COGMA

Church of God Mission Academy

STUDY GUIDE 87

Pentecostalism Unmasked

STUDY GUIDE 3 OF 3:

Speaking With Tongues

An overview of biblical tongues, order and true edification.



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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Confusion over tongues has produced division, disorder, and fear in many churches. Some believers have been taught to doubt their salvation because they have not spoken in tongues. Others have been encouraged to imitate sounds and call them spiritual gifts.

This Study Guide is written to restore clarity and peace. Its purpose is to bring the reader back to what Paul actually taught in the Scriptures.

Paul wrote plainly about spiritual gifts. He explained what tongues are, who receives them, how they function, and how the church must be ordered when believers come together. Paul's teaching is consistent, practical, and clear.

It does not support the idea of tongues as a universal sign of salvation. It does not support disorder or confusion in worship.

This Study Guide also exposes a simple pattern. When tongues are redefined as sounds and noises, people are pressured, consciences are troubled, and meetings become confused. But when tongues are defined by Scripture, fear is removed and the church is strengthened in truth.

Therefore, this Study Guide carefully follows Paul's instruction, line by line, so that Scripture defines Scripture. The goal is not to chase experience, but to submit to God's order, so that all things are done unto edifying and in peace.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why must Paul's teaching govern claims about tongues and the order of the Church?

Personal Reflection

Has pressure to accept tongues caused uncertainty or fear in your own understanding of salvation?

Action Step

Choose one claim about tongues that has troubled you. What will you examine in the Bible, and how will you respond without fear?

INTRODUCTION

BACK TO CONTENTS

Pentecostalism teaches that speaking in tongues is evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit. It appeals to Acts 2, Acts 10 and Acts 19 to support that teaching. This claim must be examined against the words of Scripture rather than accepted because of religious experience.

In Scripture, tongues were meaningful languages with words that could be understood. On the day of Pentecost the disciples understood the languages they spoke, and the people hearing them understood those languages in their own native tongues. Luke records the languages of the hearers in Acts 2, while the accounts of Cornelius and the men at Ephesus do not name every language used. Each account must be examined for what it actually says, not for what later religious practice assumes.

Study Guide 86 has examined the events of Pentecost on the sixth of Sivan in A.D. 31. We now turn to the Corinthian instructions and ask how the one Spirit distributes gifts and governs the Church in understanding and peace.

In the Pentecostal practices challenged here, people are sometimes encouraged to repeat sounds that neither they nor the listeners understand. Some of these sounds may be coached or copied, but that does not establish the work of the Holy Spirit. The contrast with meaningful languages in Acts is significant, and every claimed manifestation must be judged by Scripture.

This difference is important because religious excitement cannot prove that an experience comes from God. In Acts the languages carried meaningful speech, while the practices being challenged can produce confusion and disorder. God is not the author of confusion, and His Word must govern the Church.

To further add to the confusion, many Pentecostal faith statements appeal to 1 Corinthians 12 and 1 Corinthians 14 to validate their experience. They claim that Paul taught a private or unknown tongue and that every believer may or should speak in tongues. These ideas are not found in Paul's teaching.

This Study Guide will examine these chapters carefully and in order. It will show what Paul meant by tongues, how the gift functioned in the church, and why it was never given as a sign of salvation. When Scripture is allowed to speak plainly, the confusion is removed, and the truth stands clear.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why must claims about tongues be tested by what the biblical accounts actually record?

Personal Reflection

Have you ever been urged to accept a spiritual practice before you understood what the Bible teaches about it?

Action Step

If someone presses you to accept a practice, how will you respond respectfully while testing the claim by God's Word?

1. CORINTH IN PAUL'S DAY

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In Paul's day, Corinth was one of the most important cities in southern Greece. It was a prosperous centre of trade and government, attracting people from many different nations. Its position made it an important place for spreading the Gospel.

The Romans had destroyed Corinth in 146 B.C. However, in 44 B.C., Julius Caesar established a new Roman colony on the site, and the city was rebuilt. Corinth later became the capital of the Roman province of Achaia, and its trade and political importance continued to grow.

Because of this position, Corinth controlled a key north-south land route. It also benefited from east-west movement of goods between the western and eastern Mediterranean.

Travellers and merchants could avoid the dangerous sea journey around the Peloponnese by crossing the isthmus. There was even an overland route used to move cargo across the land.

Corinth also had two harbours, giving it strong trade links both westward and eastward. This helped Corinth become a meeting place for merchants, sailors, officials, migrants, and travellers.

People And Religion

Corinth was home to Greeks, Romans and a Jewish community, and travellers came there from many other places. As a Roman colony and provincial centre it had a mixed population with different backgrounds and languages. This helps us understand the need for clear instruction when believers met together.

Religious life in Corinth also included many temples, gods and competing beliefs. Egyptian religious influences existed in the wider culture, but we should not assume that Paul was speaking directly about Isis in 1 Corinthians 1. His argument concerns human wisdom and the wisdom of God, a contrast that was clear in the Greek world.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 1:22**:

> *"For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:"*

Paul's point fits the Greek world. Many Greeks prized speech, debate, and human *"wisdom."* They treated these things as marks of status and insight.

Morality And Reputation

Corinth also carried a reputation for moral looseness. This was common in major port cities where wealth, travel, and entertainment mixed freely. Ancient writers also linked Corinth with sexual immorality.

Corinth was known for immorality, and sexual sin was a serious problem in the surrounding culture. Paul therefore addressed moral conduct and the responsibility of believers to live according to the Word of God.

The Church In Corinth

The congregation itself was predominantly made up of Gentile and Greek believers. Many had come out of various pagan cults. The church included a cross-section of people. There were wealthy believers, and there were also many who were poor and underprivileged.

Paul addressed this disparity several times. He showed how the wealthy should conduct themselves toward others in the church. He also corrected many other problems in Corinth.

In this letter, Paul addresses the difference between Christ's wisdom and Greek wisdom, sexual immorality, divisions among the brethren, food offered to idols, and believers taking one another to court. He also corrects conduct when the Church gathers for worship. These matters show why the congregation needed clear instruction grounded in the Word of God.

Paul made it clear that church gatherings must not be chaotic. They must be orderly.

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

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

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does Corinth's mixed population help explain Paul's concern for understanding and order?

Personal Reflection

Have you considered how a person from another language background experiences the gathering you attend?

Action Step

Think of someone who may struggle to understand a church gathering. What practical help will you offer so that person can follow the message?

2. DIVERS KINDS OF TONGUES

BACK TO CONTENTS

When the Pentecostal faith statements refer to spiritual gifts, they appeal especially to Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 12. But Paul first explains that the gifts belong to one Spirit and are distributed among different members of the same body. That setting must govern the meaning of *"divers kinds of tongues"*.

When reading Pentecostal faith statements and teachings, they explain that the tongues described as a gift in 1 Corinthians 12 is the same in essence as Acts 2, but different in purpose and use. In other words, they claim it is the same sounds and noises (tongues) a person receives when receiving the Holy Spirit, but used in a different manner. This claim is untrue.

