COGMA

Church of God Mission Academy

STUDY GUIDE 85

Pentecostalism Unmasked

STUDY GUIDE 1 OF 3:

Pentecostalism: Origins and Claims

An overview of Pentecostalism's origins, claims and biblical testing.



Equipping and empowering for effective service

2 Timothy 2:2

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

My Study Plan

Preparing a Study Plan before starting this Study Guide will assist you in completing it within a designated timeframe. It also helps in developing the discipline required for studying God's Word effectively.

Proverbs 16:3:

> *Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.*

My Study Guide Journal

Keep a record as you progress through your Study Guide, including the Personal Responses for each section, for future reference and goal setting.

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Important Points

- COGMA does not claim to be infallible or the authority.
- Infallibility and authority belong only to God and His Word.

COGMA therefore strongly advises that you prayerfully study the content of each Study Guide with the heart of a Berean (**Acts 17:10–12**).

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PREFACE

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This Study Guide is written to bring clarity where there has been much confusion. Its purpose is not to attack people, question their sincerity or mock religious experience. Many who belong to Pentecostal groups may sincerely love God and desire to serve Him. However, sincerity alone does not determine truth.

The Bible instructs believers to *"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good"* (**1 Thessalonians 5:21**). History must also be examined honestly. When a religious movement claims that its teachings and practices originated with Jesus Christ and the apostles, those claims must be tested against Scripture and the available historical evidence.

This first Study Guide focuses on origins and asks three important questions. Where did Pentecostalism, as a modern religious movement, begin? Did its distinctive teachings originate with Jesus Christ and the apostles, or did they develop much later? Which of its teachings are established in the Scriptures, and which arose through later religious movements?

By carefully tracing the history of Pentecostalism and comparing its claims with Scripture, this Study Guide seeks to distinguish historical facts from religious assumptions. History can help establish when particular teachings and practices arose, but Scripture remains the final authority for determining spiritual truth. For this reason, examine the evidence carefully, even when it challenges beliefs you have held for many years.

Do not begin with what you have always been told. Begin with what is written. Let Scripture speak first, examine every claim, and be willing to accept what the Word of God reveals.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why must claims about Pentecostal origins be tested by both the Bible and historical evidence?

Personal Reflection

When a trusted belief is challenged, are you willing to test it by God's Word and the facts?

Action Step

Identify one claim about Pentecostal origins you have accepted. What evidence would change your thinking, and what will you examine first?

INTRODUCTION

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At the beginning of the twentieth century, a new religious movement spread across many countries. This movement became known as Pentecostalism. Many people were drawn to its meetings, emotional worship and reports of miracles, and its influence increased rapidly.

From the beginning, this movement was not united. It developed into numerous churches and groups, often disagreeing in teaching and practice. Charles Parham, a preacher from the Holiness movement, taught that speaking in tongues was the biblical evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit, which he placed after conversion.

One of his students, William J. Seymour, later led meetings in Los Angeles at Azusa Street. These meetings became famous, and their influence spread into many churches and nations. Their historical development and the claims associated with them require careful examination.

Reports of Religious Manifestations

Contemporary reports described noisy and highly emotional meetings at Azusa Street. On 18 April 1906, the Los Angeles Daily Times published its report headed *"Weird Babel of Tongues"*, describing a *"Wild Scene"* and the *"howlings of the worshipers"*. The report described swaying, arm movements, shouting and speech the reporter considered unintelligible.

The newspaper's language was openly hostile and included racial prejudice. Its observations must therefore be distinguished from its ridicule. The movement's own newspaper, The Apostolic Faith of September 1906, also described participants being overcome during meetings, using the expression *"slain under the power of God"*.

Later historical accounts also record the mocking names used for people attending these meetings, including *"Holy Rollers"*, *"Holy Jumpers"*, *"Tangled Tonguers"* and *"Holy Ghosters"* (The Washington Post, 15 April 2006). These names reflect the public ridicule directed towards early Pentecostal participants, not the biblical authority of their experiences.

Later Pentecostal and charismatic meetings were associated with reports of uncontrollable laughter, shaking, jerking, falling and lying on the floor. Accounts also described running, spinning, roaring and barking. These reports concern later manifestations; they must not all be attributed to the April 1906 newspaper account of Azusa Street.

Rodney Howard-Browne, associated with Revival Ministries International, used the description *"Holy Ghost bartender"* about himself. His ministry influenced the movement associated with the Toronto blessing. Brownsville also had connections with the wider revival network, including visits to Toronto by members of its leadership circle and participation by followers of Howard-Browne.

Testing the Claims by Scripture

Does unusual behaviour establish that the Holy Spirit is at work? Does a strong emotional experience prove the truth of the teaching that accompanies it? These questions must be answered from Scripture, not from the intensity of a meeting or the confidence of its leaders.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 14:40**:

> *"Let all things be done decently and in order."*

In this Study Guide, we will examine these teachings and behaviours in the light of the Bible. In the Gospel Day, baptism in the Holy Spirit takes place when a person is truly born again, and Jesus Christ alone makes the believer complete. We will examine the origins of the claims and trace how they spread before comparing them with the Word of God.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why can the intensity of a religious meeting not establish that its teaching comes from God?

Personal Reflection

Have strong emotions in a meeting ever influenced your judgement about what is true?

Action Step

Think of a religious experience you found convincing. What will you check in the Bible before accepting the teaching attached to it?

THE ORIGINS OF MODERN PENTECOSTALISM

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Modern Pentecostalism claims to continue the experience recorded on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2. Its distinctive teaching about a later baptism in the Holy Spirit, evidenced by speaking in tongues, must be traced historically and tested through Scripture. We will begin with the Methodist and Holiness movements before examining the claims that emerged at Topeka.

Pentecostal Claims About Pentecost

The Pentecostal movement claims to trace its history back to the book of Acts and the day of Pentecost in A.D. 31, when the disciples received the Holy Spirit and spoke with *"other tongues."* This claim gives Acts 2 a central place in Pentecostal teaching, so we must examine it carefully.

Luke wrote in **Acts 2:4**:

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

Pentecostal teachers say that their modern movement continues this same experience. In this module we will test this claim by looking closely at what the Scripture really says about the day of Pentecost. We will compare the experience of the disciples in Acts 2 with the experiences claimed by Pentecostals today.

But what actually happened on that day, and does it agree with the experiences claimed by modern Pentecostal teachers? Claiming to have the same experience does not establish that the experiences are the same. We must examine what Scripture records rather than assume that similar religious expressions prove a common spiritual origin.

Methodist and Holiness Roots

The origin of Pentecostalism is the early twentieth century. It has its roots in the holiness movement of the Methodist church, which began as a revival inside the Church of England, led by John Wesley.

John Wesley taught that, after a person is truly converted, there is a further second work of grace. He spoke of two main works of grace in the Christian life.

The first is the new birth, or justification, when a person is forgiven and becomes a Christian. The second is entire sanctification, or Christian perfection, a further work of grace after conversion, to be sought earnestly by believers.

The Methodist movement that grew out of Wesley's preaching placed strong emphasis on this teaching about holiness and a second work of grace. In the 1800s, people within Methodism formed the Holiness movement, wanting to re-emphasise Wesley's teaching on entire sanctification as a definite second work of grace. In the years after his death, various Wesleyan Holiness groups and denominations were formed to preserve and promote this doctrine.

From this Holiness background many of the early Pentecostal leaders and churches eventually sprang. Historians widely recognise this Wesleyan Holiness stream as the main immediate precursor of Pentecostalism. Men such as Charles Parham and William J. Seymour were first shaped by Wesleyan Holiness teaching before they added the idea of a further baptism in the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues.

However, the sequence was not taught identically by every group. Early Azusa Street teaching distinguished three experiences: justification, sanctification and baptism with the Holy Ghost. Within that framework, Spirit baptism followed what they regarded as a separate experience of sanctification. The important issue is therefore not whether a denomination calls Spirit baptism a second or third experience, but whether Scripture teaches that a born-again believer must receive the Holy Spirit through a later experience.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How did Methodist and Holiness teaching prepare the way for a later Pentecostal experience after conversion?

Personal Reflection

Does learning about Pentecostalism's later origins cause you to reconsider anything you were taught about receiving the Spirit?

Action Step

Identify one inherited belief about receiving the Holy Spirit. How does the new birth in Christ challenge it, and what must you now reconsider?

Charles Parham and the Formation of Pentecostal Teaching

Historically, this new teaching took shape at the start of the twentieth century. Bethel Bible College was opened by Charles Parham in Topeka, Kansas, in October 1900. In December of that year, Parham asked all his students to study the Bible on the subject of the baptism in the Holy Spirit and to find the Bible evidence for this experience.

Parham already believed there was a supernatural experience after conversion, a further work of grace which he called the baptism in the Holy Spirit. When the students reported back to him just before the New Year of 1901, they told him that in the book of Acts the outward evidence of this baptism was speaking in tongues.

This conclusion became central to the teaching that followed. Tongues were no longer treated simply as something described in particular biblical events. They became the identifying

evidence by which people were encouraged to recognise and seek what Parham called baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The Topeka Outpouring

The first person in Parham's school to claim this experience was a woman named Agnes Ozman. On 1 January 1901 she asked Parham to lay hands on her so she could receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit as they had just defined it. She then began to speak in what they believed was a real foreign language, which they said was Chinese, and for a time she could not speak English.

In the days that followed, other students and Parham himself also reported speaking in tongues. These events are commonly called the Topeka Outpouring. They formed an influential framework for modern Pentecostalism: an experience after conversion, with tongues as the evidence of receiving Spirit baptism.

