McKissic is classified as a charismatic. [It takes a lot of courage to stand up for what you believe in.-comment by G.T. Panell] But globally, the distinction between Pentecostals and charismatics is unclear.

"In Brazil, Pentecostals are far more likely than charismatics to speak in tongues (there, charismatics are as unlikely as the general population to do so). In India, charismatics are more likely than Pentecostals to speak in tongues. In Guatemala, it's about equal-and popular; nearly two out of five Guatemalans are likely to speak in tongues weekly or more." (*Christianity Today, December 2006 Tidings* by Ted Olsen)

This shows, for one thing, that even Charismatics and Pentecostals (in some countries) need to get back to their core beliefs in the power of the Holy Spirit if we are to be effective witnesses in our world today.

Also, there is another reason why I have included the above article, and that is to show that the Church is still divided over this issue of tongues. As we have seen, it was not a problem in the early church, other than abuses that took place in the Corinthian church. It has become a problem today, because many denominations have taught and fought against the gifts of the Holy Spirit. There will continue to be divisions over 'gifts' and the use of them, and the teaching about the filling or baptism of the Holy Spirit until revival takes place. In the mean time, myself and many other Christians, will be looked upon as doing something contrary to Scripture.

Many denominations today teach that when the Holy Spirit came to all the different ethnic groups, then He no longer baptizes people today like back then. They say when one is saved that is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Which in one sense they are right, we are baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ at the moment of salvation, 1 Corinthians 12:13, but to stop there is to make a serious mistake.

Whatever happened to Ephesians 5:18 and the command to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Then there is Paul's experience, needing to be filled with the Holy Spirit even though he was a Jew, and the Holy Spirit had come to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, but Paul still needed the filling Acts 9:17. References to ethnic groups i.e. Jew, Samaritans, Gentiles was because that was the first occurrence of a baptism or filling in that group, fulfilling Acts 1:8. Even after the initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit to the ethnic groups, though, each individual Christian would need to be filled, Ephesians 5:18.

So you cannot say that the Holy Spirit only came once to Jews on the Day of Pentecost, but now only at salvation. What about Paul's being saved on the Damascus Road and still needing the filling even as a Jew? So we see here that this argument that when we are saved we have all we need from the Holy Spirit, does not hold water! Yes, we have the Holy Spirit when we are born again (Romans 8:9), but we also need His fullness!

What about the example of the 12 disciples in this chapter 19 of Acts, that needed the filling or baptism of the Holy Spirit after their salvation? Also, if the gifts are no more, what about the passages of 1 Corinthians 12-14? "Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues." (1 Corinthians 14:39)

If a person does not accept that the filling (baptism of the Holy Spirit) is for today, and believes that it is just an historical occurrence, they usually do not accept, either, that tongues are for today. For that matter, they usually say the 'sign gifts' [nine of the gifts from 1 Corinthians 12-14 that are considered to be supernatural] are not for today as well.

They use as their 'text' "But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then fact to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." (1 Corinthians 13:10-13)

Here is the standard statement of those who teach that (at least these) three gifts of tongues (presumably interpretation also), knowledge (the 'supernatural' gift), and prophecy (not as preaching the Word, but as foretelling) are done away with after the beginning of the Church:

"It is extremely important to an understanding of Paul's thought to notice the force of the illustration he introduces at this point. The illustration is designed to show the character of the period between the two comings of Christ. With reference to these particular gifts, it may be likened to the growing up of a person from infancy to manhood. The special and spectacular gifts were necessary in the early stages of the growth of the true church (cf. Ephesians 4:7-16) for purposes of authentication (cf. Hebrews 2:3, 4) and edification (1 Corinthians 14:3) when there was no New Testament to give light.

