

## Journey to Pentecost: The Spirit and Us Part II

### Grace, Gift, and Gifts of Grace

- **Greek:** *charis* (grace) | *dōrea* (gift) | *charisma*, *pl: charismata* (literally, “that which is of grace” or “thing of grace,” usually translated “gift of grace.”)
- **Rom 5:12,15** “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, so death spread to all men because all sinned...<sup>15</sup> But the free gift (*charisma*) is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace (*charis*) of God and the free gift by the grace (*dōrea en chariti*) of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.” **What is the gift given here?**
- **Consider these next two verses together (what is the gift here?):**
  - **Acts 2:38-9** “<sup>38</sup> Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift (*dōrea*) of the Holy Spirit.”
  - **1 Cor 3:16-17** “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you? If someone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him. For God’s temple is holy, which is what you are.”
- **Rom 1:11-12** “For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift [*charisma pneumatikon*] to strengthen you— <sup>12</sup> that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine.” **(what gift?)**

### Gifts of the Spirit, Part II

**What gift is given, according to the following verses, and how is it given?**

- **2 Samuel 23:1-2** “Now these are the last words of David. David the son of Jesse declares, the man who was raised on high declares, the anointed of the God of Jacob and the sweet psalmist of Israel: ‘The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue.’”
- **Luke 10:21** “At that very time [Jesus] rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit, and said, ‘I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight.’”
- **Colossians 3:3** “we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.”
- **John 4:23-24** “But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”
- **Ephesians 5:18-20** “Do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father.”

**What gift is given, according to the following verse, and how is it given?**

- **Romans 5:5** “hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”

- Augustine, *On the Spirit and the Letter* (OSL), 32.56 [emphases mine]: “Now the love of God is said to be shed abroad in our hearts, not because He loves *us*, but because He makes us *lovers of Himself*.” [not God’s love for us, but God’s love for HIMSELF in us.]
  - Grammatically...hmmm
  - BUT, theologically: Jesus is quite explicit that the greatest commandment is complete love of God with all we are, and that obedience to all the commandments are bound up in this one (Mt 22:36). And Augustine has a argument about how Scripture says this love of God DOES and MUST come about: Rom 8 is quite clear that we cannot love God in our own power; rather, “naturally” we do the opposite. Therefore, any love of God that obeys God must come through the Spirit who, according to Rom 8, overcomes this problem (OSL 4.6, 17.29). Indeed, Augustine points out, our whole understanding that salvation / justification comes about by *grace* and not works of the law, i.e. the “letter that kills” (2 Cor 3:6), hinges on getting this point right (OSL 2.2-4.6). Indeed, he points out, according to Jeremiah 31 and 2 Cor 3, one of the pivotal differences between the Old and New Covenants is precisely that in the New Covenant, the Spirit writes “obedience to God and all the commandments” *into our hearts* through his own action and presence in them (OSL 17.29-21.36, 25.42).
    - **“Pentecost” as New Sinai?** Sinai – mountain, fire, wind, thunder (*kolot* – can also be translated, voices or tongues), first law; Acts 2 Pentecost – mountain (Zion), fire, wind, tongues/languages, new law on hearts.
    - Further parallels - 40 days after the Exodus deliverance begins, the people arrive at Sinai (Ex 19:1) and Moses goes up on mountain for “several days.” Early Jewish tradition held that he came down on Day 10, so that the giving of the law coincided with the original festival of Pentecost (which was a harvest festival). When Moses came down, Israel was disobediently worshipping the golden calf and so 3,000 died (Ex 32:28). On Pentecost, 3,000 are saved (Acts 2:41).

**Consider also 1 John 4:7,12-13,17:** “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God...12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. 13 By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit...17 for as he is so also are we in this world.”

### **According to John, with what love do we love each other?**

#### **What gift is given, according to the following verses, and *how* is it given?**

- **Acts 1:8** “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”
- **1 John 2:14-15** “14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. 15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.”

**Summary:** The Spirit shares his life with us – a life of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Gifts of the Spirit, Part III: the Fruits of the Spirit**

**Eph 5:22-3** “<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control.”

**Is there a common/core form and focus manifest in all these fruits, considered as a whole?**

**According to the following, how (specifically) do the fruits come about in us?**

- **Origen, *On First Principles* 2.7.4:** “For anyone who has deserved to participate in the Holy Spirit, by the knowledge of ineffable mysteries, undoubtedly obtains consolation and gladness of heart. When he has come to know, by the direction of the Spirit, the reasons of all things that happen—why and how they happen—his soul can in no respect be troubled or accept any feeling of sadness, nor is he alarmed by anything, as, clinging to the Word of God and his Wisdom, he calls Jesus ‘Lord’ in the Holy Spirit [1 Cor 12:3].”
  