The Nature Of The Gift

What is described as a gift in 1 Corinthians 12 is markedly different. The Bible does not describe meaningless sounds and noises as a spiritual gift. The gift of tongues is a real tongue, consisting of spoken words that can be understood by someone who knows that language.

The Meaning Of "Tongues" In Greek

The Greek word translated *"tongues"* is GLOSSA. This word can refer to the physical tongue or to a language, according to the setting. In the biblical accounts being examined, tongues involve meaningful words, not sounds that are without meaning. The use of a Greek word alone cannot prove that a claimed experience is a gift of the Holy Spirit.

What "Divers Kinds Of Tongues" Means

When Paul speaks of *"divers kinds of tongues,"* he is referring to different kinds of real languages. He is not describing different forms of sounds or noises. He is describing different spoken languages, each of which may require interpretation so that others in the assembly can understand what is said.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 12:10**:

> *"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."*

For comparison, the LITV reads, **1 Corinthians 12:10**:

> *"and to another, workings of powers, and to another, prophecy, and to another, discerning of spirits, and to another, kinds of languages, and to another, interpretation of languages."*

In the biblical examples considered here, GLOSSA is interpreted according to its context. The need for interpretation shows why congregational understanding matters.

Personal Response

Key Truth

What does the connection between different languages and interpretation show about the gift of tongues?

Personal Reflection

Has the difference between an unfamiliar language and meaningless sounds corrected your understanding of a spiritual gift?

Action Step

When you hear speech described as tongues, what will you ask about its meaning and interpretation before accepting the claim?

Not All Believers Speak With Tongues

Pentecostalism claims that speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit. However, 1 Corinthians 12 clearly teaches that the gift of tongues is not given to everyone.

The Distribution Of Gifts Is God's Choice

All spiritual gifts come from the same Spirit, but they are distributed according to God's will, not human expectation. The Spirit Himself decides who receives which gift. No believer is promised every gift, and no single gift is given to all.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 12:11** (LITV):

> *"But the one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing separately to each as He wills."*

Not All Have The Same Gift

Paul confirms this truth by asking a series of questions that clearly demand a negative answer. He lists several gifts and shows that not every believer receives the same one.

Paul 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?"*

The clear answer is no. Just as not every believer is an apostle or a prophet, not every believer speaks with *"divers tongues"*, and not every believer interprets. This directly contradicts the claim that speaking in tongues is a universal and required sign of receiving the Holy Spirit.

The gift of *"divers tongues"* is explained more fully in the module The Gifts and Offices in the New Testament. However, we must state this clearly here. Pentecostalism teaches that

tongues is a *"heavenly language"* or a *"prayer language"* that only God understands. This is not what Paul is teaching.

The word translated *"divers"* is connected to the Greek word GENOS, which speaks of kinds and groups. It can refer to *"kin," "offspring," "race," "nation,"* or *"family."* The point is simple. It speaks of different kinds within human groups.

The expression *"kinds of tongues"* describes different languages rather than separate forms of meaningless sounds. Languages belong to people who speak them, and their words can be understood and interpreted. This is why Paul connects tongues with interpretation in the congregation.

Signs Follow Believers, They Do Not Define Believers

Pentecostal teaching presents tongues as evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit, but Scripture does not establish a single outward sign as the proof of salvation. Jesus said signs would follow believers, not that believers must follow signs. Tongues are listed alongside healing, deliverance and protection, yet Scripture does not require every believer to demonstrate all these signs. Salvation is established by the new birth and the life of Jesus Christ within, not by one religious manifestation.

IN CONCLUSION

The Bible is clear and consistent about the purpose of spiritual gifts. What Scripture calls *"divers kinds of tongues"* involves meaningful languages that can be understood and interpreted. GLOSSA does not, by itself, establish the Pentecostal claim of a private heavenly language or compulsory initial evidence. The claimed experience must be tested by the setting of the verses and by Paul's requirements of understanding and edification.

Pentecostalism departs from this clear teaching. It redefines tongues as sounds and noises, claims they are the same as Acts 2, and then elevates them as required evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit. These claims are not stated in Acts 2, 1 Corinthians 12, or 1 Corinthians 14, and they are not stated anywhere else in the New Testament.

The Bible teaches that not all believers speak with tongues, because tongues are a gift, and gifts are distributed by God according to His will. Salvation and the reception of the Holy Spirit are not proven by one manifestation, but by new birth, faith in Christ, and the inward work of the Spirit.

Signs may follow believers, but they do not define believers. Love, truth, obedience, and a transformed life are the marks of New Covenant salvation. When tongues are separated from their Scriptural meaning and made the measure of spirituality, the result is confusion, division, and error.

The difference is clear: Scripture describes tongues as meaningful languages that can be understood and interpreted. Pentecostal practice, as criticised here, treats sounds that no one understands as evidence of spiritual life. Only the teaching established by God's Word can determine what is true.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does the Spirit's distribution of gifts challenge the claim that every believer must speak in tongues?

Personal Reflection

Have you judged your own or another person's spiritual standing by an outward gift?

Action Step

Identify one judgement you have made about spiritual gifts. How will you correct it in the light of God's choice and the new birth?

3. UNKNOWN TONGUES AND ORDER IN THE CHURCH

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In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul instructs the church on how the congregation must order itself when coming together in public service and worship. When believers come together, they may want to sing, testify, pray, and preach. But Paul's rule is clear. Public worship must be orderly.

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

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

Edification Must Be For All

In the public assembly, Paul insists that the whole church must be edified. What is said and done must build up everyone present, not just the speaker. For this reason, if a man speaks in a tongue, it must be interpreted, so that the church can understand and be edified.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 14:26**:

> *"How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying."*

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 14:5**:

> *"I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying."*

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 14:12**:

> *"Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church."*

Paul's rule is simple. If the church cannot understand what is spoken, then the church cannot be edified. This is why tongues must never be treated as a display, and they must never be used to create excitement or noise in the assembly.

When God's people come together, the aim is not private experience, but public profit. Everything must be done so that the saints are helped, strengthened, and built up in truth.

Love Must Govern The Gifts

Paul begins the chapter by setting the motive for the use of gifts. The motive is love.

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

> *"Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy."*

This love is AGAPĒ. It is the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. It is selfless and sacrificial.

It seeks the profit of others. It seeks the edification of the whole congregation, not the display of one person.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why must love and the strengthening of the whole congregation govern the use of gifts?

Personal Reflection

Have you been more concerned about being noticed in worship than helping the people listening?

Action Step

Before you contribute in a gathering, what will you change so your words express Christ's love and help others understand?

Prophecy Is Preferred In The Assembly

Pentecostalism puts great emphasis on tongues, but Paul puts the emphasis on prophecy. Prophecy is speaking under divine inspiration in words that people can understand. It is the public declaration of the will and purpose of God so that all within hearing may be edified.

Paul teaches that prophecy is greater in the public assembly because it brings understanding. Tongues do not help the church unless they are interpreted.