Was Agnes Ozman Really Speaking Chinese?

Parham later wrote that Agnes Ozman:

"began speaking in the Chinese language, and was unable to speak English for three days."

He also said that when she tried to write in English:

"she wrote in the Chinese language,"

Copies of this *"Chinese"* writing were printed in newspapers. Her fellow students also said that she started speaking Chinese and that she wrote in Chinese characters.

Parham's identification must be distinguished from independent confirmation that the language was Chinese. The Religion in Kansas Project preserves a reproduction described as writing that was assumed to be Chinese. The expectation was that God would provide real foreign languages for missionary work, but an expectation is not proof that an intelligible language was spoken.

An earlier account also exists. The Topeka Daily Capital of 6 January 1901 reported former student S. J. Riggins saying that a sample of Ozman's supposed Chinese writing had been shown to a Chinese reader in Topeka, who could not translate it. This is a reported encounter rather than a surviving independent translation, but it adds to the historical reason for examining the language claim carefully.

A historical retelling also preserved the reported reaction of a Chinese reader in the stereotyped wording, *"Me no understand. Takee to Jap."* This quotation reflects the prejudiced way the words were represented at the time and is not language we should imitate. The important historical point is that the writing was reportedly not recognised as an intelligible Chinese message.

A later published enquiry by Shawn Lazar describes sending a reproduced sample to a Chinese-speaking acquaintance. The reader recognised some strokes resembling parts of Chinese characters but could not identify a coherent Chinese message. This was an informal assessment of one reproduced sample, not a comprehensive linguistic examination of everything Ozman said or wrote.

Testing the First Pentecostal "Proof"

The claim concerning Ozman has been used as an early example supporting the Pentecostal understanding of tongues. Yet the evidence examined here does not establish that the reported Chinese speech and writing were an authenticated language miracle. In Acts 2, by contrast, hearers recognised their own languages.

This should be compared with what Luke recorded concerning the day of Pentecost. He wrote in **Acts 2:6-8**:

> *"Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?"*

Notice the distinction. In Acts 2, the hearers recognised their own languages and understood that the speakers were communicating in tongues they had not naturally learned. Luke identifies both the speakers and those who heard them, establishing that the languages were understood by people present. The disciples themselves spoke with understanding, and the people who heard them understood what was spoken in their own languages.

The question deserves an honest answer. Was a genuine language demonstrated, or was an unusual experience interpreted as a language because that was what the participants expected? Religious enthusiasm cannot settle that question. Nor can an unverified experience establish a doctrine that must be founded upon the Word of God.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why must the claim that Agnes Ozman spoke Chinese be distinguished from independent confirmation of a language?

Personal Reflection

How has the difference between a claimed miracle and a verified language changed the way you hear religious reports?

Action Step

If someone describes unverified speech as a miracle, how will you respond without ridicule while remaining faithful to what Acts 2 records?

THE SPREAD OF MODERN PENTECOSTALISM

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The teaching developed at Topeka did not remain confined to Charles Parham and his students. It spread through preachers and religious meetings and became associated with a growing movement that claimed to restore apostolic Christianity. One of the most influential centres of that expansion emerged in Los Angeles in 1906.

The Azusa Street Revival

In the year 1906, what we now know as the Azusa Street revival began under the leadership of William J. Seymour, an African American preacher who had come out of the Holiness movement and then embraced Pentecostal teaching. Seymour had briefly attended Charles Parham's Bible school in Houston, Texas, where he heard the new doctrine that there is a baptism in the Holy Spirit after conversion, and that the evidence of this baptism is speaking in tongues.

Invited to Los Angeles, Seymour preached that believers should seek the further experience of Spirit baptism, with tongues as its sign. Some leaders rejected his teaching, and a small group invited him to continue meetings in a house in Bonnie Brae Street. In April 1906, participants began reporting that they had spoken in tongues.

Within days, the crowds became too large for the house, and the meetings moved to a simple building at 312 Azusa Street. It became known as the Apostolic Faith Mission. Reports described long services, emotional scenes, shouting, crying, falling to the floor and claims of speaking in other languages.

Seymour and those working with him presented the movement as a restoration of apostolic Christianity. They urged believers to seek Spirit baptism after conversion and sanctification. Visitors and preachers carried the teaching from Los Angeles across the United States and into other countries, making Azusa Street a major centre of its worldwide spread.

Early Pentecostal Denominations

Out of this stream many Pentecostal denominations either arose or were reshaped. One of the most important was the Assemblies of God, formed in 1914 at a ministers' meeting in Hot Springs, Arkansas. Its leaders were strongly influenced by the Topeka and Azusa Street teachings and adopted the belief that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a second experience after conversion, with speaking in tongues as its initial physical evidence.

The Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee, began in 1886 as the Christian Union, associated with Richard Green Spurling and others who had departed from Baptist structures. Its founders sought to follow the New Testament rather than remain bound by denominational traditions. The organisation subsequently became associated with the Holiness movement and teaching about sanctification after conversion.

During 1907–1908, its adoption of the Pentecostal teaching became more definite. In January 1908, Gaston B. Cashwell, who had visited Azusa Street, preached in Cleveland, and A. J. Tomlinson reported receiving the experience with tongues. The organisation increasingly identified itself with the Pentecostal movement.

An organisation could therefore begin before modern Pentecostalism and later embrace its teaching. Its founding date must be distinguished from the date on which tongues became accepted as evidence of Spirit baptism. The historical beginning of a denomination and its subsequent doctrinal development are not the same event.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How did Azusa Street help spread teaching that had developed at Topeka?

Personal Reflection

Have you ever accepted a teaching chiefly because it was popular? What does that reveal about your judgement?

Action Step

Name one belief you have accepted because many churches teach it. What will you examine, and how might your view need to change?

The Church of God Must Be Distinguished from a Denomination

It is very important not to confuse this Pentecostal denomination with the true Church of God described in the New Testament. The expression the Church of God refers to the one spiritual body of Christ made up of all who are truly born again, walk in the light of God's Word, and remain faithful to the gospel;

The name Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee) refers only to a human organisation which has taken that Bible name while teaching Pentecostal doctrines such as a second blessing and tongues as the necessary evidence of Spirit baptism. The true Church of God does not rest on Pentecostal traditions, but on Jesus Christ alone, on the one new birth, and on the one Spirit given to every believer, without the need to seek another spirit or a second experience to be complete in Him.

Major Pentecostal Denominations – Size and Founding Dates

Figures below are dated estimates or organisational reports. They are not all measured on the same basis or in the same year, and they must not be treated as directly comparable current totals. Founding dates may distinguish first organisation from incorporation or a later denominational name.

Denomination and founding date	Reported membership or constituency	Historical description
Assemblies of God — 1914	Approximately 88.9 million worldwide (2025)	Organised at Hot Springs, Arkansas, USA. The largest worldwide Pentecostal fellowship by reported adherents.
Church of God in Christ (COGIC) — 1897; incorporated 1907	Approximately 6.5 million; organisational estimate	Began through the Holiness work of Charles H. Mason and later became a major Pentecostal denomination headquartered in Memphis, Tennessee.

Denomination and founding date	Reported membership or constituency	Historical description
Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee — 1886	More than 8 million members; organisational report	Began as the Christian Union and subsequently embraced Pentecostal teaching. It adopted the name Church of God in 1907.
Apostolic Church, UK and worldwide — 1916	More than 15 million; organisational estimate	Developed from early British Pentecostal work and spread through affiliated churches internationally. Its early British Pentecostal work developed during 1909–1911.
International Church of the Foursquare Gospel — 1923; incorporated 1927	More than 8.8 million; organisational estimate	Founded by Aimee Semple McPherson in Los Angeles. *"Foursquare"* describes its teaching of Jesus as Saviour, Baptiser, Healer and *"Coming King"*.
The Church of Pentecost, Ghana — 1953; renamed 1962	5,226,271 worldwide (2025)	Developed from the work of James McKeown and expanded internationally. It was organised as the Gold Coast Apostolic Church in 1953.
Christian Congregation in Brazil — 1910	Approximately 2.29 million in Brazil (2010 census); not a current worldwide total	Founded through the work of Luigi Francescon and became a significant Pentecostal denomination in Brazil. It is one of the early influential Pentecostal groups in Brazil.

Denomination and founding date	Reported membership or constituency	Historical description
The Pentecostal Mission (TPM) — 1923; registered 1924	Reliable current worldwide total not established	Established in Colombo, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), through the work of Paul Ramankutty and Alwin R. de Alwis. Originally known as the Ceylon Pentecostal Mission, it later spread to India and other countries.
International Pentecostal Holiness Church (IPHC) — 1911 merger	More than 2.1 million worldwide; organisational report	Formed through the union of earlier Holiness organisations that had adopted Pentecostal teaching. The merger took place in Falcon, North Carolina.
United Pentecostal Church International (UPCI) — 1945	Approximately 6.2 million constituents worldwide (2025)	A Oneness Pentecostal denomination formed through the merger of two earlier Pentecostal organisations. The bodies were Pentecostal Church, Inc. and Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why must a denomination's founding date be distinguished from the date it accepted Pentecostal teaching?

Personal Reflection

Does a church's name or size influence whom you regard as belonging to Christ?

Action Step

Examine one assumption you make about spiritual membership. What will you change in how you judge people in the light of the new birth?

CAN PENTECOSTALISM TRACE ITS ORIGIN TO CHRIST?

