

# The Purpose, Nature, Duration, Boundary Rules And History of Biblical and Nonbiblical Tongues

## A Study of the Prophet Joel's "Latter Rain"

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## A Study of the Completion of Revelation in the Apostolic Tradition

Compiled by Pastor J. O. Hosler, Th.D.

*(Rev. 2:2) "To the angel<sup>a</sup> of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands: <sup>2</sup>I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false.*

In the first discussion we will discuss the biblical purpose of the biblical gift of tongues and then look to see if such a purpose is in mind in the modern tongues movement.

### I. The Purpose of tongues.

The question of whether miraculous speaking in tongues in modern day is genuine will be decided largely by whether or not its Scripturally revealed purpose is being fulfilled in the day in which we live.

#### A. Can we assume that the existence of a particular phenomenon in the apostolic church must automatically exist today?

1. We know that the gift of an apostle is not for today (Eph. 4:7-12) *"<sup>7</sup>But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. <sup>8</sup>Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. <sup>9</sup>(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? <sup>10</sup>He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) <sup>11</sup>And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; <sup>12</sup>For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.".....(I Cor. 12:28-31) "<sup>28</sup>And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. <sup>29</sup>Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? <sup>30</sup>Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak*

*with tongues? do all interpret? <sup>31</sup>But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.”*

2. Protestant theology generally has clearly recognized the cessation of the apostolic gift in the first century and therefore denies the Roman Catholic teaching of Apostolic Succession. By this admission, Protestant theology is committed to the principle of temporary gift in its defense of the *sole authority of Scripture*.
  3. For this reason it is perfectly legitimate to inquire as to whether there may not be other first-century gifts which were likewise temporary.
  4. The apostolic office ceased because the purpose for which apostles were originally given has been fulfilled. (Eph. 2:20) speaks of the church as being constructed on the “*foundation of the apostles and prophets*”. Thus, the apostolic office belongs to the foundational aspect of the church.
  5. To the apostles and prophets was committed the responsibility of the laying the all-important groundwork upon which in succeeding ages the superstructure might be reared until the whole sublime and holy temple had been completed.
  6. Having laid the groundwork, and the Scriptures being committed to the church, the apostles passed permanently off the spiritual scene. The building, however, has continued to rise through the centuries and will not be complete until the return of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. But the special gift of an apostle is no longer given for the simple reason that the purpose for it no longer exists. [See the last section of this paper regarding the Apostolic boundaries of NT truth.
- B. The same question should naturally apply to the question of the continuance or cessation of the gift of tongues. If the Biblically revealed purpose of this gift be an age-long purpose, it is proper to look for tongues as an age-long spiritual manifestation....If, on the other hand, the Biblically revealed purpose of the gift be temporary, we shall have reason for regarding the gift itself as temporary and will be inclined to view modern claims to its possession as actually lacking in basic biblical credibility.
1. In I Cor. 14:20-22 we have a direct and specific Scriptural statement regarding the purpose of the gift of tongues...

*“<sup>20</sup>Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men. ...<sup>21</sup>In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.<sup>22</sup>Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.”*

2. Paul’s occasion for these words is the well-known problem of the disorders attending the exercise of spiritual gifts in the assembly at Corinth.
3. The Corinthians were guilty of overrating the spiritual significance of the gift as well as misusing it. Appropriately the apostle places it last in his own list of *charismata*... (I Cor. 12:28) *“<sup>28</sup>And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.”*
4. Then Paul makes it plain by a series of questions that by no means was it to be expected that all should speak with tongues any more than that all should be apostles (I Cor. 12:29-30) *“<sup>29</sup>Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? <sup>30</sup>Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? <sup>31</sup>But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.”*
5. Then, after setting forth the surpassing excellence of love over any and every spiritual gift (I Cor. 13), he proceeds in chapter 14 to extol the principle of edification (a thing quite naturally desired for others where love is operating) as the paramount object to be sought in the assembly exercise of gifts....(14:26) *“Let all things be done unto edifying. This is the guiding thought.*
6. Accordingly, vss. 1-19 of Chapter 14 are primarily occupied with the unprofitableness of speaking in tongues not known to others in the assembly for the simple reason that edification cannot result from utterances which cannot be understood. Note that the Bible does not speak of closet tongues. The man in vs. 2 believes he is communicating with God during a public service as Paul makes special note of the fact that no one understands him.
7. Paul would rather speak five words in the assembly that could minister edification than ten thousand in an unknown tongue (14:19), as the man in vs. 2 was doing. This prepares us for the special point dealt with beginning at verse 20 *“<sup>20</sup>Brethren, be not*