What "Unknown Tongue" Means

Paul then addresses the problem of speaking in a tongue that those present do not understand. His concern is that the congregation receive instruction and be edified rather than hear words they cannot follow.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 14:2**:

> *"For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries."*

The word *"unknown"* is supplied in italic type by the KJV translators; it is not a separate word in the underlying Greek expression. Paul is describing a man or woman in a public meeting who speaks in a foreign language that is not understood by those listening.

The word translated *"tongue"* is the Greek word GLOSSA. This word means the tongue or a language. In Scripture, it refers to spoken words belonging to a known language.

The Greek word itself does not establish that an unrecognisable sound is a divine gift. Paul's surrounding instructions emphasise meaningful communication and edification.

Paul's point is clear. When a person speaks in a foreign language that no one present understands, they are not speaking to men but to God, because no one else understands what

is being said. Unless that language is interpreted into words the congregation understands, the church receives no edification.

Silence Without Interpretation

Paul gives clear rules for speaking in tongues when the Church comes together. He does not allow everyone to speak at once, and he limits the number who may speak. Those who speak must take their turn, and the words must be interpreted so that the congregation can understand them. These instructions establish order rather than uncontrolled speech.

Paul's goal is simple. The whole congregation must be edified. If the congregation cannot understand what is said, then the church is not being built up. Therefore, tongues must never be spoken publicly without interpretation.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 14:27-28**:

> *"If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God."*

Paul's command is direct. If there is no interpreter, the speaker must keep silence in the church. He may speak quietly to himself and to God, but he must not address the congregation in a tongue that cannot be understood.

This is God's order for public worship. Tongues must be understood through interpretation, and everything must be done for edification and in order.

An example would be a foreign person in a church service who only speaks Chinese. If the congregation only speaks English, they will not understand what the Chinese person says. What is spoken will not edify the congregation, but it will edify the speaker.

Paul teaches this principle clearly. Without understanding, there is no edification for the church. The speaker may be speaking to God, and God understands all languages, but the congregation cannot profit unless the language is interpreted. Therefore, the speaker edifies himself, not the church.

Paul also makes it very clear that before an *"unknown tongue,"* that is, a foreign language, is spoken in a public meeting, the person who wishes to speak must ensure there is an interpreter present. If there is no interpreter, that person must keep silence in the meeting.

If you have attended a Pentecostal meeting, or witnessed one on television, the very opposite often takes place. During singing or *"worship,"* many may begin speaking in what is termed tongues, and no interpretation is given. The preacher may also be preaching and suddenly speak in *"tongues,"* and again no interpretation is given. According to Paul's instructions, this is forbidden.

There may be instances when someone speaks in tongues and someone gives an interpretation. However, in many cases the person speaking in Pentecostal tongues may do so for several minutes, but the *"interpretation"* may only be brief.

That is not interpretation. An interpretation should convey what was spoken. It should reasonably match the substance of the original tongue (language). If it does not, then it is not an interpretation as Paul required.

IN CONCLUSION

Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 14 is clear. Public worship must be orderly, and everything spoken must edify the whole church. For that reason, if a man speaks in a tongue in the assembly, it must be a real tongue that can be understood through interpretation. If there is no interpreter, Paul's command is direct: the speaker must keep silence in the church.

The expression *"unknown tongue"* does not mean a special heavenly language. The word *"unknown"* was added by translators. Paul is describing a foreign language that the congregation does not understand.

The tongue is still a known tongue, but it is unknown to the hearers. Therefore, without interpretation, the church receives no profit.

Pentecostalism reverses Paul's order. It often allows many to speak at once, without interpretation, during singing and preaching, and then calls this spiritual worship. Paul does not call this worship. He commands silence when there is no interpreter, because the church cannot be edified.

The contrast is clear: Scripture requires understanding so that the whole congregation may be edified. Where speech is not understood but is still accepted as a spiritual gift to the Church, the purpose of Paul's instruction has been overlooked. We must follow the order God gave through Paul.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why does Paul command silence when a tongue cannot be interpreted for the congregation?

Personal Reflection

Do you consider the understanding of other people before speaking in a gathering?

Action Step

If others cannot understand your language, what will you do to provide interpretation or remain silent as Paul commands?

4. THE "UNKNOWN TONGUE" AND THE LANGUAGE OF THE HEARERS

BACK TO CONTENTS

Paul's concern in the congregation was whether those listening could understand and be edified. The language spoken might be familiar to the speaker yet unfamiliar to some of the hearers. His instructions therefore require us to consider the audience and the need for interpretation, rather than treat unfamiliar speech as proof of spirituality.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 14:3-4**:

> *"But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church."*

The *"unknown tongue"* spoken of here is not groans and noises. It is not a *"prayer language."* It is not gibberish or baby talk. It is the native tongue or mother tongue of the speaker that is not known by the hearers.

The expression *"mother tongue"* simply means a person's first language. It is the language learned as a child in the home. It is the language a person understands most naturally, and usually speaks most easily.

Because the congregation does not understand the language being spoken, an interpretation is needed. Without it, the speaker may understand the words, but the Church does not receive their meaning.

In Acts 2, Luke expressly states that the hearers recognised their own languages. Acts 10 and Acts 19 also record tongues, but do not identify every language or describe the comprehension of each listener. We must not supply details beyond those actually recorded.

Paul is giving instruction concerning order in a public meeting. This includes public prayer, testifying, singing, and preaching. Everything must edify and be understood by the whole congregation. Therefore, if a foreigner speaks in a tongue not understood by all, it must be interpreted, so that the whole church may receive edification.

Edification And Understanding In Public Worship

Paul continues his instruction by stating the purpose of spiritual gifts in the public meeting. The goal is not personal display. The goal is edification of the church.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 14:12-13**:

> *"Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church. Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret."*

If one is to speak or minister in a congregation, spiritual gifts must edify the church. If you or I speak and the congregation cannot understand what we are saying, then it is useless, and the church is not edified.

Paul is also clear that the *"unknown tongue"* is known to the speaker, but unknown to the hearers, and therefore an interpreter is required. In contrast, the tongues demonstrated in Acts 2 were understood by the hearers and did not create confusion in the same way.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How can a language be known to its speaker yet unknown to the people listening?

Personal Reflection

Have you assumed that people understand your words simply because their meaning is clear to you?

Action Step

Think of one spiritual truth you share. What will you explain more clearly so the person listening can understand it?

Praying And Singing Must Also Be Understood

Paul shows that this principle applies to prayer and singing as well as to preaching. Understanding is necessary if the congregation is to join together and receive spiritual help.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 14:14-18**:

> *"For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all:"*

Paul is not saying that he spoke what Pentecostals claim to be *"tongues"* more than everybody. He is not claiming a *"heavenly language."* Paul was an educated man, and he spoke more foreign languages than many in the local congregation at Corinth. But even with that ability, he still submits to the rule of edification and understanding.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 14:19**:

> *"Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue."*

"My Understanding Is Unfruitful" Explained

When Paul says that his understanding is *"unfruitful,"* he is not saying that he does not understand what he is saying. He is saying that his understanding does not benefit others unless they also understand.