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The first question we need to ask is whether the origin of Pentecostalism in the early 1900s can trace back to Jesus Christ and the church that He built and revealed on the day of Pentecost, on the sixth of Sivan in A.D. 31. The answer must be established from both the historical record and the teaching of Jesus Christ.

The clear answer is no. Pentecostalism has its immediate roots in Methodism and the Holiness movement. John Wesley, Charles Wesley and George Whitefield were important figures in the Methodist movement, which began within the eighteenth-century Church of England. Separate Methodist organisations developed, including the American Methodist Episcopal Church in 1784, during Wesley's lifetime.

What is clear is that before the eighteenth century there was no Methodist church, and before the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there was no Pentecostal church. Neither can be found in the Bible, because the only church it speaks of is the Church of God, whose founder and builder is none other than Christ Himself.

Jesus Christ Himself identified who would build His Church. Matthew recorded His words in **Matthew 16:18**:

> *"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."*

Notice the words *"I will build my church"*. Jesus did not promise to establish a succession of religious denominations under competing human authorities. He declared that He would build His own Church, and that Church belongs to Him. Its spiritual existence rests upon His saving work, not upon the establishment of a later religious organisation.

Pentecostalism has its roots in Protestantism, which came out of Roman Catholicism. No Protestant denomination, from Lutherans to Baptists to Presbyterians, has any existence prior to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The Church Jesus built was founded in A.D. 31, and Jesus Himself is the head. By contrast, modern Pentecostal bodies freely admit that they stand within the Protestant family.

Pentecostal Denominations and Protestant Identity

- The Assemblies of God states on its official USA website, under the heading "Our Position in the Christian World," that "The Assemblies of God is a Protestant fellowship." They openly accept the Protestant label;
- The Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee), one of the largest Pentecostal denominations in the United States, says on its official site that the Church of God is "founded upon the principles of Protestantism" and is "positioned in the mainstream of Evangelical Protestantism";
- The Church of God in Christ (COGIC) describes itself, in its official history, as part of "the great Protestant body," and in various statements calls itself "the fourth largest Protestant group in the United States." These leading Pentecostal denominations publicly identify themselves as Protestant and Evangelical Protestant. Their statements establish organisational identity; they do not establish that the denominations existed on the day of Pentecost. A claim to continue or restore apostolic teaching must still be tested by Scripture.

The true Church of God does not rest upon Protestant or Pentecostal traditions. It rests upon Jesus Christ, the one new birth and the one Spirit given to every believer. An organisational history and a claim of spiritual continuity are different matters.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why does a claim to restore apostolic Christianity not prove that a denomination began with Christ?

Personal Reflection

What has Christ's promise to build His own Church changed in your understanding of denominational claims?

Action Step

When someone claims their denomination began with the apostles, what will you examine, and how will you keep Christ's headship central?

Origins of Protestant Denominations

Protestant denominations and groups arose in the sixteenth century and the seventeenth century as organised movements led by human founders such as Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Cranmer, and Smyth. The word Protestant itself comes from a formal protest in A.D. 1529, often called the Protestation at the Diet of Speyer, when certain princes and cities protested against decisions that supported Roman Catholic teaching and authority.

From that period onward, churches that followed these reformers were called Protestant, because they protested against the teachings and authority of the Roman Catholic Church. So, in the normal historical sense, there were no Protestant denominations before the fifteen hundreds A.D. Before that time, in the West, organised church life was under the broad umbrella of what we now call the Roman Catholic Church.

The Origins of Baptist and Anglican Churches

The Baptist churches provide an example. In A.D. 1609, John Smyth, an English Separatist, formed the first known Baptist congregation. Its denominational beginning was a separation from the Church of England, not an organisation established by Jesus Christ in the first century.

The Church of England's break with papal authority was formalised through the Act of Supremacy in A.D. 1534, during Henry VIII's reign. This followed the dispute concerning the ending of his marriage. The Act concerned royal supremacy over the English Church; it did not mark the beginning of Christianity in England. Anglican and Episcopal churches belong within the religious history shaped by that separation from Rome.

Why We Are Not Protestant

Many people today assume that anyone who is not Roman Catholic must be a Protestant. This is not correct. There are Eastern Orthodox churches, various independent groups, and also the true Church of God which do not belong to the Roman Catholic system and are not Protestant denominations.

A common idea is that the church described in the New Testament gradually became the Roman Catholic Church, and then, through men such as Martin Luther, Menno Simons, the Wesley brothers and others, this Roman Catholic Church reformed and changed into what is

now called Protestantism. In this way people imagine just one visible line of churches, first Roman Catholic, later Protestant.

This, however, is not the full truth. According to the Bible, the church that Jesus built has never been part of Roman Catholicism and is not the product of the Reformation. Christ founded His Church in the first century. It is His body, made up of all who are truly born again and walk in the light. Human systems rose later alongside that true church and often tried to claim its name and authority, but the Church of God itself has always belonged to Christ alone.

Denominational Membership and Historical Origins

Historically, what we now call Protestant churches began in the fifteen hundreds during the Reformation. The term Protestant comes from the Protestation made by certain German princes at the Diet of Speyer in A.D. 1529, when they protested against decisions that supported the Roman Catholic position.

From this time onward, various denominations arose, such as Lutheran churches, Reformed churches, the Church of England, and later groups such as the Baptists, Methodists, and many more. None of these denominations existed in New Testament times, and none can trace their denominational origin back before the Reformation period in the sixteenth century.

All Protestant churches, whatever name they carry, are man-made organisations. They were founded by men or women at particular points in history. They appoint their own heads and leaders and adopt their own rules and laws. To become a member of a Protestant denomination you must accept a creed, confession, or discipline, and agree to its list of beliefs and practices.

Each denomination has its own marks which separate it from the others. For example, many Baptist congregations will require a person who comes from a Lutheran or Pentecostal background to be baptised again as a believer before receiving full membership and recognised rights, such as taking communion as part of that local body. In practice, full fellowship and privilege within a denomination usually depends on formally joining that denomination.

The Rise of the Roman Catholic System

After the Roman emperors granted legal status to Christianity in A.D. 313, the Western church and the bishop of Rome gradually became closely tied to imperial power and Roman culture. Over many centuries this alliance produced the organised system we now call the Roman Catholic Church, with the pope claiming titles such as *“Supreme Pontiff”* and *“Vicar of Christ,”* and holding a place of earthly headship in the church that the New Testament reserves for Jesus Christ alone.

God's Remnant Beyond Religious Institutions

At the same time, we must remember that God always had His remnant. The true Church of God is not the same as any later Protestant or Catholic system. It consists of those who are truly born again, who walk in the light of God’s Word, and who live under the sole headship of Christ, whatever the outward state of religion around them.

Paul established this headship in **Colossians 1:18**:

> *"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."*

Notice that Paul did not identify an earthly religious office as the head of Christ's spiritual body. He declared that Jesus Christ Himself is the Head of the Church. His authority is not dependent upon an earthly institution, and no organisation can assume the place that belongs to Him.

Christ Alone Is the Church's Foundation and Head

In history, Pentecostalism begins in the early twentieth century, not in A.D. 31 on the day of Pentecost. It grows out of the Methodist and Holiness movements, which themselves arose inside the Church of England in the eighteenth century. Before that time there was no Methodist church, and before the nineteenth and twentieth centuries there was no Pentecostal church.

The broader Protestant denominations, such as Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican, Baptist, and Presbyterian, only appear from the sixteenth century onwards. They took shape as organised movements protesting against the Roman Catholic system, which itself had developed over many centuries after A.D. 313, as the Western church became joined to imperial power and the bishop of Rome took on titles and powers the Bible never gives to any man. In this normal historical sense there were no Protestant denominations at all before the fifteen hundreds A.D.

Modern Pentecostal bodies openly identify themselves with the Protestant stream. The Assemblies of God, Church of God, Cleveland, and Church of God in Christ use Protestant descriptions in their own statements. Such identification places them within a family of later movements rather than proving an organisational beginning on the day of Pentecost.

By contrast, the New Testament speaks only of the Church of God, founded by Christ Himself, built on the one new birth, and joined by the one Spirit given to every true believer. God has always had His remnant, but neither the Roman Catholic system nor the later Protestant and Pentecostal systems can claim to be the original church of A.D. 31.

Paul wrote in **1 Timothy 6:15**:

> *"Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;"*

Peter wrote in **1 Peter 2:25**:

> *"For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."*

Jesus Christ has never abdicated His authority to any pope, bishop, founder, or denomination, nor has He ever given any man the right to stand in His place as head of the church. He alone is the blessed and only Potentate, the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, the only true Pontiff and overseer of His children. Therefore Pentecostalism cannot trace its origin back to Christ on the day of Pentecost, and no Pentecostal or Protestant body can rightly claim to be the church's foundation or head in His stead.

This does not deny the ministries and offices of service that Christ has given within His Church. Those who serve are accountable to Him and His Word. Their responsibility is to care for His children and faithfully teach His truth, never to claim ownership of the Church or authority independent of its Head.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does Christ's headship distinguish His Church from the later religious systems described here?

Personal Reflection

Have you given a respected leader more authority in your thinking than the Word of God?

Action Step

Think of a respected religious authority. How will you test its claims while giving Jesus Christ, not that leader, the final place?

THE PENTECOSTAL NAME

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The name Pentecostal is familiar today, but what does the word actually mean? Was it the name given to the Church by Jesus Christ, or did a later movement adopt it from the events of Acts chapter 2? We must begin with the meaning of Pentecost in Scripture.