"They were the 'baby talk' of the church. As history has abundantly verified, with the Word and growing maturity, there came to be no need for such gifts. [Which is just not the case, as shown by the quotes

we gave from John Wesley, as he demonstrated many examples from the church fathers of all the gifts being in effect right up until the Church leaders became corrupt (after Constantine became leader of Rome, this is found in Part Five of our Acts Study). I hope to show that these gifts did continue throughout history even after Constantine, however, somewhat abated for various reasons. Now as we near Christ's return, we see the outpouring of the Holy Spirit increased as prophesied it would happen in Joel two and Acts one.] -Comment by G. T. Panell

[Wycliffe's comments continued] "Today it is questionable that there exists anywhere the Scriptural exercise of the three gifts referred to by Paul in this passage [Which is just not true, I have documented many contemporary examples of the gifts in action in the Church, and I will continue to do so in this study of Acts. -comment by G.T. Panell] I spake [spoke] (lit., *was speaking, or used to speak*) possibly refers specifically to tongues, I understood to prophecy, and I thought to knowledge. One cannot be dogmatic about it, however. I put away childish things (lit., *have put away*, the perfect tense stressing the results of the action) looks ultimately to the coming of that which is perfect (v. 10).

For. [v.12] Paul explains that the present time is the infant stage. Now might be rendered *at the present moment* (the word *arti* usually refers to the present time in contrast to past or future time). In the light of the fact that the Corinthians saw only darkly and in part through the exercise of the gifts, why should they have gloried so in that which was fragmentary?

Now [v.13] (*nuni* refers to time generally without reference to other times, but here it may well be logical and not temporal, being rendered *so then*) Abideth faith, hope, and love. These virtues outlast the gifts and, consequently, are to be cultivated more earnestly." (*The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*)

As much as I like the *Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, this is one area that we have to respectfully disagree on. I know exactly where they are coming from, though, and for many years as a Christian I believed and taught this very same thing. Isn't it interesting how often the authors of *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary* use here such phrases as: "*possibly refers specifically to tongues*," "*one cannot be dogmatic about it, however*," and "*here it may well be*" are used when giving the explanation of the gifts of tongues, knowledge, and prophecy not being for today?

Let's look at that same passage in 1 Corinthians 13 again and put it into its proper context. Paul's illustration is good when you understand it in its correct setting. He is not teaching us that the gifts are not for the Church Age, because that would contradict what he says about tongues later in chapter 14, "Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues." Also, the end of Mark 16 would be in error, if it is not for the whole Church Age. Do you see now, though, why so many Christians want to deny that Mark 16:9-20 is authentic? [For more on the authenticity of Mark 16 look at our article on this, [In Defense of Mark 16:9-20.](#)]

Getting back to Paul's illustration, he is pointing out when that which is 'perfect' is come, in other words when we are in heaven, face to face with the Lord Jesus Christ, these gifts will not be needed. There in heaven we will definitely still have love! So the most important gift of all, yes, of course, is love! He is saying these gifts are temporary, but not that they are going to be done away with when the Bible is complete or when the apostles die off, but when we are in the 'perfect state' (heaven, where we won't need the gifts) with the Lord face to face! (The illustration represents the Church on earth with incomplete understanding, and is not intended to be used as a doctrinal treatise.)

Here I will give you a statement from *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary* that I do agree with:

10. That which is perfect cannot be a reference to the completion of the canon of Scripture; otherwise we now, living in the age of the completed canon, would see more clearly than Paul did (v.9). Even the most self-satisfied and opinionated of theologians would hardly admit that. The coming of that which is perfect can only be a reference to the Lord's second coming. That event will mark the end of the exercise of prophecy, tongues, and knowledge." (*The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*)

Believing part of Acts and part of the Epistles are for us today, and parts are not, does not work! Let me ask those who do not believe that the 'sign gifts' are for today. Why were all the instruction given in 1 Corinthians 12-14 on how to use these gifts then, if they are not to be used in the Church today? [For more on this subject check out our study on [1 Corinthians 12-14](#).]

It seems to me to be a waste of space if the information in 1 Corinthians 12-14 is not for us in the entire Church age; also it would be rather confusing to figure out what is for us and what is not, if you leave out the filling, tongues and the other so called 'sign gifts.' And if these are not for today, how much more of what we see Acts and in the letters of Paul are not for us today?