- **Gal 5:16-24** “16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.”
  
- **Romans 14:15-19** “15 If your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy someone for whom Christ died. 16 Therefore do not let what you know is good be spoken of as evil. 17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, 18 because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval. 19 Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.”

**According to the following passages, how does this fruit *fail* to come about and what is the consequence?**

- **Acts 7:51:** “You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit!”
- **Eph 4:30-32:** “<sup>30</sup> And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup> Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. <sup>32</sup> Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”

## Gifts of the Spirit Part IV: Guidance, Prayer, and *Internal* Witness

**What gift is given according to the following passages, and how might it come?**

- **Romans 8:14** “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”
- **Gal 5:18,25** “If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law...If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.”
- **John 16:3** “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.”

**What gift is given according to the following passages and how might it change your perspective on prayer?**

- Romans 8:26-27: “<sup>26</sup>Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. <sup>27</sup>And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”

**What gift is given in the following passage, and what do you think it “looks like”?**

- Rom 8:16 “The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”

## Gifts of the Spirit Part V

**What gifts are given according to the following passages, and for what purpose?**

- **1 Cor 12:4-11, 27-8** “<sup>4</sup>Now there are varieties of gifts [*charismata*], but the same Spirit; <sup>5</sup>and there are varieties of service [*diakonia*], but the same Lord; <sup>6</sup>and there are varieties of activities [*energemata* – “energizings”], but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. <sup>7</sup>To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. <sup>8</sup>For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup>to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, <sup>10</sup>to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. <sup>11</sup>All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills... <sup>27</sup>Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. <sup>28</sup>And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues.”
- **1 Cor 7:7** [Writing about how some are given to marriage and some to celibacy for the kingdom, Paul states]: “<sup>7</sup>I wish that all were as I myself am [i.e. single and celibate]. But each has his own gift [*charisma*] from God, one of one kind and one of another.”

**How do the following passages a) elaborate what “prophecy” and “tongues” ARE, b) raise certain concerns, and c) address those concerns?**

- Acts 2:1-8** “2 When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. 5 Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. 6 And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. 7 And they were amazed and astonished, saying, ‘Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?’”
- 1 Cor 14:2-6, 13-33** “2 For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. 3 On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. 4 The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. 5 Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up. 6 Now, brothers, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how will I benefit you unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching?...13 Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret. 14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. 15 What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also. 16 Otherwise, if you give thanks with your spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider say “Amen” to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying? 17 For you may be giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not being built up. 18 I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. 19 Nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue. 20 Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature. 21 In the Law it is written, “By people of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners will I speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord.” 22 Thus tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is a sign not for unbelievers but for believers. 23 If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds? 24 But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, 25 the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you. 26 What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. 27 If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret. 28 But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God. 29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. 30 If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent. 31 For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged, 32 and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. 33 For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.

- **1 Cor 12:31-13:1-3,8-13:**“And I will show you a still more excellent way. [13] If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup> And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup> If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing...<sup>8</sup> Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. <sup>9</sup> For we know in part and we prophesy in part, <sup>10</sup> but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. <sup>11</sup> When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. <sup>12</sup> For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. <sup>13</sup> So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

**A) The gift(s) of prophecy include:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**The gift(s) of tongues include:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**B) Paul raises these concerns:**

**C) How does Paul address those concerns?**

- **How do the following passages further spell out what it means to “weigh what is said” (1 Cor 14:29)?**
  - **1 John 4:1-6** “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. <sup>2</sup> By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, <sup>3</sup> and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. <sup>4</sup> Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. <sup>5</sup> They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. <sup>6</sup> We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.”
  - **John 16:12-15** “<sup>12</sup> “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. <sup>13</sup> When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. <sup>14</sup> He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. <sup>15</sup> All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.”
  - **1 Cor 12:1-3** “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. <sup>2</sup> You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. <sup>3</sup> Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.”