*children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.”*

- C. Paul prefaces himself by cautioning against any childishness in thinking about these matters. Paul is hinting that to exalt the gift, while overlooking the purpose for which God gave it, is to betray an immaturity which is inappropriate to spiritual adulthood (The Greek word for “men” in verse 20 is “mature.”)
1. The conspicuous lack of serious and careful consideration of this pivotal section among present-day advocates of tongues, therefore, may not speak well for the maturity of understanding.
- D. Then follows in verse 21 an OT quotation from which the apostle draws a deliberate conclusion in (V.22) *“<sup>21</sup>In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. <sup>22</sup>Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.”*
1. The word “*wherefore*” makes plain that the statement to follow is the result of a legitimate deduction from the Scripture just presented...”*So that,*” says Paul, “*the tongues are for a sign...*”
  2. Paul discovered the true intent of this miraculous phenomenon in the OT passage just quoted. The OT predicted the NT gift of tongues.
  3. The use of the definite article in the Greek (*the* tongues) does not appear in the AV of this verse but must not be overlooked. The definite article confirms that Paul finds this particular phenomenon to be the thing referred to by the Scripture he has cited. It is not simply “tongues” in general to which Isaiah of old refers, but “*the* tongues” of which the apostle has been speaking throughout.
  4. Taken at face value, therefore, the OT (specifically Isa. 28:11-12) is here alleged by Paul to have prophesied the gift of tongues as a god-given sign to the Jewish nation---the expression “this people” can, in its O.T. setting, refer to no other. Isaiah also foretold the unbelieving rejection of Israel.
- E. If someone wishes to argue that this sign is for all unbelievers then two points might be made:

1. First, the expression “this people” refers to an O.T. prophecy about the Jewish nation.
2. Secondly, if the sign is for all unbelievers then it is difficult indeed to comprehend the thought of the verses 23-25 which follow...For in these verses the apostle plainly teaches that the average unbeliever who enters the assembly, upon hearing them all speak with tongues, will say that the Christians are mad (v. 23).
3. He goes on to assert that it is prophecy which will bring to such an one the conscious realization of the presence of God in their midst.
4. But if the gift of tongues be truly a sign to all unbelievers, it is hard to perceive why it should not have been the appropriate gift to exercise on any occasion when an unbeliever might be present.
5. So, tongues were given as a sign to the Jewish people only, from which it follows that the average heathen visitor to the Corinthian assembly (far more likely to be a Gentile than a Jew) would be exposed to a phenomenon never intended for him in the first place.
6. On the other hand, the intelligible use of prophecy for the edification of the assembly, perfectly understandable to a Gentile visitor, would be likely to have powerful side effects, searching him, and begetting within him the fear of God.

## II. The real nature and use of tongues.

A. It is wrong to suppose that biblical tongues consisted of anything other than known languages.

1. But what about the expression “tongues of men and angels” (I Cor. 13:1)?
2. Note that the first three verses of this chapter have a pronounced hyperbolic character. While angels no doubt have languages of their own, the apostle no more implies that he expects the readers to use them than that he expects them to give their bodies to be burned.

B. The word *unknown* frequently coupled with the word *tongue* in the Authorized Version is italicized to indicate that there is nothing in the original to correspond to it . Thus, it was inserted by the translators.

1. The Greek word for “*tongue*” meant no more in such a setting to the Greek reader than does our English word “*language*.”