Then, what about the 'sign gifts' that have been used throughout history and that are being used today? If you say, as many denominations do, that when the Bible was written these gifts are no longer used or needed again, then what about the two prophets and their prophesying in Revelation 11? You cannot have it both ways, either the gift of prophecy is finished or it isn't!

To say that these gifts are finished, is a 'slippery slope' that leads to unbelief for even Christians. [We do agree that once the last book of the Bible was completed, the book of Revelation, there is no more prophecy of 'Scripture' (2 Peter 1:16-21) being given Revelation 21:18,19. [Look at our article [Is There Even One Mistake In the Bible?](#)]

There are churches that write "prophecies that someone has given" and make them equal to Scripture. This is contrary to the Word of God, and it usually leads to a false teaching at the least, and often the end result is the making of a false cult.

Here is the true history of John Huss and how he prophesied as he was being burned at the stake.

"When the chain was put about him at the stake, he said, with a smiling countenance, 'My Lord Jesus Christ was bound with a harder chain than this for my sake, and why then should I be ashamed of this rusty one?'

"When the fagots [sticks] were piled up to his very neck, the duke of Bavaria was so officious [obnoxious] as to desire him to abjure [recant]. 'No, (said Huss;) I never preached any doctrine of an evil tendency; and what I taught with my lips I now seal with my blood.' He then said to the executioner, 'You are now going to burn a goose, (Huss signifying goose in the Bohemian language, but in a century you will have a swan which you can neither roast nor boil.' If he were prophetic, he must have meant Martin Luther, who shone about a hundred years after, and who had a swan for his arms.

"The flames were now applied to the fagots, when our martyr sung a hymn with so loud and cheerful a voice that he was heard through all the cracklings of the combustibles, and the noise of the multitude.

At length his voice was interrupted by the severity of the flames, which soon closed his existence." (*Fox's Book of Martyrs*) How can anyone deny that this was a true prophecy?!

No, when it is in Acts and the Epistles it must be for us in the Church Age! These books were written especially for us. Yes, the 'sign gifts' along with tongues and the filling or baptism of the Holy Spirit are still in effect! We thank God for these 'gifts' and we will use them for His glory and honor!

If you say it is not Scriptural and not happening today you need to rethink your theology just as I had to do. I studied my Bible thoroughly, and looked into what is happening in the Christian Church around the world today. This was not some decision I came to lightly, no, it took me some seven years to finally make this decision. It would affect not only myself, but my wife, my family, and our ministry. But do you know what? I am glad I made the decision I did! What about you, what will you do about the Holy Spirit's filling in your life? Can you say for certain 'I am filled with the Holy Spirit?'

I have found that usually Christians have trouble with the filling of the Holy Spirit for them personally for several reasons. Usually, first, because they have been taught that it is not Scriptural. Secondly, they think about what other Christians in their denomination will say about them (if their denomination is opposed to it), or else they are afraid they will do something foolish in front of people when they are filled. These are some of the very fears Irene had as she heard about the filling of the Holy Spirit, and considered it for herself. This true account is taken from the country of Argentina in South America as given by Missionary Pastor Miller in his book *The Flaming Flame* R. Edward Miller.

"Just then Elvira came over and knelt beside her, and slipping her arm around her shoulders said, 'I love you.' To Irene it was the voice of God speaking to her-the God that had seemed so very far away and inaccessible. God was telling her that He loved her! This word produced in her heart what only the voice of God can produce: a melting at His feet and an awakening of an even more fervent thirst. Unemotional Irene found herself weeping.

"Seeing her crying, the other girls promptly decided that she must be helped to receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit-of which Irene knew little. So they all rushed over and began to pray for her. "Grabbing and shaking her, they counseled, 'Say Hallelujah. Raise your hands .Praise the Lord. Do this and do that.'