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

> *"For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful."*

Paul's understanding was fruitful to himself, but unfruitful to the congregation. Understanding only becomes fruitful when it produces edification in others. Your understanding becomes fruitful to other believers when you communicate in words they understand. This is why Paul gives priority to instruction that builds up the whole congregation.

This verse does not teach that the speaker is unaware of what he is saying. It teaches that the hearers are unaware, and therefore the church is not edified.

This completely destroys the Pentecostal claim that tongues are sounds the speaker does not understand. Paul is dealing with foreign languages, not meaningless speech.

Order Protects The Church And The Unsaved

Paul also shows why order matters when outsiders are present. Corinth was a congregation of mixed nationalities, and confusion could easily arise if people spoke in tongues without interpretation.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 14:23**:

> *"If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?"*

Why would Paul say this? Because nobody understands, and therefore nobody profits. It becomes speaking into the air, while the Word of God must be spoken to the minds and hearts of men and women so it can be understood. But prophecy brings understanding and conviction.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 14:24-25**:

> *"But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth."*

Paul then explains how the whole congregation should behave when believers come together. The purpose of every contribution is that all things may be done unto edifying.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 14:26**:

> *"How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying."*

Paul is not forbidding participation. He is commanding that every part of the meeting must build up the whole church. Therefore, he immediately gives instructions about tongues, showing that they must be limited and interpreted so that the congregation is edified.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 14:27**:

> *"If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret."*

Paul uses the expressions *"by course"* and *"interpret"* in **1 Corinthians 14:27**. These words explain how speech must be ordered so that the congregation receives a meaningful message.

Meaning Of "By Course"

The expression *"by course"* translates the Greek phrase ANA MEROS. It means in turn, part by part, one at a time. Paul's point is that tongues must not be spoken all at once or over one another, and not as one long uncontrolled speech.

This also fits the practical meaning in a public meeting. The speaker should speak a portion in the foreign language (for example, one or two sentences), then stop so the interpreter can interpret. After that, the speaker may speak another portion, and the interpreter interprets again, and so on. This is ANA MEROS: in order, part by part: so the whole congregation can follow and be edified.

Meaning Of "Interpret"

The word *"interpret"* translates the Greek verb DIERMĒNEUŌ. It means to translate or to explain clearly what was spoken. It is not guessing, and it is not a short slogan that does not match what was said. It is giving the meaning in words the congregation understands.

When Paul says *"let one interpret"*, he is instructing the Church to communicate the meaning of the foreign tongue in words everyone can understand. The interpretation must provide understanding rather than another display that leaves the congregation confused.

In Pentecostal meetings I have personally observed, this order has not always been followed. The person speaking in *"unknown tongues"* usually speaks until they are finished. This may last two or three minutes.

Then a person who has not been prearranged gives an interpretation, and it usually lasts much less time. This is unbiblical and false.

According to Paul, the interpreter must be in place before anyone speaks in an *"unknown tongue."* If there is no interpreter, the speaker must not speak at all.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 14:28**:

> *"But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God."*

This instruction is clear. Silence is required when there is no interpreter. Paul insists that interpretation be available and that silence be maintained when it is absent.

"By Course" Requires Order And Prearranged Interpretation

Paul requires those speaking in tongues to take turns and to have their words interpreted. These two requirements work together to give clarity and order to the whole meeting.

The expression *"by course"* means in turn, part by part, one at a time. This requires restraint, order, and clarity.

The order can be explained simply. A speaker gives a short portion in the foreign language, and the interpreter communicates its meaning to the congregation. The speaker may then continue with another portion, which is also interpreted. In this way the Church can follow the message, understand it and receive instruction.

This is not optional. It is God's order.

If someone speaks at length in a foreign language, and an interpreter later gives a brief statement, that is not interpretation. Interpretation must reasonably match what was spoken.

Paul's command is clear and direct. Where there is no interpreter, the speaker must remain silent in the congregation.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 14:28**:

> *"But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God."*

An interpreter must be available; without one, the person speaking is instructed to remain silent in the congregation. That is the clear requirement stated in the verse.

Order Produces Confidence

When a foreign person speaks a sentence and then someone interprets, there is confidence that a true interpretation is being given. This is because the interpreter has been prearranged, and the message can be followed and checked. This is what Paul means by speaking by course and with interpretation.

The Tongues in Acts Were Understood

In Acts 2, the hearers expressly recognised their own languages, so no separate interpretation was needed for them to understand. Luke does not provide the same detail about every speaker and listener in Acts 10 or Acts 19. The accounts must therefore be read according to what they actually establish.

God Is Not The Author Of Confusion

Paul concludes this teaching with a principle that governs the whole congregation. His instruction concerns the peace and order that should be present whenever the Church comes together.

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."*

Anything that brings confusion into a congregational meeting is not of God. Especially in public worship, disorder contradicts the nature of God. Pentecostal practice brings confusion to the body of Christ because its practices are unbiblical.

IN CONCLUSION

Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 14 is careful, clear, and practical. The *"unknown tongue"* is not unknown to the speaker, and it is not a heavenly or private prayer language. It is a native or foreign human language that is unknown to the hearers. Because it is not understood by the congregation, it requires interpretation so that the whole church may be edified.

The Bible places understanding and edification at the centre of public worship. Paul does not allow tongues to function as uncontrolled speech or personal display in the assembly. He limits their use, requires interpretation, demands order, and commands silence when interpretation is absent. This protects the church and preserves peace.

Pentecostalism departs from this pattern. It redefines the *"unknown tongue"* as sounds and noises the speaker does not understand. It then permits many to speak without interpretation and still calls it spiritual worship.

This directly contradicts Paul's instructions. Scripture requires understandable words, interpretation and peace, while the practices being examined permit confusion where interpretation is missing. What Scripture requires must not be set aside, and what Scripture forbids must not be accepted as spiritual worship.

The Bible defines the *"unknown tongue"* as a real human tongue, unknown to the hearers, and therefore requiring interpretation. Pentecostalism defines it as an experience expressed without understanding and without order.

God is not the author of confusion, but of peace. Therefore, practices that produce confusion do not reflect His order. Only the biblical pattern of order, understanding, and edification is faithful to the Word of God.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do speaking in turn, interpretation and silence without an interpreter work together for the Church's peace?

Personal Reflection

Have you ever valued a dramatic contribution more than words that strengthened the congregation?

Action Step

In a gathering with different languages, what will you do to protect order, interpretation and the understanding of others?

5. THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER

BACK TO CONTENTS

In Luke 24 and Acts 1, Luke records that Jesus gave His disciples a clear final instruction. They were to wait for the promise of the Father. These words were spoken after the resurrection and just before the ascension. For that reason, they are among the last and most important instructions Jesus spoke before He ascended.

Promised Long Before

Jesus called this gift *"the promise of the Father"* because it had already been promised through the prophets. Joel had spoken of the Spirit being poured out long before the disciples were told to wait in Jerusalem.