2. **There is no trace of Scriptural evidence that to the Jews, for whom the gift was intended, tongues were to ever to be heard as incoherent, incomprehensible, babbling.**
3. **It is evident that on the day of Pentecost, for example, to the great Jerusalem multitude all that was being said was perfectly intelligible—without an interpreter—for these Jews exclaimed: “*And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?...we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God*” (Acts 2:8-11). In this case, the hearers served as interpreters.**

**B. If all the evidence of Scripture is carefully put together, certain conclusions concerning the gift of tongues will become apparent:**

1. **From the very first this gift consisted of languages known and spoken by Jews of the dispersion, so many of whom were present in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:8-11).**
2. **The prominence of the gift in the Corinthian assembly is easily accounted for by the fact that Corinth was at this time a thriving commercial center where there was also an appreciable Jewish element (Acts 18:1-17).**
  - a. **Obviously, due to the natural Jewish aptitude in commercial affairs, Corinth would be just such a city as would exhibit a polyglot Jewish community many of whom might be resident only for a time in connection with specific ventures.**
  - b. **There seems to be a predictable Jewish practice of planning a year’s residence in some city to “buy and sell and get gain” (James 4:13).**
  - c. **If , then, as is natural to suppose the affairs of commerce in Corinth resulted in Jews of various linguistic backgrounds flowing in out of the city, no surprise is occasioned by the fact that many languages—unknown to the average Greek Corinthian who might visit the assembly—were supernaturally present there and they might be properly utilized in the confirming the gospel to the nation for whom they were a sign.**
3. **Obviously, as in the case of any other spiritual gift, the possessor of the gift of tongues could utilize this gift at will.**

- a. Accordingly, in addition to its primary function in witness to Jewish visitors or inhabitants at Corinth, some were employing the gift in prayer (I Cor. 14:14-16) or simply in speaking in the assembly (I Cor. 14:2, 27, 39 etc.)
  - b. But herein lies the danger of its abuse for, outside of its proper Jewish context, the average believer in the assembly might not know *“the meaning of the voice”* and might be unedified when the gift was used (cf. I Cor. 14:6-11).
  - c. Indeed, if so used, the gift might be no more than a means of vain display.
4. However, once the apostle places the gift in its proper perspective by reminding the Corinthians of its basic purpose (vv. 20-22), he is then prepared to restrict its use in the assembly and to stipulate its nonuse there altogether unless there was an interpreter (I Cor. 14:27-28).
- C. A sign-gift for an unbelieving nation had indeed its proper sphere, but the controlling principle with the church was the building up of the saints.
1. To this end, tongues would have to be harnessed and directed if they were to be employed in the church at all, *“Let all things be done unto edifying”* (I Cor. 14:25).
- D. That the purpose of this gift has ended and that it has therefore been withdrawn, is the conclusion which is forthcoming from Luke 21:20-24 *“<sup>20</sup>And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. <sup>21</sup>Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. <sup>22</sup>For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. <sup>23</sup>But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. <sup>24</sup>And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”*
1. From this Scripture it is clear that the destruction of Jerusalem (accomplished in A.D. 70) was to signalize the fact that God’s attention was being directed primarily to the Gentiles until their times (or seasons) or even, (times of opportunity) should be fulfilled.

2. The age long treading down of the holy city constitutes a visual lesson in history that, so long as it continues, God's purposes with the Jews as a nation are in a state of expectation or waiting and His purposes with the nations are predominant.
3. That the period between the crucifixion of Christ and the prophesied destruction of Jerusalem was so long, is but a tribute to the matchless patience and forbearance of God toward His ancient and erring people.
4. The temporary flourishing of the sign-gift of tongues during this period in accordance with OT prophecy as a final gracious effort to rouse the nation to repentance—can only be rightly understood if it is seen as a parting token of Jehovah's love for the earthly seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

**CONCLUSION:** The failure of much of the modern tongues movement to display any discernible consciousness of the plain Biblical purpose of the gift stands as a powerful argument against the movement's genuineness and validity.