The Meaning of Pentecost

In the Bible the word Pentecost does not describe a church or a denomination. It refers to one of the feasts given to Israel under the law of Moses. In the Old Testament it is called the Feast of Weeks or the Feast of Harvest (also the Feast of Firstfruits of wheat harvest). It was one of the three great pilgrimage feasts when all the men of Israel were to appear before the Lord in Jerusalem.

The word Pentecost comes from a Greek word that simply means *"fiftieth"*. The feast was held on the fiftieth day after the offering of the first sheaf of the harvest, which took place during the Passover season (see **Leviticus 23:15–21**; **Deuteronomy 16:9–12**). God told Israel to count seven full weeks, forty-nine days, and then on the fiftieth day they kept the Feast of Weeks.

The name therefore identifies an appointed day in Israel's religious calendar. It did not originally describe a spiritual experience, a Christian denomination or a particular group of believers. Understanding this distinction is essential when examining the later adoption of the name Pentecostal.

Pentecost in Acts Chapter 2

The day of Pentecost in Acts 2 was the same appointed feast following the Passover season in which Jesus was crucified. Before His ascension, He showed Himself alive to His disciples for forty days.

Luke wrote in **Acts 1:3**:

> *"To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:"*

Luke then recorded His ascension in **Acts 1:9**:

> *"And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight."*

About ten days later, the disciples were together in Jerusalem when the day of Pentecost fully came. The Holy Ghost was poured out upon them on that appointed day.

Luke wrote in **Acts 2:1–4**:

> *"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."*

Pentecost identifies the day on which this happened. It does not name the Church or give its members a denominational identity.

Personal Response

Key Truth

What does Pentecost identify in the Bible, and why does this matter when examining the Pentecostal name?

Personal Reflection

What assumption have you held about the name Pentecostal, and how has the meaning of Pentecost challenged it?

Action Step

When you speak about Pentecost, how will you distinguish the Bible event from a modern church name and explain belonging to Christ?

Not a Name for the Church of God

Pentecost was a feast day on God's calendar, not the name of a denomination. When groups call themselves Pentecostal, their name is drawn from the word meaning *"fiftieth"* and from the festival associated with that number. They name themselves after a day and an event rather than using the biblical name of Christ's Church. Many years later, modern churches that teach a second baptism in the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues borrowed this word from Acts 2 and began to call themselves Pentecostal, claiming that their experience is a repeat of what happened *"on the day of Pentecost."* It is important to remember that the name Pentecost in the Bible belongs to the feast day itself and to the historical event of Acts 2, not to any modern organisation or movement.

Bible Name for the Church

In the Bible, the church that Jesus built is never named after a day, an event, or an experience. It is named after God Himself.

Matthew wrote in **Matthew 16:18**:

> *"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."*

Notice that Jesus said *"my church"*. He identified Himself as the builder and declared that the Church belonged to Him. Its foundation and existence are therefore inseparable from Jesus Christ, not from an organisation established by men.

Jesus builds His Church, and in the New Testament that church is kept and known in the name of the Father. This concerns the people whom Jesus kept through His name and who continued to belong to Him.

John wrote in **John 17:12**:

> *"While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled."*

The Church that Jesus builds is kept in the Father's name, and in the epistles that name is clearly given. The following Scriptures identify that spiritual body by the name of God.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 1:2**:

> *"Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:"*

Notice that Paul addressed *"the Church of God which is at Corinth"*. The believers were identified as those sanctified in Jesus Christ and called to be saints. Their spiritual identity rested upon belonging to God through Jesus Christ, not upon the name of a religious denomination.

Paul wrote in **Galatians 1:13**:

> *"For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:"*

Paul wrote in **1 Timothy 3:5**:

> *"(For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)"*

So the New Testament name for the one body Christ purchased is *"the Church of God"*, not *"the Pentecostal church"*. Pentecostal denominations call themselves after an event and a feast day, but God's church is a heavenly entity, named after God Himself.

The Bible does not speak of *"the Pentecostal church"* or identify Christ's members as *"Pentecostals"*. God's Church is a spiritual body named after Him, not after a festival or a modern movement.

You may remember from the earlier COGMA module on The True Church that Scripture never names Christ's spiritual body the Pentecostal Church or calls its members Pentecostals. That earlier teaching helps us distinguish a biblical name from a later religious designation. Yet the name Church of God must also agree with the spiritual reality of being born again.

Bible Names for God's People

God's children are given simple, holy titles. They are called disciples, brethren, and saints.

Paul wrote in **Philippians 4:21**:

> *"Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you."*

Notice that Paul used both *"saint"* and *"brethren"* when referring to believers. He was not identifying two different classes of Christians. Both expressions described people who belonged to Jesus Christ.

Members of the Church of God are called *"saints"* sixty-two times in the New Testament, and never called Pentecostals. The saints are the children of God.

The word saint comes from the Greek word HAGIOS, which means *"sacred, pure and morally blameless"*. A true child of God is a saint, and lives above sin in righteousness.

Therefore, God Himself has given His children the Bible names saints, disciples, and brethren. Any group or member of a Pentecostal body who chooses another name is using a title that the Scriptures never use for the people of God.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do the biblical names for the Church and its members point to belonging to God through Jesus Christ?

Personal Reflection

Do you depend on a religious label to describe your place before God rather than the life of Christ within?

Action Step

Consider how you describe your spiritual identity. What change will help you place the new birth and Christ's life above any label?

SAINTS, SIN AND THE HOPE OF PURITY

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The teaching challenged here tells believers that they *"cannot help but sin every day in thought, word and deed"*. It is expressed in the saying, *"sin you will, sin you must"*. Such teaching leaves people seeing themselves as sinners who cannot live in righteousness, rather than saints whose life is in Jesus Christ. The New Testament gives a very different picture of the sons of God.

John wrote in **1 John 3:2–3**:

> *"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."*

Notice the words *"now are we the sons of God"*. John was addressing people who already belonged to God. Their relationship with Him was a present spiritual reality, and he connected their hope in Christ with the responsibility to live in purity.

John did not present conscious sin as an unavoidable part of belonging to Jesus Christ. Neither did he teach that believers must wait for another religious experience before they can live in righteousness. Those who are born again already possess the life of Christ, and that life is to be expressed through their thoughts, words and conduct.

A saint lives in Jesus Christ and forsakes sin, with Christ's indwelling life governing the believer's conduct. This is living in fellowship with Him, not attempting to copy Him through human effort.

John wrote in **1 John 3:6**:

> *"Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him."*

It is impossible to truly abide in God and at the same time live in conscious rebellion against Him. John does not present known disobedience as compatible with remaining faithful to the indwelling Christ.

John continued in **1 John 3:7**:

> *"Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous."*

God's children are therefore pictured as righteous, purified by their hope in Christ, and walking in obedience, not as helpless slaves to daily sin. This present righteousness is the fruit of the life received through the new birth.

Not Continuing in Known Sin

We do not knowingly continue to commit sins. John speaks very plainly about this.

John wrote in **1 John 3:8–10**:

> *"He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother."*

Notice the purpose for which Jesus Christ was manifested: *"that he might destroy the works of the devil."* He did not come simply to excuse those works while leaving His children under their

dominion. The new birth delivers a person from sin and brings that person into the life and righteousness of Jesus Christ.

John also wrote, *"for his seed remaineth in him"*. The believer's freedom from sin is inseparable from the life of God within. The seed that remains is not a human achievement, an outward religious performance or a second blessing received after salvation.

An interpretation of *"committeth"* as *"practises"* must not be used to suggest that a person may knowingly commit sin for a period before it counts as rebellion against God. The error being challenged is permission given to known sin, not simply the use of a different English word.

This is completely false, because you cannot walk in the light and at the same time be in rebellion against God. Sin and righteousness are diametrically opposed to each other.

Young's Literal Translation of **1 John 3:8** brings out this fact very simply:

> *"he who is doing the sin, of the devil he is, because from the beginning the devil doth sin; for this was the Son of God manifested, that he may break up the works of the devil;"*

John's words do not mean that a person who has experienced the new birth has lost the ability to make a wrong choice. They teach that sin is contrary to the life received from God. A person cannot claim to be faithfully abiding in Christ while deliberately turning against His authority. Doing sin is doing the works of the devil, not a harmless weakness that God ignores.

What Is Sin? A Clear Bible Definition

From the beginning, God has treated sin as a serious, personal choice. When Adam and Eve chose to disobey God's commandment not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, it became sin to them. God then drove them out of the garden. They only had to do sin once before they were counted as unrighteous and removed from His presence.

They did not get to *"practise sin"* for a season before it mattered. James gives a simple Bible definition.

James wrote in **James 4:17**:

> *"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."*

If you or I know what is right in God and do not do it, then we become sinners again. The important truth here is that there must be a knowing element. It is possible to be in opposition to God without yet understanding it.

Important message: committing sins of ignorance does not immediately make a person a wilful rebel. When light comes, and the matter is seen as sin, God will grant grace if it is confessed and repented of.

But what happens if someone does sin? John addressed this matter without weakening his instruction concerning holiness. He wrote in **1 John 2:1**:

> *"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:"*

Notice the order of John's teaching. His first instruction was *"that ye sin not"*. He then spoke of the provision available if someone sins. The existence of an Advocate does not turn sin into something acceptable or unavoidable. It reveals the mercy of Jesus Christ towards the person who needs forgiveness and restoration.

John's instruction therefore agrees with his later declaration that the person abiding in Christ does not sin. He teaches believers not to sin, warns them against deception and identifies Jesus Christ as their Advocate if they fall into wrongdoing. These truths must be held together rather than allowing one to cancel another.