Joel wrote in **Joel 2:28-29**:

> *"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit."*

Joel shows us that this promise was not a new idea. It was the Father's declared plan, that He would pour out His Spirit in the days of the New Covenant.

Commanded To Wait

Luke records Jesus instructing His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the promised Spirit. They were not to begin their Gospel witness until that promise had been fulfilled.

Luke recorded Jesus' words in **Luke 24:49**:

> *"And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."*

Notice the emphasis. Jesus would send the promise. The disciples were to tarry in Jerusalem. The purpose was to be endued with power from on high.

Jesus did not tell them to preach immediately. He did not tell them to begin the mission at once. He commanded them to wait until the promise was received.

Luke repeated the same instruction at the beginning of Acts. He recorded Jesus' words in **Acts 1:4-5**:

> *"And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."*

Here Luke highlights something important. Jesus reminds them that this promise was not new information. He says, *"which, saith he, ye have heard of me."* This means Jesus had already spoken to them about this promise before. He had already made it known to them, and now He brings it back to their minds and gives them a direct command to wait until it was fulfilled.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why did Jesus command the disciples to wait for the promise of the Father before beginning their witness?

Personal Reflection

Have you relied on your own ability when speaking about Christ rather than on His indwelling Spirit?

Action Step

Consider an opportunity to witness. What attitude of self-reliance must change as you trust the Spirit of Christ within?

Not Identified With Tongues

Nowhere in Jesus' three-and-a-half-year ministry did He identify the promise of the Father with speaking in tongues, as Pentecostalism claims. Jesus never described the promise as tongues, nor did He present tongues as evidence of receiving the promise.

At the Last Supper, Jesus spoke plainly about what would take place after His departure. He did not speak of tongues, but of the coming of the Comforter.

John recorded Jesus' words, **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."*

Here Jesus identifies the promise clearly. The promise of the Father is the Holy Spirit Himself, given to abide in the believer.

Jesus spoke of the Spirit dwelling within His disciples, not of an outward manifestation that would become a compulsory sign. His promise concerned His own abiding presence and the relationship established through the new birth. The Spirit of truth is the Spirit of Jesus Christ Himself, who dwells within His children.

Jesus was present with His disciples when He gave this promise. He said that the Spirit of truth was dwelling with them and would come to dwell within them. He then made the promise personal by saying, *"I will come to you."*

At Pentecost, Jesus Christ fulfilled this promise by coming as the Holy Spirit to dwell within His disciples. His command to wait was given before the Gospel Day began, and it does not establish a further reception of the Spirit after the new birth.

The New Covenant Mark And The Seal

Paul wrote 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."*

This verse is clear. The New Covenant mark is indwelling. If the Spirit of God dwells in a person, that person belongs to Christ. If the Spirit is not in him, he is none of His.

The Spirit is also the seal of salvation. God marks the believer as His own by giving the Holy Ghost.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 1:13**:

> *"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,"*

That seal is not a later reward for advanced believers. It is God's own testimony that the believer is His, and it is given when the gospel is believed.

IN CONCLUSION

The Bible presents the promise of the Father with clarity and consistency. It was promised long before, commanded by Jesus, and fulfilled according to God's own order. The promise is the Holy Spirit Himself, given to dwell in the believer under the New Covenant.

Jesus never defined this promise as tongues, signs, or outward manifestations. He defined it as indwelling life, the Spirit being in His people.

The New Testament confirms this truth. The mark of the New Covenant is indwelling, and the Spirit is given as the seal of salvation when the gospel is believed. This seal is not reserved for a later stage, a special class, or a second experience. It is God's testimony that the believer belongs to Christ.

Pentecostalism departs from this biblical pattern. It shifts the focus from indwelling to manifestations, from salvation to experience, and from God's finished work to a later sign. These claims are not stated in Luke 24, Acts 1, John 14, Romans 8, or Ephesians 1, and they are not stated anywhere else in the New Testament.

The difference is clear. Scripture identifies the promise of the Father with the Holy Spirit dwelling within every person who is truly born again. The Pentecostal claim being examined makes a later outward experience, identified by tongues, the sign of receiving that promise. We must accept what Jesus and His apostles taught, not an additional requirement imposed by religious practice.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do Jesus' promise and the Spirit's seal show what the Father gave to those who believe the Gospel?

Personal Reflection

Has someone suggested you lack the Holy Ghost because you have not produced a later outward sign?

Action Step

If you hear that claim again, how will you respond from **John 14:17–18** *and* **Romans 8:9** *without doubting Christ's indwelling life?*

6. BAPTISED IN THE HOLY GHOST

BACK TO CONTENTS

How was the promised change from the Spirit being with the disciples to dwelling in them to take place? Jesus Christ would baptise them in the Holy Ghost, bringing them into His own spiritual life. This baptism was the fulfilment of His promise to dwell within His disciples and make them members of His body.

The KJV uses the English expression *"with the Holy Ghost"* in **Acts 1:5**, where the Greek preposition is EN. In the spiritual teaching of this Study Guide, the meaning is baptism in the Holy Ghost, since the believer is brought into Jesus Christ Himself and receives His indwelling Spirit. This is the inward reality to which the words direct our attention.

Luke recorded Jesus' words, **Acts 1:5**:

> *"For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."*

EN: Baptised In the Holy Ghost

In **Acts 1:5**, the preposition before *"Holy Ghost"* is the Greek EN, meaning *"in"* within this explanation of spiritual baptism. John baptised people in water, an outward act, but Jesus Christ baptises His people in His own Spirit. The contrast is between the outward water and the inward spiritual reality received through Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is the One who baptises, and the Holy Ghost is His own Spirit. When He baptises a believer in the Holy Ghost, He brings that person into His own spiritual life. Christ Himself dwells within everyone who is truly born again.

The expression *"baptism of the Holy Ghost"* can obscure who performs the baptism. John identified Jesus Christ as the Baptiser, while the Spirit is His own indwelling life. The Scriptural question is not which later religious expression is commonly used, but what Jesus Christ accomplishes in the person who is born again.

In this promise, EN expresses baptism in the Holy Ghost. The meaning agrees with the words of Jesus in **John 14:17-18**, where He promised to dwell within His disciples. There is no second baptism following the new birth, because the believer receives the Spirit of Christ at salvation.

Paul confirms this understanding in **1 Corinthians 12:13**, where the KJV reads *"by one Spirit"* and *"into one body"*. The Greek uses EN in the expression *"in one Spirit"*, followed by EIS, meaning *"into"*, in the expression *"into one body"*. Together they describe the one spiritual baptism by which God brings believers into the body of Jesus Christ.

This is why we must read the words in harmony with the rest of Scripture. Jesus Christ baptises the believer in His own Spirit, and through that baptism the believer is brought into Christ and His body. The one Spirit is not an added blessing received after salvation; His indwelling life is the new birth itself.