### **III. The Prophet Joel and the "Latter Rain"**

*(Acts 2:14-21) "14But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: 15For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. 16But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; 17And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: 18And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: 19And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: 20The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: 21And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."*

**Introduction:** Many modern Pentecostals treat the tongues phenomenon in one of two ways: (a) Some say that the gift never ceased but just declined. This position places them in several heretical traditions; (b) Others concede that tongues did cease after the apostolic era, but that contemporary manifestations are a final outpouring of the Spirit and His gifts for the last days.

- A. A key text for many modern Pentecostals who take the second view is (Joel. 2:28) "*28And 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:*"



1. According to Joel 2:19-32, before the final Day of the Lord, God's Spirit will be poured out in such a way that there will be wonders in the sky, and on the earth—blood, fire, and columns of smoke: (vs. 31) *“<sup>31</sup>The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.”*
    - a. This is obviously a prophecy of the coming millennial kingdom and cannot refer to anything earlier. The context of the Joel passage makes this the only plausible interpretation.
    - b. For example, Joel 2:20 refers to the defeat of “the northern army” that will attack Israel in the end time apocalypse.
    - c. Joel 2:27 speaks of the great revival that will bring Israel back to God. This is another feature of the Great Tribulation and is not yet fulfilled.
    - d. Joel 3:2, 12, 14 describe the judgment of the nations, an event that comes after Armageddon and in connection with the establishment of the earthly, millennial kingdom.
    - e. Later in Joel 3:18, Joel gives a beautiful description of the millennial kingdom: *“<sup>18</sup>And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim.”*
  2. Clearly, Joel 2 is a kingdom prophecy, which was not completely fulfilled at Pentecost or on any occasion since. It must refer to an era that is still future.
- B. This still leaves the question of what Peter meant when he quoted Joel 2:28-32 on the day of Pentecost.
1. Some teachers say that Peter was pointing to Pentecost as the fulfillment of Joel 2:28.
    - a. But on the day of Pentecost there were no wonders in the heavens and signs in the earth; no blood and fire and vapors of smoke; the sun did not turn to darkness and the moon to blood and the great and terrible day of the Lord did not come. The prophecy was not fully realized.

- b. Pentecost was only a partial fulfillment, or better, a preview of the prophecy's ultimate culmination.
  - c. The parallel to that is the Transfiguration, in which the Lord's glory was briefly revealed as it will be seen fully throughout the millennial kingdom (Matt. 17:2; Mark 9:2). Jesus prophesied His second coming and its preview on the mount of transfiguration when He said: *"<sup>27</sup>For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. <sup>28</sup>Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."* (Matt. 16:27-28). The Transfiguration was a preview or a preliminary glimpse of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.
  - d. Peter was telling those present at Pentecost that they were getting a preliminary glimpse, a projection of the kind of power that the Spirit would release in the millennial kingdom. How do we know this? Because Peter had just been told by Jesus that it was not for him to know when the Joel prophecy of the restoration of the Kingdom of Israel would occur: (Acts 1:6-9) *"<sup>6</sup>When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? <sup>7</sup>And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. <sup>8</sup>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. <sup>9</sup>And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight."*
  - e. The miracles that began on the day of Pentecost are a light on the horizon, heralding the coming earthly kingdom of Jesus Christ.
- C. Some charismatics spiritualize "the former rain and the latter rain" of (Joel 2:23)...<sup>23</sup> *Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.*" They argue that the former rain refers to Pentecost and apostolic times and the latter rain to the modern charismatic movement.

1. Throughout the OT, “the former rain” refers to the autumn rains and “the latter rain” to the spring rains. Joel was actually saying that in the millennial kingdom both rains will come as before. His point was that God will make crops grow profusely in the millennial kingdom.
  - a. (Joel 2:24-26) makes this point abundantly clear: *“<sup>24</sup>And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil. <sup>25</sup>And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you. <sup>26</sup>And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed.”*
  - b. The “former and latter rain” have nothing to do with Pentecost, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, or the twentieth century.
  - c. Joel 2:28 can not be used to say that tongues have been poured out a second time. In the first place, Joel did not even mention tongues. In the second place, the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost was not the ultimate fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy.

**CONCLUSION:** There is no biblical evidence that there will be a reoccurrence on the church of the sign gifts or that believers will work miracles near the end of the Church age.