Dead to Sin, Alive to God

Paul gathers this teaching into a clear challenge. His question leaves no room for using grace as permission to continue knowingly in sin.

Paul wrote in **Romans 6:1–2**:

> *"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"*

God's true people are saints, not *"sinners who must sin every day"*. They are dead to sin, alive to God, and walking in righteousness by the power of the new birth.

This does not mean that good conduct earns salvation or completes an unfinished work of grace. Jesus Christ makes the believer complete at the new birth. Righteous conduct is the expression of His indwelling life, not the means of obtaining that life.

So the Bible picture is clear. The Church that Jesus built is the Church of God, kept in the Father's name, and its members are called saints, disciples, and brethren, walking in righteousness, not living in continual sin. No Scripture ever speaks of a *"Pentecostal church"* or a people called *"Pentecostals"*.

Summary: The Pentecostal Name and the True People of God

In the Bible the word Pentecost is not a church name. It is a feast day given to Israel, meaning *"fiftieth"*, kept on the fiftieth day after Passover. In Acts 2, *"the day of Pentecost"* was simply day fifty after the Passover in which Jesus was crucified, when the Holy Ghost was poured out on the disciples. Many centuries later, churches that teach a second *"baptism in the Holy Spirit"* with tongues borrowed this word and began to call themselves Pentecostal, but Scripture never uses Pentecost as the name of a denomination.

The Church that Jesus promised to build is kept and known in the Father's name. The New Testament calls it *"the Church of God"* (for example **1 Corinthians 1:2**; **Galatians 1:13**; **1 Timothy 3:5**). God's church is a heavenly body named after God Himself, not after a feast day or an experience.

God's children are also given clear Bible titles. They are called disciples, brethren, and saints (**Philippians 4:21**). The word saint (HAGIOS) means *"sacred, pure and morally blameless"*. Members of the Church of God are called *"saints"* many times in the New Testament, and never called Pentecostals. A true child of God is a saint, living above sin in righteousness, not a *"sinner who must sin every day"*.

So the Bible picture is clear. The Church that Jesus built is the Church of God, kept in the Father's name, and its members are saints, disciples, and brethren, walking in righteousness, not living in continual sin. No Scripture ever speaks of a *"Pentecostal church"* or a people called *"Pentecostals"*.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do John's teaching about holiness and his words about Christ as Advocate belong together?

Personal Reflection

Is there a known duty you have been excusing, or a mistake you need to confess before Christ?

Action Step

Identify one matter where God's Word has shown you what is right. What response will you make through Christ's indwelling life?

THE PENTECOSTAL CLAIM

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Pentecostalism teaches that there is a special experience called *"the baptism in (or with) the Holy Spirit"* which comes after a person has been born again. In their official statements many Pentecostal denominations say that this baptism in the Spirit is *"distinct from and subsequent to the new birth"* and that all believers should earnestly seek it as *"the promise of the Father"*. They also teach that the initial physical sign of this experience is *"speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance"*.

How Pentecostalism Describes the New Birth

In the Pentecostal teaching examined here, a person repents and believes in Jesus Christ and is counted as saved. At that point, the person is regarded as born again. The believer is then told to seek a further *"endowment of power"* or *"fullness of the Spirit"*.

In practice this makes the new birth a first level experience, and the so-called baptism in the Holy Spirit a second level experience which they are urged to seek. It directs someone who has already been pronounced saved to seek a further experience as though something were still missing.

The "Promise of the Father" in Pentecostal Teaching

After conversion, believers are directed to seek *"the promise of the Father"*. This is identified as baptism in the Holy Spirit, presented as a further experience of receiving Him in a special and fuller way. The teaching therefore separates the new birth from a later baptism in the Holy Spirit.

According to their doctrine, this second experience will be outwardly shown by speaking in tongues. These tongues are treated as the initial physical evidence that a believer has received this baptism in the Spirit. Many are taught that without this evidence they have not yet entered into the full blessing of God.

The sequence being examined has two distinct stages. First, a person repents, believes and is counted as born again, but is told that baptism in the Holy Spirit has not yet occurred. Afterwards, the person seeks Spirit baptism, with tongues presented as its evidence and power, boldness and fullness associated with that further experience.

Some Pentecostal groups, like the Revival Centres church, go even further and teach that a person is not truly saved at all until they have received the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. In that belief system, if you have believed in Christ but have never spoken in tongues, you are told that you do not yet have the Spirit indwelling and are therefore not yet a saved Christian.

Acts 2:4 as the Key Supporting Verse

Acts 2:4 is the principal supporting verse used for this claim. The verse is therefore central to the claim that tongues identify the further experience believers are urged to seek.

Luke wrote in **Acts 2:4**:

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

From this verse, the teaching claims that baptism in the Holy Spirit is a separate experience after salvation and that speaking in tongues is the necessary sign that a person has received this baptism and has the Holy Ghost in fullness. If you have been Pentecostal or come from that background, you will recognise how this is usually *"ministered"* in practice.

Personal Response

Key Truth

What separate stages does the Pentecostal claim place between the new birth and receiving the Holy Spirit?

Personal Reflection

Has the idea of receiving the Spirit later made you doubt the completeness of salvation in Christ?

Action Step

State what you believe about receiving Christ and His Spirit. Which assumption must you test against **Romans 8:9** *and Acts 2?*

An Example of How the Baptism Is Ministered

A man named John is invited by his friend to a gospel meeting at the local Pentecostal church. After the preaching, an altar call is given, calling people to *"receive Jesus"* to be saved and born again. At his friend's urging, John goes forward with the others to *"receive Jesus into his life and heart"*.

Those at the front are asked to repeat a prayer after the pastor, confessing repentance for their sins and asking Jesus into their hearts. They are told to imagine opening the door of their heart to let Jesus in. The pastor then prays over the seekers and pronounces them born again.

John goes away rejoicing, believing that he is now saved and complete in Christ Jesus. The next Sunday, John returns to the same church. To his surprise, the pastor now begins to

preach that receiving Jesus does not make a person complete. John is told that his salvation remains unfinished because he has not yet received the Holy Spirit into his heart.

He is told that Jesus came into his heart when he was born again the previous week, but that the Holy Spirit was only alongside him. Now he must ask the Holy Spirit into his heart to complete his salvation. What John had understood as completeness is now presented as an experience still lacking something essential.

The pastor explains that John must receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, presented as the promise of the Father. John is asked to come forward again so that the pastor and elders can lay hands on him to receive the Holy Spirit with the initial physical evidence of speaking in other tongues, said to be in accordance with Acts chapter 2.

In the prayer line, John is told to raise his hands and *"seek the Holy Spirit"*. He is instructed to speak whatever sounds come into his mind and let them come out of his mouth. Meanwhile, the pastor, elders and sometimes people in the congregation speak loudly in sounds they call tongues, encouraging him and showing him what is expected.

This becomes a very intense time. John is surrounded, prayed over, urged to *"let go"*, *"yield his tongue"*, and to keep making sounds. At last he begins to utter noises that he does not understand, and that no one else understands.

As soon as he does this, the pastor declares that John has now received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, because he has spoken in tongues as the supposed initial physical evidence. In this way **Acts 2:4** is used to support a two-step pattern of salvation and to convince sincere seekers that an experience of unintelligible sounds is the proof that they have at last received the Holy Ghost in fullness.

But a serious question must be asked. Who entered John's heart when he was supposedly born again? If Jesus Christ gave him spiritual life, how can the Holy Spirit still remain outside him? Are Jesus Christ and the Spirit of Christ two separate divine Persons who must be received through different experiences?

Paul answered the question of who possesses the Spirit in **Romans 8:9**:

> *"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."*

Notice the expressions *"the Spirit of God"* and *"the Spirit of Christ"*. Paul identifies the indwelling Spirit with belonging to Jesus Christ. He does not describe a person who possesses Christ while remaining without His Spirit.

His conclusion is unmistakable: *"if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."* A person cannot truly belong to Jesus Christ and remain without the Spirit of Christ. The indwelling Spirit is not an additional divine Person to be received after the new birth.

One of the Scriptures used to explain this distinction is found in Jesus' words before His crucifixion. John recorded His promise in **John 14:16-18**:

> *"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."*

Notice the expressions *"he dwelleth with you"* and *"shall be in you"*. These words were spoken by Jesus Christ before the events recorded in Acts chapter 2. He was promising a change that would take place when He returned to His disciples as the Holy Spirit.

The promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 31. Jesus Christ returned as the Holy Spirit to dwell within His children, establishing the spiritual reality of the Gospel Day. What had previously been promised was now fulfilled.

Therefore, the distinction between *"with you"* and *"in you"* must be understood within the historical setting of Jesus' promise and its fulfilment at Pentecost. It must not be turned into a continuing arrangement in which born-again believers possess Jesus Christ but remain without His indwelling Spirit.

This Poses a Serious Question About the Gospel

The question we must now face is simple and serious. Does the Bible really teach salvation and the reception of the Holy Spirit as a two-step progression?

Is this the gospel that Paul preached by revelation of Jesus Christ, or is it a different message and therefore accursed? Paul warned very plainly about changing the gospel.

Paul wrote in **Galatians 1:9**:

> *"As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."*

Paul wrote in **Galatians 1:11–12**:

> *"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."*

These are solemn words. Paul did not regard the Gospel as a message that could be altered according to religious tradition, spiritual manifestations or the teaching of influential ministers. Its truth had to be preserved because salvation rests entirely upon Jesus Christ and His finished work.