John baptised in water, but Jesus Christ gives a greater baptism in His Spirit. As the water surrounded the person in John's outward baptism, the born-again believer is brought into the spiritual reality of Christ Himself. The Person is greater than the outward representation, because only Jesus Christ gives the life that makes a person a member of His Church.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does identifying Jesus Christ as the Baptiser help explain baptism in the Holy Ghost?

Personal Reflection

Has the difference between John's water baptism and Christ's spiritual baptism changed your view of salvation?

Action Step

Identify one belief that makes an outward ceremony or later experience necessary. What will you correct in your understanding of Christ's baptism?

An Inward Baptism Into Christ

The promise in **Acts 1:5** is therefore an inward work, not an outward performance or a second experience after salvation. The believer is brought into the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of Christ dwells within the believer. We are in Him, and He is in us.

This agrees with Jesus' promise in **John 14:17-18**. He said that the Spirit was with His disciples and would be in them, and then declared, *"I will come to you."* At Pentecost, Jesus Christ fulfilled His promise by coming to dwell within His children as the Holy Spirit.

Thus, baptism in the Holy Ghost is New Covenant entry into Jesus Christ Himself. To be in the Spirit is to belong to Christ, His body, His Church and His Kingdom. These are not separate saving experiences but connected descriptions of the one new birth.

One Salvation Described Four Ways

In Christ

Paul wrote in **2 Corinthians 5:17**:

> *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."*

Paul wrote in **Romans 8:1**:

> *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."*

Paul also wrote in **Ephesians 2:6**:

> *"And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:"*

Notice that Paul says *"in Christ Jesus"*. He does not present believers as seated beside Christ while remaining separate from His life. Their spiritual standing is in Him, just as they are brought into His body through the one spiritual baptism.

In The Body

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."*

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 1:22-23**:

> *"And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."*

In The Church

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

> *"And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."*

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:"*

In The Kingdom Of God

Paul wrote in **Colossians 1:13**:

> *"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:"*

This is why the expressions must be interpreted through Jesus Christ and His completed work. The baptism promised in **Acts 1:5** is baptism in the Holy Ghost, and **1 Corinthians 12:13** identifies its result as entrance into one body. The believer is placed in Christ through the new birth, not given a later baptism to make salvation complete.

The One Baptism Of New Covenant Entry

Baptism in the Holy Ghost is the saving baptism through which a person is brought into Jesus Christ, not a later experience. Paul describes the one Spirit and the one body without separating the reception of Christ from the reception of His Spirit.

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."*

Paul's statement joins the two truths: in one Spirit all believers are baptised into one body. The spiritual baptism is not subsequent to salvation. It is how the person receives the life of Christ and becomes a member of His Church.

This is the new birth, through which God places the believer in Jesus Christ and gives the indwelling Spirit. No born-again person must seek a second Spirit or another spiritual baptism to become complete in Him.

This is the new birth, the work of God through which the person receives the indwelling Spirit and belongs to Jesus Christ. It occurs when the Gospel is believed, not at a required later stage of salvation.

Belief And Baptism Unto Salvation

Mark recorded Jesus' words, **Mark 16:16**:

> *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."*

Jesus is clearly not speaking of water baptism here. He is speaking of the baptism that must take place at the moment of salvation, the baptism by which God places the believer into the body of Christ. This is the baptism in the Holy Ghost, and it is New Covenant entry, accomplished by God alone when a person believes the gospel.

Paul wrote in **Romans 1:16**:

> *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."*

Paul makes it clear that salvation is effected by the gospel itself, not by a later experience or additional work. When the gospel is believed, God acts, and the believer is immediately placed into salvation through the baptism in the Holy Ghost, which is the power of God unto salvation.

Why They Had To Tarry

Why was it so important that the disciples had to tarry for this baptism? What is this *"power"* that Jesus promised them?

They had to tarry because Jesus did not want them to witness in their own strength. He required them to wait until God had done His New Covenant work in them, so their witness would be true, spiritual, and fruitful.

Luke recorded Jesus' words, **Acts 1:8**:

> *"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."*

They had already walked with Jesus, heard His words, and seen His resurrection. Yet Jesus still commanded them to wait, because the work ahead required the Holy Ghost, not human effort. They needed the Spirit's indwelling reality before they could represent Christ rightly.

What The Power Is

The power Jesus promised was the Holy Ghost coming upon His disciples. Through His indwelling life, the love of God would be given to them so that they could witness faithfully to Jesus Christ.

Paul wrote in **Romans 5:5**:

> *"And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."*

So the power Jesus promised is not noise, not display, and not a second experience after salvation. It is the Holy Ghost giving the believer the love of God, which makes them true witnesses of Christ, even under hatred, persecution, and death.

Without Love, Works Are Empty

Without the love of God, outward works and religious activity cannot produce spiritual life. Paul made this clear when he explained that even impressive gifts and acts are empty without charity.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 13:1-4**:

> *"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,"*

They tarried because they needed the Holy Ghost. They needed the love of God in their hearts. That love is the power that makes a believer a true witness of Christ.

This promise is not for a special class of believers, and it is not received in a second work. It is promised to all who believe. Paul states this plainly.

Paul wrote in **Galatians 3:14**:

> *"That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."*

This love is not a mere feeling. It is the inward evidence of New Covenant life. The love of God shed abroad in our hearts is the true sign that we are born again.

John wrote in **1 John 3:14**:

> *"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."*

John also wrote, **1 John 4:7-8**:

> *"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."*

So the mark is clear. Not tongues. Not noise.

Not display. The true sign of the new birth is the love of God in the heart, produced by the Holy Ghost.

IN CONCLUSION

Jesus Christ is the One who baptises in the Holy Ghost, His own Spirit. The Greek EN in **Acts 1:5** gives the inward sense of baptism in the Spirit, while Paul confirms in **1 Corinthians 12:13** that all believers are brought into one body. The Lord does not bring a person into an independent Spirit; He brings that person into His own life.

John baptised in water, which was outward and physical. Jesus Christ baptises in the Holy Ghost, which is inward and spiritual. The believer is in Christ, and Christ dwells within the believer.

Therefore, **Acts 1:5** does not describe a later experience after conversion. It concerns the promised New Covenant life fulfilled at Pentecost, when Jesus Christ came as the Holy Spirit to dwell within His people. The believer enters Christ, the body, the Church and the Kingdom through one new birth.

This is not reserved for a few believers or for those who have demonstrated outward signs. Every person who is truly born again receives the Spirit of Christ and is complete in Him.

A religious movement cannot establish another Spirit baptism after salvation by choosing a particular English expression. In **Acts 1:5** the KJV reads *"with the Holy Ghost"*, while the Greek expression uses EN. The spiritual meaning taught here is baptism in the Holy Ghost, through which the believer enters Jesus Christ and receives His indwelling life.

The difference is clear. Scripture reveals Spirit baptism as God bringing the believer into Christ and His body through the new birth. The teaching examined here describes a later experience that must be sought and proved through manifestations. The Spirit's power is not proved by noise or outward display, but is expressed through the love of God within His children.

And the true mark is also clear. The Spirit's power is not noise or display. It is the love of God shed abroad in the heart, producing a true witness of Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do entry into Christ, His body, His Church and His Kingdom describe the one new birth?