"In their enthusiasm to help her receive, each one offered a different suggestion, but their variety of ideas only served to confuse her further. For wasn't the Baptism of the Holy Spirit only for the days of the Apostles? And if-by any stretch of the imagination-it should be for today, didn't one receive it when one received salvation? However, because her mind was filled with a maze of anti-baptism doctrines, she wasn't the most likely candidate to receive.

"Suddenly a girl sitting on the foot of her bed screamed out as she felt the presence of the Lord. Surely we've made a mistake, thought the girls, we're praying for the wrong one; then promptly plunged over to pray for the other girl. When my wife finally made it upstairs to find out the cause of all the rumpus in the darkness of the dorm, she found a group of girls enthusiastically praying, and the new Methodist girl sitting on her bed, terrified and perplexed and wondering just what was happening.

"After another long counseling session, and many hours of searching through the book of Acts, to Irene came the knowledge of what the next step must be so that her communion with the Lord might grow: she needed to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. No longer did any formerly held doctrines confuse her,

because she found the new experience taught in the Word. A quiet inner voice said, 'You don't yet have it, but I want to give it to you.'

"Shortly afterwards, as a visiting Baptist brother told his experience of receiving the Holy Spirit, Irene realized that she was afraid to receive it for herself, for she erroneously thought that God would take hold of her body and make her run or jump or do something else equally scandalous. Didn't God require one to yield one's body to Him? Who knows, then, what He might do with it?

"In spite of all her premonitions of making a public scene, she carefully tried to interpret what the Lord wanted her to do in the service that night, be it to lift her arms, kneel, praise or pray. It didn't really matter to her what others were thinking; the most important thing to her was to be in obedience to the Lord-her owner.

"Her mind-now filled with the techniques of 'How to Receive'-hindered her from relaxing in faith so that He could fill her. When the ministers prayed for those desiring to receive, Spanish speaking Irene felt a strange, burning warmth and found herself pronouncing some sounds which sounded exactly like English words. But having studied a little English in secondary school, she promptly concluded that she was speaking words she had already learned, and immediately quit talking, convinced that her subconscious was playing bad tricks on her.

"So she continued to seek, thinking that nothing at all had happened. Irene came-for the first time that week-not even seeking for the Baptism. Sensing no indication from the Lord to stand, lift her hands or kneel, she felt so relaxed. "Such a sweet rest followed the battle of the past weeks when she had sought so diligently to be filled.

"Sitting quietly in her chair, she began to praise the Lord in such a quiet voice that not even the person sitting next to her could hear it. As she partook of the Lord's cup she sensed the same strange warmth. Thanking the Lord for the cup, she again quietly began to pronounce words in English, but this time she didn't discard the speaking as something of her own mind, she just let it continue to flow through her.

"Seconds later, it was no longer English words that she was pronouncing, but compound, separated syllables. Completely conscious of what she was saying, she didn't feel the least emotion; it seemed as though she were observing herself from the outside.

"As soon as the meeting finished, she rushed to her room, and throwing herself on her bed, she continued to articulate syllables. Later these were no more syllables, but words in another language that she had never heard before. Now there was no doubt in her mind that she had actually received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

"All happened in such a different way from what she had expected: without any scandal, without yelling, without jumping, and even without emotions. It wasn't as though her tongue were being handled by some strange, outside force, as she had thought it would be: she could just surrender her vocal organs and begin to talk in that unknown language and could stop speaking whenever she wanted to. How beautiful it was and how utterly different from what she had anticipated!" (*The Flaming Flame* R. Edward Miller)

We, in the Church, need to get back to the teaching of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts if we are to have the power to preach the Gospel to the rest of the world that has not heard His Good News. Gospel for Asia missionaries and many other missions are not fighting against the Holy Spirit's move, but are cooperating with Him to finish the command of Jesus as He gave us the great commission.

How do we think we can do it in ourselves? Like Paul says to the Galatians, "This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?" (Galatians 3:2-3) Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, *does He do it* by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? (Galatians 3:5) We need to continue to walk (live) in the Spirit. "I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." (Galatians 5:16) This theme is also taught in Ephesians. [For more on this go to our Ephesians Study # 2.]