Paul received the Gospel through the revelation of Jesus Christ, not through human invention. Therefore, no teaching concerning salvation should be accepted simply because a minister presents it confidently, a denomination endorses it or an unusual religious experience appears convincing. In this module we will measure the Pentecostal two-stage teaching against the New Testament gospel, to see whether it truly comes from God, or whether it is a man-made perversion that must be rejected.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does **Romans 8:9** *help test what John was told about receiving Jesus without His Spirit?*

Personal Reflection

Have you ever felt that receiving Jesus Christ was not enough because someone urged you to seek another experience?

Action Step

If you are told that Christ can dwell in you without His Spirit, how will **Romans 8:9** *guide your reply and your trust?*

PENTECOSTAL FAITH STATEMENTS

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Most Pentecostal denominations share the same key teaching about what they call the baptism in the Holy Spirit. They say that this baptism is a second experience after salvation and that the initial evidence of this experience is speaking in tongues. We can see this clearly in the faith statements of two of the largest Pentecostal groups in the world.

Assemblies of God (USA)

From the official Statement of Fundamental Truths of the Assemblies of God, Article 8, *"The Initial Physical Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit"*, they state that the baptism of believers in the Holy Spirit is witnessed by the initial physical sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gives them utterance (with **Acts 2:4** given as the main reference). They also explain that these tongues are the same in essence as the gift of tongues in 1 Corinthians 12, but different in purpose and use.

In the same Statement (Article 7), they say that this baptism in the Holy Spirit is *"distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth."* According to the Assemblies of God, baptism in the Holy Spirit is an experience after the new birth. Speaking with other tongues is presented as its initial physical evidence.

Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee)

From the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee) Declaration of Faith they state:

"In the baptism with the Holy Ghost subsequent to a clean heart";

"In speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance and that it is the initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Ghost."

Many local Church of God congregations repeat the same statement and add the usual Scripture references, such as **John 15:26**; **Acts 2:4**; **Acts 10:44–46**; **Acts 19:1–7**. According to the Church of God, Cleveland, baptism with the Holy Ghost is subsequent to a clean heart. Speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance is its initial evidence.

How Wide Is This Teaching?

The bodies examined include the Assemblies of God, Church of God, Cleveland, Church of God in Christ, Foursquare, Pentecostal Holiness, other Pentecostal groups and Oneness Pentecostal bodies. Speaking with tongues is central to the claim of receiving Spirit baptism.

The declarations examined above place Spirit baptism after the new birth or a clean heart and present tongues as its initial evidence. Those statements establish the teaching being tested; they cannot establish their own biblical authority. Some later charismatic groups may soften the wording or not insist so strongly on tongues as the required evidence, but the core Pentecostal denominations are very clear: no tongues, no Spirit baptism.

Personal Response

Key Truth

What do the two Pentecostal faith statements claim about the timing and evidence of Spirit baptism?

Personal Reflection

Is there a church statement you have accepted mainly because it came from an established denomination?

Action Step

Choose one claim about later Spirit baptism. What Bible teaching will you compare it with, and what personal conclusion must you reconsider?

"BAPTISM IN THE HOLY GHOST" AND "BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST"

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Pentecostal writers use *"baptism in the Holy Ghost"* or *"baptism in the Holy Spirit"*, as well as *"baptism of the Holy Ghost"* or *"baptism of the Holy Spirit"*. They usually mean the same experience, but the wording matters when compared with Scripture.

In the Bible, Jesus Christ is identified as the One who baptises in the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is His own Spirit, not another divine Person beside Him.

Matthew wrote in **Matthew 3:11**:

> *"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:"*

Matthew 3:11 uses the Greek preposition EN both with water and with the Holy Ghost. In this verse EN carries the sense of *"in"*: John baptised in water, whereas Jesus Christ baptises in the Holy Ghost. Paul also uses EN in **1 Corinthians 12:13**, where the KJV reads *"by one Spirit"*; the verse separately states that believers are baptised *"into one body"*. This is the one spiritual baptism into Christ at the new birth.

In John's baptism, water was the outward element. John was the baptiser, and he baptised people in water.

Jesus Christ brings the greater baptism in the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is not an impersonal element or an additional divine Person; He is the Spirit of Jesus Christ Himself. This baptism takes place at the new birth.

John also identified Jesus as the Baptiser in **John 1:33**:

> *"And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost."*

The words *"the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost"* identify Jesus Christ as the Baptiser. The Holy Ghost is His own Spirit, not a separate Person through whom He works. At the new birth, Jesus Christ Himself dwells within the believer as Spirit.

"Baptism in the Holy Ghost" and *"baptism with the Holy Ghost"* describe the promised work of Jesus Christ in His own Spirit. The expression *"baptism of the Holy Ghost"* is not the exact wording of the biblical promise and can obscure the identity of the Baptiser if taken to mean another divine Person is doing the baptising. Jesus Christ baptises in His own Spirit at the new birth.

The Assemblies of God acknowledges that *"baptism in the Holy Spirit"* is not the exact noun phrase found in Scripture; its position paper refers to **Matthew 3:11**, **Mark 1:8**, **Luke 3:16**, **John 1:33**, **Acts 1:5** and **Acts 11:16**. It nevertheless distinguishes the baptism into Christ at conversion in **1 Corinthians 12:13** from another Spirit baptism afterwards. Scripture establishes one spiritual baptism into Christ at the new birth, not another baptism after receiving Him.

What This Means for Our Study

The Assemblies of God places Spirit baptism after the new birth, while the Church of God, Cleveland, places it after a clean heart. Both identify speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of that experience. This is the Pentecostal claim being tested against the New Testament Gospel and its teaching concerning one spiritual baptism.

Paul confirmed this unity in **Ephesians 4:4-6**:

> *"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."*

The declaration is unmistakable: *"One Lord, one faith, one baptism."* Jesus Christ is the one true God, and the Holy Ghost is His Spirit. Every believer receives the indwelling Christ at the new birth, not another divine Person through a later baptism.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Who baptises in the Holy Ghost, and how does that identity help explain the one spiritual baptism?

Personal Reflection

How has identifying Jesus Christ as the Baptiser affected your understanding of the Holy Ghost?

Action Step

Consider any belief that separates receiving Christ from receiving His Spirit. What will you correct in your understanding of the new birth?

SIGNS DO NOT PROVE THE TRUTH

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A physical manifestation of any kind does not in itself authenticate truth. Only *"thus saith the Lord"* in the Word of God proves what is true. Jesus made it clear that if a person does not believe the Word, they will not truly believe through a sign.

Matthew wrote in **Matthew 12:38–39**:

> *"Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:"*

Jesus explained what *"the sign of the prophet Jonas"* means. Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish and then came out alive. This pointed forward to Christ's death and resurrection.

Matthew wrote in **Matthew 12:40**:

> *"For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."*

The true sign God would give was not a showy miracle to satisfy curiosity, but the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is the one true God revealed in flesh. This sign proves that He is who He claims to be. The Scriptures themselves also authenticate Jesus, not human signs and experiences. The sign of Jonah directs us to Christ's death and resurrection, not to an experience invented to satisfy human curiosity.

John wrote in **John 5:39**:

> *"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."*

The Bible does not tell us to chase signs to find the truth. It tells us to search the Scriptures, because they testify of Christ and confirm that He is the promised Saviour and Lord.

Tongues in Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians 12

The Pentecostal faith statements say that the tongues in **Acts 2:4** are the same in essence as the gift in 1 Corinthians 12, though different in purpose and use. The Pentecostal teaching built upon this comparison does not agree with Paul's explanation.

Pentecostalism teaches that all must receive and speak in tongues according to **Acts 2:4**, but when you study 1 Corinthians 12 the spiritual gifts are divided among the members of the body of Christ as God wills. This is clearly taught in the following verses.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 12:8–11**:

> *"For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."*

Notice the repeated expression *"to another"*. Paul does not describe every believer receiving every spiritual gift. He identifies different gifts distributed among the members of Christ's body according to the will of the one Spirit.

Paul specifically included *"divers kinds of tongues"* among the gifts distributed in this manner. Tongues were therefore not presented in this chapter as a gift possessed by every member of the Church.

The word *"severally"* is connected with the Greek word IDIOS and conveys separate or individual distribution. The Spirit does not give every gift, including tongues, to every member. He divides them individually according to His will.

Some Pentecostal faith statements also refer to 1 Corinthians 14 in connection with **Acts 2:4**, but in that chapter Paul is dealing with specific problems in the church at Corinth. We will study this in more detail in this module.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does the distribution of gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 challenge the demand that every believer speak in tongues?

Personal Reflection

Has an impressive sign ever seemed more persuasive to you than the clear teaching of the Bible?

Action Step

When someone offers a sign as proof, how will you examine the claim before allowing it to influence your faith or conduct?

Do All Believers Speak With Tongues?

Paul then asked a series of questions that make the distinction between different spiritual gifts especially clear. He wrote in **1 Corinthians 12:29-30**:

> *"Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?"*

Consider the directness of these questions. *"Do all speak with tongues?"* The expected answer is no, just as not every member exercises the other gifts Paul identifies.

Pentecostal teaching attempts to resolve this difficulty by distinguishing tongues as initial evidence from tongues as a continuing spiritual gift. However, 1 Corinthians 12 does not itself establish that every believer must speak in tongues as evidence of receiving a separate baptism in the Holy Spirit. That additional requirement must be demonstrated from Scripture rather than assumed.