### ***For Us, Today? The Charisms of the Spirit, Pentecostalism, and Other Movements***

Starting in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Christian Church has seen various movements that emphasize some sort of direct/strong experience of the Spirit's presence and power. It is important to recognize some basic differences, along with commonalities, in these. To vastly oversimplify: in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the *Holiness Movement* emerged out of the Methodist emphasis on sanctification and the Second Great Awakening's emphasis on "revival." Here, experience of the Spirit is identified primarily with radical experience of conversion followed by "entire sanctification," i.e. full "perfection" as a real possibility through the Spirit even in this life. In 1901, *Pentecostalism* emerged, which linked the idea of holiness to a second "baptism in the Spirit" *separate from* water baptism, given through the laying on of hands. It also connected Spirit-baptism to "sign gifts" like tongues, healings, miracles, and a specific understanding of prophecy as revealing the future or direct words from God; some Pentecostals say these gifts are intended by God for all individual believers; others say rather that these are ongoing gifts for *all churches*, though not necessarily for all individuals. Those today who remain in holiness movements that are not "Pentecostal" generally resist this focus on sign gifts. (It is also worth knowing that in 1914, a small tribe of "Oneness" Pentecostals emerged who are not Trinitarian but believe that Father, Son, and Spirit simply name different forms into which the one God "changes" at different times in history – a version of the ancient heresy of modalism.). Beyond these new denominations, there are also various movements *within* the traditional denominations, sometimes called "*charismatic*," "*renewal*," or "*charismatic renewal*." Each of these movements are distinctive, too. Some make some common cause with Pentecostalism. Others, distance themselves from Pentecostalism and especially the strong emphasis on sign gifts. Most tend to see the recent emphasis on the Spirit as a *renewal* or *reclamation* of aspects of biblical theology, and sometimes even of their own traditions, that have been "forgotten."

In the LCMS, charismatic renewal was originally linked with the organization Renewal in Missouri, which no longer operates in a formal way, and with specific congregations who took up this emphasis. Semi-official responses came in [1971](#), [1974](#), with related guidance on gifts in [1994](#). In general, there is a concern that any discussion of the Spirit and his gifts not detract from the focus on Christ and the Word and Sacraments. The documents consistently affirm that advocacy of a second "baptism in the Spirit" fundamentally *separate from* water baptism is theologically wrong and detracts in this way. Interestingly, the 1971 document seems to affirm that in principle, we cannot say that any of the gifts definitely have ceased except for apostleship, which is linked with being one of Jesus' original disciples in Acts 1 and other Scriptures (pp.24-5). In some contrast, however, the 1974 document states that any teaching that prophecy, dreams, or direct communication from God occurs today outside the "external" word and sacraments (and their proper interpretation) is false teaching and dangerous to salvation (p.10), and there are hints of that position even in 1971 (p.33). The 1974 document essentially equates such beliefs with that of the "enthusiasts" confronted by Luther and the early Reformers; these "enthusiasts" maintained they had "personal revelations of the Spirit" that contradicted biblical teaching, especially on the sacraments. Furthermore, the latter document also vehemently objects to treating any of the gifts as themselves "means of grace," interpreted especially as looking to the gifts or subjective experience for assurance of salvation, rather than the objective word and sacrament (1974, pp.5,10). There was also significant concern with what was perceived as a willingness of charismatics to ignore doctrinal differences and join in unity and worship with other Christians simply on the basis of shared "charismatic" convictions (1974, p.8). Finally, there was also concern that focus on Spiritual experience was generally tending to displace focus on Christ and Scripture study in practice, even if not in theory, including

through obsession with “spiritual gift inventories” operating in a “church growth” paradigm that emphasized the possibility of “bringing on” the Spirit’s work through these human attempts to organize it (see 1994).

It is worth pondering these concerns. At the same time, we must also remember the command of Jesus not to treat the “traditions of men” as the Word and command of God (Mk 7:6-9). The Word of God must “norm” every other word. So let us come again to the Word of Scripture with two key questions:

- What is the biblical treatment of “spirit baptism” and its relation to water baptism?
- What is the wider biblical evidence for the direct experience of the Spirit and his gifts today?