Some Christians misunderstand basic things about this subject of the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit, and they erroneously teach that you have to speak in tongues in order to be saved. Let me illustrate this, at our Fourth of July parade, someone said, (over the loud speaker in his car)"Jesus loves you and died for you, and rose again. You need to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues so that you can be born again, and go to heaven."

The 'proof text' he used was, "unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." (John 3:5) This verse, of course is speaking of salvation, and the context is 'being born again' by the Spirit of God. This verse has nothing to do with the fullness of the Holy Spirit. [Look at our tract [What does it mean to be born again?](#)]

Do you see how those who are not taught well in the Word can get everything mixed up and become a stumbling block to the world. When the unsaved hear things like the above statement, it causes them to get turned off on the gospel message. The filling of the Holy Spirit, that we are talking about here, has nothing to do with salvation. It is subsequent to salvation.

In Acts 10:44 Gentiles were filled as soon as they believed. This may seem like an exception to the order in the rest of Acts, but God did this because the 'Jews' would never have accepted that the Gentiles were saved unless they saw something tangible happen. Notice in Acts 19 people were saved, baptized, then the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied (v.5-6).

Paul made it very clear that at the moment of salvation a person is baptized into Christ and into the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:26-28)

St Paul says, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, when speaking in Hebrews that these teachings are basic doctrines in the Church, and that every Christian should learn them as soon as they get saved: "Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary *principles* of Christ, let us go on to perfection (maturity), not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." (Hebrews 6:1-2)

Here is another contemporary example of how the Holy Spirit moved on Christians like He did in the book of Acts. Also, we see in this true story how when they were filled with the Holy Spirit they not only spoke in tongues but in this case there were specific prophecies that were given, and fulfilled like what we have just read about in Acts 19: 6. This is the missionary account by Todd and DeAnn Burke as they were missionaries in Cambodia before it fell to Communism.

"On this particular Sunday, a baptismal was scheduled for the afternoon. In the meantime, DeAnn and I decided to rest in our one-room apartment, since this was our day of fasting. As we made our way to our quarters, we stopped at the room next to ours to look in on the five orphans. "What do you think the Lord wants us to do with them?"

"DeAnn asked in frustration. For nearly an hour we sat in our room, discussing the problem. Even the two families in the States and Canada were encountering all sorts of roadblocks [waiting for the orphans]. For more than eight months the orphans had been with us and there was no foreseeable break in the red tape that tied up their cases.

"Perhaps the Lord wants us to adopt them all,' I answered DeAnn. 'We might as well, they've been with us this long. But even if the visas are granted, what will happen to the work if we have to leave it to deliver these orphans? It's liable to collapse.'

"About an hour had passed since the morning service had ended. We decided to go for a ride on the cycle. But as we walked out the door of our living quarters, we found the building in chaos. People were running up and down the stairs full of laughter and excitement.

"Pentecost. wind. tongues. Peter? What's going on here?' I questioned. Finally, Thay appeared and began to explain to me what had happened.

"After the service,' he informed me, 'about thirty people went to the prayer room on the roof. They had no more than begun to pray when suddenly a strong wind blew into the room. They said even the shutters were blown back by the force of it. Everyone began speaking in tongues-and most of them had never even heard of the experience! It was definitely the Lord. Then Somaly stood and began prophesying; she has continued now for over an hour! I've never seen anything like it!'

"But what's this about Peter?' I questioned eagerly. 'Oh, that,' he said, laughing. 'They're just drawing a parallel between Acts chapter 2 and what happened here. First the wind and tongues, then Peter stood and began to speak. So they've given the name Peter to Somaly.'

'It was more than I could comprehend. We quickly made our way down to the large hall where she was standing in the far corner of the room with her back to us, still prophesying. I could hardly believe my eyes. Several people were gathered in front of Somaly as she thundered messages to one and then another. She was such a meek woman and so young in the Lord. Never had I heard more than a peep out of her. But here she was, prophesying with all the authority of heaven behind her. God was speaking through her like she was His mouthpiece. Then she stopped abruptly.