The Need to Search the Scriptures

False beliefs can only take root when God's children are led into confusion and do not study the Bible carefully. The Bereans were a good example. They did not even take Paul at his word without testing his teaching by the Scriptures.

Luke wrote in **Acts 17:11**:

> *"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."*

Notice that the Bereans received the Word willingly, but they also searched the Scriptures. Even when Paul preached to them, they examined what they heard against the Word of God. They did not regard the reputation or authority of the preacher as a substitute for Scriptural evidence.

Respect for a preacher must never replace examination of the message. The same responsibility applies when someone claims to possess a special anointing, spiritual gift or supernatural experience.

God is not the author of confusion. When there is confusion, it does not come from Him.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 14:33**:

> *"For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."*

The Literal Version (LITV) expresses the sense in these words:

"For God is not of confusion, but of peace, as in all the assemblies of the saints."

This helps us see that confusion does not belong to the nature or way of God. His work in the churches is marked by order and peace, not by spiritual turmoil.

Because Pentecostals cannot truly support their practice of speaking in tongues from Acts chapter 2, they introduce 1 Corinthians chapters 12 and 14 in a way that twists the Scriptures and confuses God's children. This is not the clear, peaceful order of truth that comes from God.

This truth will become clearer as you continue to study the evidence about Pentecostalism in this module and compare every teaching with the plain Word of God. Our confidence must rest in the living Christ and His Word, not in the ability to produce or experience a particular manifestation. Jesus Christ is the source of spiritual life, and every person who is truly born again is complete in Him.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why did Paul ask whether all speak with tongues, and how does the Bereans' example help us examine that question?

Personal Reflection

Do you find it difficult to question a preacher you respect when the Bible seems to teach something different?

Action Step

Choose a claim about tongues you have heard. Which verses will you compare, and what attitude towards correction must you maintain?

THE CHURCH OF GOD: MEMBERSHIP, PRIVILEGE AND HOLINESS

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In contrast, the Church of God is a divine, spiritual institution. It is not a denomination. It includes every born-again believer, wherever they may live. Men and women can take members into Protestant churches, but only God Himself takes members into His Church.

Membership in Christ's Church is based on one condition alone: salvation. Salvation alone makes a person a member of the Church of God.

Luke wrote in **Acts 2:47**:

> *"Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."*

Protestant denominations and sects receive members who have been christened and or water baptised according to their rules. The Church of God includes only those who have been baptised by God Himself into the body of Christ.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 12:13**:

> *"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."*

While Protestant denominations and sects admit members who meet their human criteria, God alone sets members in His Church, and He does this only for those who are truly born again. No earthly membership register can perform that spiritual work.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 12:18**:

> *"But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him."*

So it is God's pleasure, not man's decision, that determines who truly belongs to the body of Christ. Human admission cannot replace the work of God in the new birth.

Full Privilege as Children of God

In the Church of God, every true believer, by virtue of salvation, has full membership and full privilege as a child of God. That standing is established when the person is born again, not after a later religious experience.

Paul wrote in **Romans 8:14–17**:

> *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."*

These verses show that all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons, children, and heirs, with full standing before the Father. Consider what this means for someone who has recently been

born again. Does that person have to wait for another religious experience before becoming a full child of God? Must speaking in tongues establish a spiritual privilege that Jesus Christ has not already given?

The answer is found in the new birth itself. Everyone who belongs to Jesus Christ possesses His indwelling Spirit and has full standing as a child of God. The privileges of this relationship include fellowship with Him, access to His grace and participation in the inheritance belonging to His children.

God never adds men and women into Roman Catholicism, a sect, or a denomination. He always adds them to the church. Christ is the only Head of this church.

Paul wrote in **Colossians 1:18**:

> *"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."*

Here Christ is shown as the one Head of the one body, having the first place in all things. Notice that Paul identifies Jesus Christ as the Head of the body, the Church. He does not assign that position to a pope, denominational president, founding preacher or another human authority.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does God make a person a member of His Church, and what standing does that person receive?

Personal Reflection

Have you measured your own or another person's spiritual standing by denomination, gifts or a later experience?

Action Step

Identify a measure of spiritual standing you have relied upon. How must the truth of complete membership at new birth change it?

Lively Stones Versus Dead Stones

His Church, the Church of God, is made up of lively stones, not dead stones. Its members are those who are saved and born again.

Peter wrote in **1 Peter 2:5**:

> *"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."*

Notice that Peter described the believers themselves as lively stones. They form a spiritual house because they possess life from God. The Church is therefore not made holy by the existence of a building, an organisational structure or a membership register.

What makes the stones living? It is the life of Jesus Christ received through the new birth. A person who remains spiritually dead in sin cannot become a living stone simply by joining a denomination.

So the true church is a spiritual house built of living people, not a dead organisation of sinners. By contrast, all Protestant denominations contain dead stones, people who are still in their sins. There are no sinners in the Church of God. If a saint goes back into sin and does not repent, he or she is no longer a member of the Church of God, for the Church of God is to be without spot or blemish.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 5:27**:

> *"That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."*

Christ's purpose is a glorious church, holy and clean, not a mixed body of saints and wilful sinners. Its spiritual life and holiness come from Jesus Christ, not from human membership requirements.

Who Are the Members of the Church of God?

Who then are the members of the Church of God, as distinct from Protestants and Roman Catholics? The Bible answer is: saints.

Paul wrote in **Romans 1:7**:

> *"To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."*

In the King James Bible, the words *"to be"* are printed in italics because they were supplied by the translators. Paul's words must not be used to suggest that the believers were not yet saints. He addressed them in their present standing as God's beloved children.

The Literal Translation of the Holy Bible (LITV) likewise identifies the believers in Rome as beloved of God and called saints. The comparison supports sainthood as their present identity, not only a future goal. The distinction concerns what God has already made them through Jesus Christ.

The word saints is from the Greek word HAGIOS, meaning holy, pure, morally blameless. The saints live above sin in obedience to God as His children, as Peter teaches.

Peter wrote in **1 Peter 1:13–16**:

> *"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."*

The expression *"all manner of conversation"* concerns the whole manner of life, not simply the words spoken during a religious meeting. Holiness must therefore govern our behaviour at home, at work, in business and in our relationships with other people.

These verses describe obedient children whose whole manner of life is holy. Christ's indwelling life governs their conduct, so that His holiness is expressed through them. Holiness is not an external imitation or a further experience that completes salvation.

Sin, Falling Away, and a False View of Grace

The teaching that believers cannot help sinning every day in thought, word and deed allows people to continue in sin while claiming to belong to Christ. Grace must not be turned into permission to resist God. The warning concerns deliberate departure from truth, not an unavoidable condition of being born again. The book of Hebrews speaks very solemnly about those who fall away and treat Christ's sacrifice as something common.

The writer of Hebrews wrote in **Hebrews 6:5–6**:

> *"And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."*

Here we are warned that to turn back from real light and grace is to bring Christ to open shame again. These words concern a serious departure from the truth after receiving the knowledge and experience of God's saving work. The warning must not be dismissed as though abandoning Christ carries no spiritual consequence.

A person cannot knowingly turn against the life of Jesus Christ and treat that rebellion as an ordinary feature of Christian living. Such conduct brings dishonour upon the One who gave Himself to save us from sin.

The writer continued in **Hebrews 10:29**:

> *"Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"*

This shows that to go on in sin while claiming to be sanctified is to trample on the Son of God and insult the Spirit of grace. Notice the seriousness of the description. The person has treated the Son of God with contempt, regarded the blood of the covenant as something unholy and insulted the Spirit of grace.

This is not the conduct of someone faithfully walking in the life of Jesus Christ. It describes a deliberate rejection of what God has made holy. A claim of salvation cannot make wilful disobedience righteous.

The saints, the true children of God, have never been Roman Catholic, have never been Protestant, and have never belonged to the Pentecostal sects and denominations as such. They may have been scattered within these systems at times, but their true identity is not in those names.

The name Protestant belongs to the confusion of Babylon and has no foundation in the Word of God as a name for the church of Christ. It describes a man-made religious movement which arose in the sixteenth century and later divided into many denominations.