### “Baptism in the Spirit” as a “Second Experience” beyond Water Baptism?

- **Mark 1:8** [John the Baptizer proclaimed,] “I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”
  - First, we should note that John is absolutely clear that Jesus DOES baptize with the Holy Spirit.
  - Second, John is also clear that there IS a contrast between HIS water baptism and Jesus’s baptism, which brings the Spirit. However, it is quite possible that Jesus could simply ADD the Spirit to water baptism, rather than Spirit-baptism remaining totally distinct from water baptism. In short, this passage doesn’t answer the question in itself. It is also important to remember that John and Jesus actually belong to different *covenants*: John is the last Old Covenant prophet whereas Jesus inaugurates the New Covenant. Paul clearly tells us that all Old Covenant rites ultimately are only *pointers*, whereas Jesus and the New Covenant rites (specifically including baptism) are the *fulfilled realities* (Col 2-3). Finally, and accordingly, as we will see in a moment, Acts 19 clearly states that indeed, even the WATER baptisms of John and Jesus are indeed fundamentally different, requiring those who were baptized with John’s baptism still to be *water* baptized anew in Jesus’ Name.
- **Acts 2** [in Jerusalem] – The Spirit falls on the apostles to preach in other tongues; Peter preaches (Acts 2:38): “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”
  - Here the gift of the Spirit is clearly linked to the reception of water baptism. Exegetes argue, though, whether baptism is presented as the *means* through which the Spirit comes, or whether it is “involved” without the Spirit’s coming being reducible or subsequent to the employment of baptism as “means.”
- **Acts 8:9-17** [in Samaria] “<sup>9</sup> But there was a man named Simon, who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great. <sup>10</sup> They all paid attention to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, “This man is the power of God that is called Great.” <sup>11</sup> And they paid attention to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic. <sup>12</sup> But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. <sup>13</sup> Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great powers unfolding, he was amazed. <sup>14</sup> Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, <sup>15</sup> who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, <sup>16</sup> for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>17</sup> Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.”



- Here water baptism apparently comes first WITHOUT the descent of the Spirit, which then comes through the laying on of the apostles' hands. This is a key passage for those who conclude these are two, separate "baptisms." It certainly adds to the argument that they are not collapsible; BUT, it is also significant that the two are kept in close proximity.
- **Acts 10:44-48** – [God tells Peter in a dream that he should not consider "unclean" anything that God has made clean, even if it was originally "ruled out" by the Mosaic Law. Peter is then sent by the Spirit to preach the Gospel to the household of Cornelius, a Gentile convert to Judaism in Caesarea and the following happens]: "44 While Peter was still [preaching], the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. 45 And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. 46 For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, 47 "Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ."
  - Here the Spirit falls first, WITHOUT the imposition of hands. Peter then asserts that this falling should lead immediately to water baptism.
  - Note also **Acts 11:15-18**, in which Peter is reflecting on this experience later with other Jewish Christians, who were unsure about the inclusion of Gentiles on equal footing in the Church: "[Peter said,] 15 'As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. 16 And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' 17 If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?" 18 When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life." This is the passage that most clearly links an initial falling of the Spirit outside of Pentecost itself to "*baptism* in the Spirit."
- **Acts 19:1-6**: "And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. 2 And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." 3 And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They said, "Into John's baptism." 4 And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus." 5 On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. 7 There were about twelve men in all."
  - First, we note again the difference between John's water baptism and even the *water* baptism into Jesus. Those with the first still need the second.
  - Second, notice where Paul's questioning immediately went: you don't have the Spirit? Well, then what *water* baptism did you receive? This indicates that for apostles like Paul, the gift of the Spirit is *standardly* linked to water baptism.

### Key Exegetical Conclusions

- Perhaps the first and most important conclusion is simply that we not lose sight of the fact that Jesus DOES "baptize in the Spirit"!

- Second, there does also seem to be some distinction between water baptism and spirit baptism: in Acts 8, water baptism can come without Spirit baptism; in Acts 10, Spirit baptism comes before water baptism and thus without water baptism as the means.
- Yet third, there is also a steady assumption that water baptism and Spirit baptism “standardly” either go directly together, or if one comes first, it immediately necessitates the other.
- Fourth, while the “laying on of hands” did seem to be a means for Spirit baptism in some of these passages, in others, that baptism simply occurred through the Spirit’s own operation in and around the preached word.