"Todd Burke,' she said loudly with her back still to us. 'Come here, quickly.' 'This has to be of God,' DeAnn said as we made our way to where she was standing. Then she turned and pointed at us. 'I will not have you concerned any longer about your orphans. You will take them to their new families. In

three days I will give you a sign. When this happens then you will know it is I who has been working in your behalf. And when you go, do not be concerned about the work here-whether it will rise or fall without your presence. For know this: This is not your work, it is *Mine*, and when you return, the church will shine like the sun.'

"When I opened my eyes, I saw DeAnn's face streaked with tears. God had just exposed the secrets of our hearts. No one knew of our problems and concerns over the orphans, nor of the conversation we had just had in the privacy of our room. But God knew, and He undoubtedly had spoken." Todd goes on in the book to show how what Somaly had spoken under the Holy Spirit's power came true to the detail. (*ANOINTED FOR BURIAL Cambodia's Like a Mighty Wind* by Todd and DeAnn Burke)

This is what St. Peter said, on the day of Pentecost, about what had happened to those who had been baptized by the Holy Spirit. "But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: '*And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy.*'" (Acts 2:15-18)

This is what Jesus prophesied would happen in the Church Age: "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:8) This message was not just for the twelve Apostles or the some 120 men and women in the upper room. Nor was it only for the Jews, Samaritans, or Gentiles of the first century.

This message of the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit is not just for those in the early Church, as some are taught; it is for us today! It is for you and I! When Peter was concluding his message he said, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." (Acts 2:38-39)

You might say, "But our church doesn't believe in this teaching that the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit is for us today!" Then you need to do something about it. Would you have believed in Jesus day that He was the Messiah even if the religious leaders didn't? Will you go on believing a lie? Or will you believe the truth of God's Word?!

Then you say, "How can we follow the blueprint of Acts in our lives and churches?" I would say do what the book teaches, follow its guidelines, and you will see the same miracles of salvation, healing, and deliverance that the Holy Spirit did in Acts. A church I visited recently has an evening in the week where the elders of the church will pray for those seeking the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit.

Many churches have 'afterglow' services where people can come after the regular church services, either in the morning or evening to pray and worship together. There at those meetings, separate from the regular services, where there are only those Christians that have been taught about the gifts; these will have the freedom to use their gifts together. In this way, there are not unsaved or uninstructed Christians coming in who could be confused by the gifts, since they were not taught about what is happening. This of course, is following the rules of the usage of the gifts, as given in 1 Corinthians 12-14. [If you want more information on this go to [our 1 Corinthians study on the chapters 12-14.](#)]

(7) "about twelve. It is perhaps significant that the number was the same as the number of the original apostles. Like the latter at Jerusalem, these became the nucleus of the important church at Ephesus. Very likely, they were 'the elders of the church' (Acts 20:17), to whom Paul spoke with such earnestness on his last trip to Jerusalem (Acts 20:17-38).

(8) *three months*. Much longer than the three Sabbaths in Thessalonica (17:2, but the same approach: Jews first, than Greeks [Gentiles]" (NIV Study Bible)

(9) *the Way*. [A name for Christianity occurring a number of times in Acts (16:17; 18:25-26; 19:9,23; 22:4; 24:14,22; (2 Peter 2:2 The Christian faith is not only correct doctrine, but also correct living Psalm 119:30 'I have chosen the way of truth.' Jesus called Himself 'the way' John 14:6)]

"Lecture hall of Tyrannus. probably a school used regularly by Tyrannus, a philosopher or rhetorician. Instruction was probably given in the cooler, morning hours. One Greek manuscript adds that Paul did his instructing from 11:00A.M. to 4:00 P.M. This would have been the hot time of the day, but the hall was available and the people were not at their regular work.