Personal Reflection

When you speak about Jesus Christ, do your words express His love or mainly your own confidence?

Action Step

Think of a person who needs to hear about Jesus. What will you do so your witness is guided by His love within?

7. IN JESUS WE ARE COMPLETE

BACK TO CONTENTS

Pentecostal teaching presents salvation and Spirit baptism as separate experiences. The person is first told to receive Jesus Christ, and then to seek a further reception of the Holy

Spirit with speaking in tongues as evidence. This creates a serious problem because Jesus Christ is not received physically at the new birth. Separating Christ from His Spirit suggests that two different spirits must be received to complete salvation, but Scripture teaches no such division.

One Spirit, Not Two

Paul wrote 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."*

Paul does not describe two spirits. He uses *"the Spirit of God"* and *"the Spirit of Christ"* in the same verse. They are the same Spirit.

Therefore, to be born again and to belong to Jesus Christ, a person must have the Spirit of God dwelling in them. This indwelling is not a later stage. It is salvation.

Pentecostalism Divides What God Has Made One

Pentecostalism teaches that a believer may receive Christ and yet not have the Holy Spirit. This directly contradicts **Romans 8:9**. If a man does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.

So Pentecostalism divides what God has made one. It divides Christ from the Spirit, and it divides salvation into stages.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 4:4**:

> *"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling."*

Paul has established that there is one Spirit and one body. The believer is brought into Christ at the new birth and is not left with a partial salvation waiting to be completed. There is one indwelling Spirit, who is the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

In Christ, Salvation Is Complete

The Bible teaches a simple truth. When a person believes the gospel, God gives them His Spirit, and that Spirit is the Spirit of Christ. That person is born again, belongs to Christ, and is complete in Him.

Paul wrote in **Colossians 2:6**:

> *"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:"*

Paul wrote in **Colossians 2:10**:

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

Pentecostalism replaces this assurance with uncertainty. It teaches believers they are saved, but not complete, until a later sign appears.

The Bible teaches the opposite. In Jesus, we are complete.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does **Romans 8:9** *explain why receiving Christ cannot be separated from receiving His Spirit?*

Personal Reflection

Have you questioned your completeness in Christ because someone told you that another experience was missing?

Action Step

Name one fear or assumption about needing more of the Spirit. What truth in **Romans 8:9** *and* **Colossians 2:10** *will correct it?*

The Meaning Of "Complete"

The word translated *"complete"* comes from the Greek verb PLĒROŌ, which means to fill or bring to fullness. In **Colossians 2:10**, Paul describes believers as those who have already been made full in Jesus Christ.

It means to fill, to make full, or to bring to fullness. The sense is not *"you will become complete later,"* but you have been made full already in Christ.

So when Paul says, *"ye are complete in him,"* he is saying that believers are fully supplied in Christ. Nothing is missing. Nothing needs to be added by a later experience, a second step, or a special sign.

This agrees with the surrounding verses in Colossians 2. All the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Jesus Christ, as Paul declares in **Colossians 2:9**. Therefore, those who belong to Christ have already been made full in Him and do not need another spiritual experience to complete their salvation.

The Meaning of "Godhead": Godhood

Paul did not teach that divine life is received in parts, or that God gives only a portion of Himself at the new birth. He taught that all the fulness of God dwells bodily in Jesus Christ. The Father is the one eternal Spirit revealed through the genuine human life of Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit is His own Spirit dwelling within His born-again children.

Paul wrote in **Colossians 2:9**:

> *"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."*

The KJV word *"Godhead"* means Godhood, the state and nature of being God. The statement concerns God Himself and His complete divine life. Paul teaches that the one true God is fully revealed through the genuine humanity of Jesus Christ.

The original Greek noun is THEOTES (θεότης). In **Colossians 2:9**, its form is THEOTETOS (θεότητος), meaning Godhood, deity, or the state of being God. The noun is derived from THEOS, the Greek word for God, and occurs only here in the New Testament.

Paul declares that all the fulness of the Godhood dwells bodily in Jesus Christ. He does not say that a portion of God dwells in Him or that salvation comes through receiving different

portions of divine life. Everything that makes God truly God is fully present and revealed in Jesus Christ.

This is the meaning of **Colossians 2:9**: the one true God has revealed His complete Godhood in Jesus Christ through genuine humanity. The verse does not teach that Jesus is one part of God, or that believers must receive parts of God through different experiences. The fulness of the one true God dwells bodily in Christ.

Paul immediately wrote in **Colossians 2:10** that believers are *"complete in him"*. Since all the fulness of Godhood dwells in Jesus Christ, everyone who has received His indwelling life at the new birth is already complete in Him. Nothing can be added through a second Spirit baptism.

Beware Of Spiritual Robbery

Paul gives an express warning to anyone who would teach otherwise. His words show why a teaching that diminishes the believer's completeness in Christ must be rejected.

Paul wrote in **Colossians 2:8**:

> *"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."*

The word translated *"spoil"* in **Colossians 2:8** comes from the Greek word SULAGOGEŌ. The term pictures someone being carried away as plunder, with what belonged to them taken away.

This word means to carry off as plunder, to kidnap, or to lead away as captives after stripping them. It was used of people taken as prisoners of war and robbed of what was theirs.

Paul's warning is therefore strong and serious. He is saying that false teaching robs believers, carries them away from Christ, and strips them of assurance and truth.

When men teach that believers are not complete in Christ, but must seek something more, they are spoiling them. They take away confidence in Christ and replace it with dependence on human teaching.

Paul's meaning is clear. Anything that turns believers away from Christ's sufficiency is spiritual robbery, and it must be rejected.

A Warning About Denying Christ

Pentecostals, having already received the Spirit of Christ, who is the Spirit of God, are then misled into believing that what they have received is not enough. They are taught to seek something additional in order to be *"complete"* or *"fully saved."* This shifts faith away from Christ Himself and onto an experience.

Jesus gave a solemn warning concerning denying Him. Matthew recorded His words in **Matthew 10:33**:

> *"But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."*

To deny Christ is not only to reject Him openly, but also to deny His sufficiency. When Christ is presented as incomplete, and His work as lacking until something else is added, His testimony is denied.

The Bible teaches that Christ is sufficient, His Spirit is sufficient, and salvation in Him is complete. Any doctrine that teaches believers they must seek something beyond Christ does not build faith in Him. It draws the heart away from Him.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does all the fulness of God dwelling in Christ help explain believers being complete in Him?

Personal Reflection

Can a persuasive religious message make you doubt that Christ has already made believers complete?

Action Step

When a teaching suggests that Christ is insufficient, what will you examine and how will you keep your confidence in Him?

IN SUMMARY

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Pentecostalism teaches that salvation is completed in two steps. First a person receives Christ. Then the person must receive the Holy Spirit with tongues as proof. This teaching is not Scriptural, because it implies that believers must receive two spirits to be complete.