### Key Practical Conclusions – What about us?

- Together, these points suggest that we too should standardly see and practice water baptism and spirit baptism as one united act. Not incidentally, many ancient and modern baptismal rites (including Luther’s own order that we use at St. Peter, as well as Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, Presbyterian, and others) include prayer for the Spirit of God accompanied by the laying on of hands and/or the imposition of oil (a sign of the Spirit); often the prayer invokes the gifts of Isaiah 11: “Pour out your spirit upon your servant, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence.”
- Given this, there is no need to seek a second BAPTISM in the Spirit. Of course, that does not preclude other specific forms of the Spirit’s ongoing descent and work.
- Finally, a Pentecostal might reply to this: but in Acts, the Spirit’s coming was always with tongues or some other “sign.” So how can there be a genuine “baptism in the Spirit” without some such sign gift (which don’t regularly occur at water baptisms)? In reply, we should simply note that there is a fundamental difference between *description*, *promise*, and *prescription*: the passages examined from acts simply *describe* what happened at one point in history; in itself, such description is NEITHER a promise that this will *always* happen, NOR a prescription (command) to ensure some sign gift with every “baptism in the Spirit.”

### Further Experience, Expressions, and Gifts of The Spirit Today

But what, then, about other direct experience of the Spirit and his gifts today – in addition to the mediation of the Spirit through Word and Sacrament, on which we all agree?

#### Cautionary Arguments

1. Wide gifts of course are quite evident throughout Acts. But here the same basic point applies that applied to the connection of the gifts to spirit-baptism: in Acts *as such*, the gifts appear in a description of what God did at a certain point in salvation history, not the language of promise or command. The Acts description *alone* thus cannot prove anything one way or another.
2. Relatedly, it is worth noting that God has specific purposes for sending the Spirit at that particular point in history: fulfilling prophecy, getting a new church off the ground, using the “sign gifts” to help settle the argument over whether the Gentiles should be included and on what terms: they were, precisely, a SIGN to the Jewish Christians that God was including the Gentiles along with them, simply through faith. Perhaps the current history does not give rise to similar purposes and actions.
  - a. Caveat: at the same time, this of course does not rule out that the Spirit might not see other needs and purposes for such sign gifts in OUR specific history.

3. The whole thrust of 1 Cor 12 is that not everyone has every gift but we each are gifted differently, for the common good. And notably, plenty of these gifts are not some miraculous show of power. Moreover, if one compares the various lists of gifts across Scriptural passages, they are not the same – which suggests that no list is intended to be definitive or exhaustive but rather *suggestive* of some of the core things the Spirit *may* give and use to bring about the common good.

*Yet, some promises do seem to be given to ALL Christians as such:*

- **Romans 8:14** “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”
- **Gal 5:18,25** “If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law...If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.”

**Caveat:** Notably, though, these passages do not say if that leading is “inner,” or rather simply “outer,” i.e. through the Word preached and interpreted.

*In other passages, Paul directly instructs the Corinthians to desire and pursue the sign gifts, and not to forbid them*

- **1 Cor 14:1,5:** “Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy...<sup>5</sup> Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy...”
- **1 Cor 14:39:** “So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues.”
- **1 Thess 5:19-21:** “19 Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not treat prophecies with contempt 21 but test them all; hold on to what is good, 22 reject every kind of evil.”
- **Caveats:**
  - As we have seen, it is not immediately clear that prophecy must always be something other than Spirit-given, sound *interpretation* of the Scripture to the present moment.
  - It is also VITAL to remember that God gives different, specific commands to different people at different times, and also that the Scriptures themselves are FIRST historical documents written to a specific audience, the believers in particular congregations in the first century, with commands specific to them and their context. Many of these commands of course apply to us also, but we cannot simply lift every passage out of its historical context and turn it into a universal command for all times and places. So we cannot, in my view, definitely conclude that these calls to pursue prophesy and tongues are definitely direct commands for all of us. Indeed, in this particular case, I would say other aspects of Scripture itself militate against this, namely Paul’s own surrounding admonition that not everyone will have every gift, along with the “ad hoc” nature of the gifts lists. At the same time, again, this does not rule out that the Spirit is sovereign and might have other purposes for employ more miraculous gifts in particular contexts today.

**Exegetical Summary:** Spirit-Baptism by Jesus is standardly to be linked to water baptism, not divorced from it. No specific gifts, beyond the ones identified for all Christians in the opening of this lesson, are required or definitively promised for all times, places, or people. And yet, the Spirit remains sovereign and may find various reasons to employ any gift today as He sees fit. So we should never foreclose such possibilities.

**Ponder for Next Week:** Under the guides given in these Scriptures, how have YOU “experienced” the Spirit as “practically” important and effective in YOUR life?