I just have to say something here about the importance of getting back to the blueprint. We think that we have to have a beautiful 'church building,' 'house of God,' 'temple.' We even call the building 'the church,' however, the truth of the matter is that the church is really the 'called out ones' or 'the assembly,' in other words, the Church of the Bible, is God's people! Nowhere in the New Testament will you find where they built buildings. Is it wrong or a sin to build a building for God, no, but, is it necessary either?

As we get closer to Christ's return and the Rapture of the Church we need to get back to how the Church operated in Acts. We see that they rented buildings and met in homes. I believe God wants us to 'stream line' the Church again and get back to its roots, and back to basics! I know some Christians will say that this is impossible and shouldn't be done, but I believe we would be more mobile and better able to reach our communities once again. So many churches are dying because they are stuck in an area where people no longer really live. Why not sell the building and move the body of believers where they can be effective again?!

There may come a time when we will have to meet in homes, but in the meantime, why not start (if you haven't already) meeting at least once a week in homes? We do this in our church, and I know that it has worked well throughout history. We feel that this is important enough to make it part of our statement of faith, look at these Scriptures as you meditate on these thoughts:

"Home Bible studies are scriptural and an important tool for evangelism, and should be practiced and encouraged in these last days. Part of the Great Commission is to train believers to reproduce (Hebrews 10:25; Acts 2:24-46; 5:42; 10:2; 16:31-34; 18:8; 20:20; Colossians 4:15; Romans 16:23; 2 Timothy 2:2; Ephesians 4:7-16; 1 Peter 2:9-10; Matthew 28:19-20)." (Statement of Faith for Bible-Christian.org)

(10) *two years*. Two years and three months was the longest stay in one missionary location that Luke records. By Jewish reckoning, any part of a year is considered a year; so this period can be spoken of as three years (20:31).

"When the Holy Spirit came upon them [the twelve] similar results attended their experience, just as other miracle signs in Acts. Most significantly, just as in Jerusalem, before long the entire city was awakened to the message of Jesus and the Resurrection (v.10). This is the greatest sign of Holy Spirit fullness: He enables believers in a bold, penetrating witness that impacts cultures alien to God's Word of Truth (v.20) (Acts 10:44-48/ 1 Corinthians 12:10) S.G.B. (*NEW SPIRIT FILLED LIFE Bible*)

(11-12) Quoting again from the article in *Christianity Today*, December 2006, *What Really Unites Pentecostals?* Tidings By Ted Olsen: He says, "But if tongues doesn't unite Pentecostals and charismatics (as a group, called renewalists), then what does? One particular miraculous gift looms largest.

"The Pew survey reports, 'In all 10 countries surveyed, large majorities of Pentecostals (ranging from 56 percent in South Korea to 87 percent in Kenya) say that they have personally experienced or witnessed the divine healing of an illness or injury.' Outside of the United States and South Korea, the percentage was above 70 percent." (*Christianity Today*)

Here are just two examples of miracles of healing, taking place in the church of Argentina, just like they did in Acts:

"Unbeknown to us, the Lord had already been working on the very first night when one of the three who attended the service took an anointed handkerchief to a hospital. This lady was doing night nurse duty, caring for a dying man. He was being kept alive by intravenous feedings because he had been unable to eat anything for two months.

"For eight days he had been unable to even swallow water. The nurse placed the anointed handkerchief on his chest. Several hours later the man called for a glass of water and drank it all down.

"The next morning he coughed up two large cysts that had been obstructing his throat and he was able to eat again.

"Also, unknown to us, the Lord had been working on the second night when a prayer cloth was taken by one of the 'second-nighters' to a paralyzed man confined to a wheel chair. The news of his healing began to spread throughout the city." (*The Flaming Flame* R. Edward Miller)

Yes, we believe in miracles, because Christ said they would happen wherever the Gospel went. He said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents [accidentally as Paul does in Acts 28:3] and if they drink anything deadly [people trying to poison Christians as they take the gospel out to the lost] it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover." Mark 16:15-18.

The following account is of K.P. Yohannan the author of *Revolution in World Missions*, he is the founder and international director of Gospel for Asia.