Names That Reveal Their Source

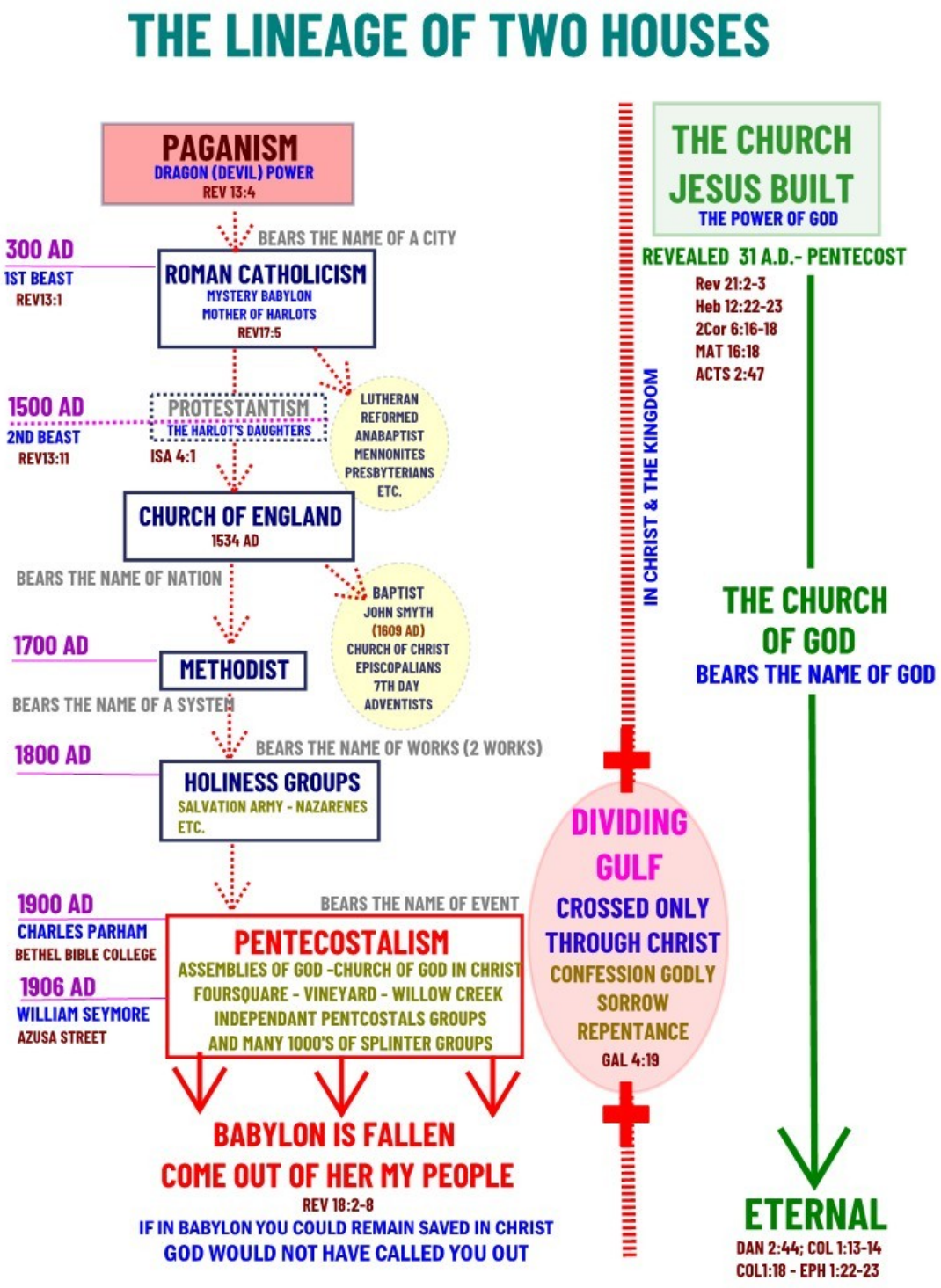
It is not hard to see the mark of man or woman in much of modern Pentecostalism. Just look at the names it goes by. Many Pentecostal ministries are named after their founders or carry

strange titles that bear no resemblance to the name of God or of Christ. They show by their very names and organisations that they are human works.

In contrast, the true people of God are content to be known simply as the Church of God and as saints, disciples, and brethren, belonging to Christ alone. This is why we must distinguish the outward religious name from the spiritual reality. The Church of God is not created by adopting the correct name; it is established through the saving work of Jesus Christ. He brings His children into one body and gives them His own indwelling life.

The following diagram contrasts the growth of human religious systems with the Church Jesus Christ established. Its call to come out of Babylon addresses those who recognise the error of religious systems and are responsible to obey the light of God's Word. It does not deny that born-again believers may previously have been found among those systems, or that their life came from Christ rather than the organisation.

The Lineage of Two Houses



Personal Response

Key Truth

How do living stones, holiness and Christ's headship distinguish God's Church from a human organisation?

Personal Reflection

Is there an area where you have treated grace as permission to delay obedience to something you already know?

Action Step

Consider one present choice where God's Word is clear. What will you do so Christ's holiness, not a religious label, governs it?

CONCLUSION: THE ORIGIN AND CLAIMS

BACK TO CONTENTS

This Study Guide established a necessary foundation: Pentecostalism is a modern movement, not an apostolic one. It traced Pentecostalism's historical roots through Methodism and the Holiness movement. It showed how the teaching of a second work after conversion prepared the way for later Pentecostal doctrine. It then examined key early figures and events that shaped the movement, especially Charles Parham, the claims surrounding Agnes Ozman, and the spread of these ideas through the Azusa Street meetings.

This Study Guide also tested Pentecostalism's repeated claim that it began on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. The historical record shows that Pentecostalism arose in the early twentieth century and developed within later Protestant streams. For this reason, it cannot truthfully claim to be the original church that Christ founded.

This Study Guide also clarified the meaning of the word Pentecost in Scripture. Pentecost is a feast day on God's calendar, not the name of the church. The New Testament name for God's church is the Church of God, and God's children are called saints, brethren, and disciples. The identity of the church is grounded in Christ and the new birth, not in a modern label taken from a feast day.

This also shows why historical claims must be tested. A movement may speak much about Acts 2, but if its beginnings are found in modern history, then its claim of apostolic origin is not true. Truth must be proven by Scripture and by honest facts, not by tradition or testimony.

The examination of Agnes Ozman's claimed Chinese demonstrated why a reported experience must be distinguished from an authenticated language. Parham and his followers believed that she had spoken and written Chinese, but the available evidence does not independently establish that claim. Calling an experience miraculous does not prove that a miracle has occurred.

Because the historical claim fails, the issue now becomes doctrinal. The next question is not, *"What experience did later Pentecostals describe?"* The key question is, What does the Bible actually teach about receiving the Holy Spirit?

The Pentecostal declarations examined in this Study Guide place baptism in the Holy Spirit after the new birth or after the experience they call a clean heart. Speaking in tongues is then presented as the initial physical evidence that this further baptism has occurred.

The practical illustration of John demonstrated how this teaching can affect someone who has responded to the Gospel. Having been told that he received Jesus Christ and was born again, John was subsequently instructed to seek another experience because the Holy Spirit had not yet entered his heart.

This Study Guide dealt with origins. The next Study Guide now turns to the centre of the issue: Acts chapter 2.

Pentecostal doctrine is built on one main assumption: that the disciples were already saved, and that Pentecost was a second experience after conversion. From that assumption comes the teaching that believers today must also seek a second experience, proved by tongues.

Acts 2 and the Holy Spirit will test that claim by rightly dividing Acts 2 and comparing it with the clear teaching of the New Testament. It will show that the disciples were not yet converted before Pentecost, and that receiving the Holy Spirit is not a second step after salvation, but the very act by which a person is made part of Christ and born again.

This means Acts 2 must be read carefully, not through later Pentecostal ideas, but in its own biblical setting. The chapter must be understood in harmony with the teaching of Jesus, the preaching of the apostles, and the plain doctrine of the epistles.

When Acts 2 is rightly understood, the foundation of the Pentecostal two-stage gospel is removed. Salvation is shown to be complete in Christ, and the gift of the Holy Spirit is revealed as God's work in the new birth, not a later experience to be sought.

Paul declared the completeness of the believer in **Colossians 2:10**:

"And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:"

Notice that Paul did not describe salvation as an unfinished experience awaiting another baptism. The believer is complete in Jesus Christ. Spiritual growth, maturity and service are the development and expression of His indwelling life, not additional experiences required to complete what He has already accomplished.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do the historical origins of Pentecostalism and the believer's completeness in Christ expose different parts of its claim?

Personal Reflection

Which Pentecostal claim still troubles you, and what has become clearer about Christ's finished work?

Action Step

Identify the main question about receiving the Spirit that remains for you. What will you examine, and how will you guard confidence in Christ?

SUBMISSION TO COGMA FOR APPRAISAL

Instructions

Complete this section after you have finished the Study Guide. It must be completed online.

The link is located at the bottom of the online Study Guide — https://cogma.com.au/study-guides/

Your answers should reflect your understanding, your personal response, and how you intend to live by the truth you have studied. Answer honestly and be specific.

1. Main Truth

How did the Methodist and Holiness roots, the events at Topeka and the spread through Azusa Street shape modern Pentecostal teaching? Explain why this history matters when a movement claims apostolic origins.

2. Understanding

How does Christ's promise to build His Church differ from a later denomination's claim of continuity with the apostles? Explain why Pentecost as a feast day cannot establish a church's identity.

3. Personal Reflection

Has examining Agnes Ozman's reported Chinese alongside the languages understood in Acts 2 challenged a belief you held? Explain what has changed in your judgement of religious claims.

4. Response to Truth

Think of a matter involving known obedience or sin. How do Christ's holiness and His mercy guide the response you need to make?

5. Action Step

Identify one Pentecostal claim you have accepted or are considering, such as tongues proving a later Spirit baptism. What will you examine in the Bible and historical evidence, and what belief may need to change?

6. Early Response

Have you begun examining the claim identified in Question 5? If yes, describe what you checked and what has changed. If not, explain the concern or assumption you still need to address.

7. Ongoing Practice

When you next hear a remarkable report or spiritual claim, how will you test its teaching by the Bible and remain willing to correct your own view?

8. Doctrinal Clarity

Compare the Assemblies of God and Church of God declarations about later Spirit baptism with **Romans 8:9** *and the one baptism in* **Ephesians 4:4-6**. *How does identifying Jesus Christ as the Baptiser help explain the difference?*

9. Living the Truth

Someone says that joining a denomination gives full standing in God's Church, but a later experience is needed for full spiritual privilege. How would you respond from the teaching about the new birth, membership and holiness? Explain one way this matters to your own choices.

10. Final Response

How do Pentecostalism's modern origins, its claim about receiving the Spirit and the believer's completeness in Christ fit together in your understanding now? Explain what has become clear to you and what you still need to examine.