Paul wrote in **Romans 8:9**, and showed that the Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ. If a man does not have this Spirit, he does not belong to Christ. Paul also wrote, **Ephesians 4:4**, and declared there is one Spirit, not two.

Paul wrote in **Colossians 2:10**, and stated that believers are complete in Christ. This completeness means we have been made full in Him. Nothing is missing. Nothing needs to be added by a later sign.

Paul wrote in **Colossians 2:9**, and taught that all the fulness of deity dwells bodily in Christ. Since all God's fulness is in Christ, and believers are in Christ, then believers lack nothing for salvation.

Paul also warned in **Colossians 2:8** that false teaching can *"spoil"* believers. It can rob them of assurance and lead them away from Christ's sufficiency.

The Bible's message is clear. In Jesus we are complete. Any doctrine that tells believers to seek something beyond Christ does not strengthen faith. It draws the heart away from Him.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do one Spirit and completeness in Christ answer the claim that salvation comes in two stages?

Personal Reflection

Which belief about salvation in stages still needs to change in the light of one Spirit and one new birth?

Action Step

Identify one conclusion you must now accept or reject about later signs. How will this change your trust in the life Christ has given?

CONCLUSION: SPEAKING WITH TONGUES

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This last Study Guide has examined Paul's teaching on tongues and spiritual gifts as found in 1 Corinthians chapters 12 and 14. When read carefully and in context, Paul's instruction is clear and consistent.

Tongues in Scripture are real languages with known words. They are not sounds, noises, or private prayer languages. The Greek word used throughout, *GLOSSA*, always refers to a known tongue or language that can be understood by those who know it.

Paul also makes it plain that not all believers speak with tongues. Tongues are a gift, and gifts are distributed by the Spirit according to His own will. No single gift is given to all, and no gift is presented as proof of salvation or Spirit reception.

In public worship, Paul's governing rule is edification. What is spoken must be understood so that the whole church is built up. For this reason, tongues must never be spoken publicly without interpretation. Where there is no interpretation, Paul's command is direct: the speaker must keep silence.

Pentecostal practice reverses this order. It accepts speech that is not understood, allows many to speak at once, and still calls this spiritual worship. Paul does not. He insists on order, understanding, and love.

Therefore, Pentecostal teaching about tongues cannot be supported from 1 Corinthians any more than it can be supported from Acts 2. When Paul's words are allowed to speak plainly, the Pentecostal definition of tongues is exposed as unbiblical.

This leaves the church with a simple duty. We must not be led by pressure, tradition, or experience. We must be led by the Word of God. If a practice cannot be clearly taught from Scripture, it must not be required of believers, and it must not be used to judge anyone's salvation.

The New Testament measure of spirituality is not a manifestation, but new birth, truth, obedience, love, and a transformed life. Signs may follow believers, but they do not define believers. The true evidence of the Spirit is the life of Christ within, shown in holiness and love, and proved by enduring obedience.

MODULE SUMMARY: PENTECOSTALISM UNMASKED

This module has examined Pentecostalism from three essential angles: history, doctrine, and practice. Each Study Guide has built upon the previous one to test Pentecostal claims against Scripture and verifiable history. The goal has not been to argue, but to prove what is true by what God has written, and to remove teachings that have been added later.

Study Guide 85: Pentecostalism: Its Origins and Claims examined origins. It showed that Pentecostalism is a modern movement arising from Methodism and the Holiness tradition, not from Christ and the apostles. It demonstrated that Pentecostalism cannot trace its beginning to Acts 2, and that the biblical church of God is not named after a feast day or an experience, but after God Himself.

Study Guide 86: Acts 2 and the Holy Spirit examined Acts chapter 2. It showed that the disciples were not converted before Pentecost, and that receiving the Holy Spirit is not a second experience after salvation, but the act by which a person is born again and placed into Christ. Acts 2 teaches one new birth, one Spirit, and one baptism into one body.

Study Guide 87**: Speaking with Tongues examined Paul's instruction in 1 Corinthians 12 and** 14. It showed that tongues are real tongues with known words, that not all believers speak with tongues, and that public worship must be governed by understanding, order, and love. Paul's teaching contradicts Pentecostal practice when speech is not understood and confusion is permitted.

Taken together, these three Study Guides establish a connected conclusion. The historical origins of modern Pentecostalism belong to a later period, and the claim of a subsequent baptism must be tested by Acts chapter 2. Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians establishes the need for meaningful speech, understanding and order. The life of Jesus Christ within the born-again believer, not the production of unusual sounds, is the foundation of New Covenant life.

The Bible presents a simpler and more powerful gospel: one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one Spirit, and one new birth in Jesus Christ. This is not a ladder of experiences, and it is not proved by outward signs. It is salvation in Christ, received by faith, confirmed by the indwelling Spirit, and shown by a life of truth and obedience.

This is the faith once delivered to the saints, and it is centred entirely in Jesus Christ. His life within the believer is greater than any outward sign, religious experience or human tradition.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do meaningful tongues, gifts distributed by God and orderly worship belong together with the one new birth?

Personal Reflection

Have your views on tongues, spiritual gifts and orderly worship changed after examining Paul's teaching?

Action Step

When a future claim about tongues arises, how will you test it and respond with truth, humility and Christ's love?

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 do the different languages and backgrounds in Corinth help explain Paul's teaching about gifts and understanding? Explain why his statement that not all speak with tongues matters to the claim that tongues prove salvation.

2. Understanding

In 1 Corinthians 14, why can a tongue help its speaker yet fail to strengthen the congregation? Use Paul's teaching about understanding and interpretation to explain why he prefers a few understood words to many words unknown to the hearers.

3. Personal Reflection

What belief have you reconsidered after learning the difference between an unknown human language and meaningless sounds? Explain how understanding and interpretation affect your judgement.

4. Response to Truth

Consider your attitude when others speak during worship. What needs to change so Christ's love and Paul's instruction about order guide your response?

5. Action Step

Think of a church gathering where you listen, pray, sing or speak. What will you do to help others understand and be strengthened by what is said?

6. Early Response

Have you begun the action described in Question 5? If yes, explain what you did or understood more clearly. If not, explain what still needs attention before you act.

7. Ongoing Practice

How could the love of God and Paul's rules for interpretation continue to guide your contributions in church gatherings? Explain how you would respond if excitement or pressure began to replace understanding and order.

8. Doctrinal Clarity

How do the promise of the Father, Jesus Christ baptising in the Holy Ghost and baptism into one body describe the one new birth? Use **John 14:17-18** *and* **1 Corinthians 12:13** *to explain why this is not a later stage of salvation.*

9. Living the Truth

Someone tells you that receiving Christ leaves you incomplete until a further Spirit baptism is proved by tongues. How would **Romans 8:9** *and* **Colossians 2:8-10** *guide your reply? Explain what this means for your own confidence in Christ.*

10. Final Response

How do meaningful tongues, gifts given by God's choice and orderly worship agree with being complete in Christ? Explain what has become clearer through the examination of Pentecostal history, Acts and Paul's teaching, and what personal response or further thought remains for you.