Achyamma's eyes stung with salty tears. But they were not from the cooking fire or the hot spices that wafted up from the pan. She realized time was short. Her six sons were growing beyond her influence. Yet not one showed signs of going into the Gospel ministry.

Except for the youngest-little "Yohannachan" as I was known-every one of her children seemed destined for secular work. My brothers seemed content to live and work around our native village of Niranam in Kerala, South India.

"O God," she prayed in despair, "Let just one of my boys preach!" Like Hannah and so many other saintly mothers in the Bible, my mother had dedicated her children to the Lord. That morning, while preparing breakfast, she vowed to fast secretly until God called one of her sons into His service. Every Friday for the next three and a half years, she fasted. Her prayer was always the same.

But nothing happened. Finally, only I, scrawny and little- the baby of the family-was left. There seemed little chance I would preach. Although I had stood up in an evangelistic meeting at age eight, I was shy and timid and kept my faith mostly to myself. I showed no leadership skills and avoided sports and school functions.

Then, when I was 16, my mother's prayers were answered. A visiting Gospel team from Operation Mobilization came to our church to present the challenge of faraway North India. My 90-pound frame strained to catch every word as the team spoke and showed slides of the North.

They told of stonings and beatings they received while preaching Christ in the non-Christians villages of Rajasthan and Bihar on the hot, arid plains of North India. As the Gospel team portrayed the desperately lost conditions of the rest of the country-500,000 villages without a Gospel witness-I felt a strange sorrow for the lost.

My decision to go into the ministry largely resulted from my mother's faithful prayers. When I announced my decision, she wordlessly handed over 25 rupees-enough for my train ticket. I set off to apply to the mission's headquarters in Trivandrum.

There I got my first rebuff. Because I was underage, the mission's directors at first refused to let me join the teams going north. But I was permitted to attend the annual training conference to be held in Bangalore, Karnatak. At the conference I first heard the missionary states man George Verwer, who challenged me as never before to commit myself to a life of breathtaking, radical discipleship.

Alone that night in my bed, I argued with both God and my own conscience. I realized that I was behaving as Moses did when he was called. Suddenly, I felt that I was not alone in the room. A great sense of love and of my being loved filled the place.

I felt the presence of God and fell on my knees beside the bed.

"Lord God," I gasped in surrender to His presence and will, "I'll give myself to speak for You-but help me to know that You're with me." In the morning, I awoke to a world and people suddenly different. As I walked outside, the Indian street scenes looked the same as before: Children ran between the legs of people and cows, pigs and chickens wandered about, vendors carried baskets of bright fruit and flowers on their heads. I loved them all with a supernatural, unconditional love I'd never felt before. It was as if God had removed my eyes and replaced them with His so I could see people as the heavenly Father sees them-lost and needy but with potential to glorify and reflect him.

I walked to the bus station. My eyes filled with tears of love. I knew that these people were all going to hell-and I knew God did not want them to go there. Suddenly I had such a burden for these masses that I had to stop and lean against a wall just to keep my balance. This was it: I knew I was feeling the burden of love God feels for the lost multitudes of India [for the world]. His loving heart was pounding within mine, and I could hardly breathe. The tension was great. I paced back and forth restlessly to keep my knees from knocking in fright.

"Lord!" I cried. "If You want me to do something, say it, and give me courage."

Looking up from my prayer, I saw a huge stone. I knew immediately I had to climb that stone and preach to the crowds in the bus station. Scrambling up, I felt a force like 10,000 volts of electricity shooting through my body.

I began by singing a simple children's chorus. It was all I knew. By the time I finished, a crowd stood at the foot of the rock. I had not prepared myself to speak, but all at once God took over and filled my mouth with words of His love. I preached the Gospel to the poor as Jesus commanded His disciples to do. As the authority and power of God flowed through me, I had superhuman boldness. Words came out I never knew I had-and with a power clearly from above. Others from the Gospel teams stopped to listen. The question of my age and calling never came up again.

For more information: bible-christian.org