However, there is much evidence that near the end of the age there will be false prophets who perform miracles, prophesy, and cast out demons (Matt. 7:22-23; 24:11,24; 2 Thess. 2:9-12).

(Matt. 24:4) *“<sup>4</sup>And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.”*

#### **IV. I Corinthians 13 and the Tongues Question**

**Introduction:** I Cor. 13 is divided into three parts—vss 1-3, 4-7, and 8-13. In the first paragraph Paul points to the necessity of love, in the second to the nature of love, and in the third to the endurance of love. It is in vss. 8-13 that the temporary aspect of the gift of tongues is seen. In connection with vs. 8 our discussion will revolve around two questions. When will prophecies and knowledge be done away? Do tongues cease before prophecies and knowledge?

A. **When will prophecies and knowledge be done away? This must be the starting point in our consideration. I wish you to consider the position that they will be done away at the rapture. Two factors indicate that prophecies and knowledge will be done away for the church at its rapture and resurrection.**

1. **First, the perfect thing mentioned in verse 10 best finds its meaning in the rapture. Second, vs. 12, which explains verse 10, clearly refers to the coming of Christ for His own. It is then that prophecy and knowledge will be rendered inoperative in the full brightness of Christ's presence.**

2. **It is well at this point to discuss the meaning of prophecies and knowledge.**

a. **In this connection it should be observed that the Greek noun *propheteia* has two meanings.**

i. **On the one hand, it may be used of the act of prophesying as in Rom. 12:6; I Cor. 12:10; 14:22 and most probably in I Thess. 5:20.**

ii. **On the other hand it may look at the content of prophecy as in Matt. 13:14; I Cor. 14:6; 2 Pet. 1:20-21 and Rev. 1:3. These passages refer to what is prophesied.**

b. **There are reasons to believe that it is the content of prophecy that Paul has in mind in vs. 8. Likewise, knowledge in this chapter looks at what was expressed by the one who had the gift of knowledge in the early church.**

c. **That *Propheteia* and *gnosis* refer to the content of prophecy and knowledge rather than to the act of prophesying and speaking knowledge is evident for several reasons.**

i. **In I Cor. 12:8 Paul describes the gift of expressing knowledge by the term *word* of knowledge, but in I Cor. 13:8 he employs the simple term *knowledge*. The former looks at the expression of knowledge; the latter refers to that which is known or the knowledge itself.**

ii. **Secondly, vs. 9 emphasizes the *content* of prophecy and knowledge more than the act.**

- iii. Thirdly, the two are brought together in I Cor. 14:6 where the last term, *doctrine*, indicates content and the preceding terms refer to content... “<sup>6</sup> Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?”

What Paul is saying is this: the content of knowledge and prophecy that was known in the early church and has been recorded in God's inspired Word will be rendered inoperative when Christ comes for His own.

The knowledge and prophecies in the Word are accurate and certain of fulfillment, but they are partial. The full revelation of Christ's presence will so completely overshadow these that they will be rendered inoperative. We will not engage in Bible studies and in marking our Bibles when we are with Jesus face-to-face

B. Do tongues cease before prophecies and knowledge are rendered inoperative? I wish you to consider that several important details imply a “yes” answer.

1. First, there is the change of verbs in vs.8. It is very significant that Paul uses *katargeo* of both prophecies and knowledge when he says they will be done away.
  - a. However he carefully selects the verb *pauo* when he speaks of the cessation of tongues.
  - b. *katargeo* means “to render inoperative, to supersede.”
  - c. In the active voice *pauo* means “to make to cease.” Why this change?
    - i. This change of verbs cannot be accounted for by saying Paul does this to avoid repetition. That Paul did not fear repetition is seen in the fact that he employs *katargeo* no less than four times in verses 8, 10, and 11.

- d. The conclusion seems clear. Tongues are viewed as ceasing before Christ comes, while prophecies and knowledge are rendered inoperative by the Lord's return.
2. Secondly, there is the change of voice in the verbs of verse 8.
- a. It may be significant that the verb *katargeo*, which is used of both prophecies and knowledge, is future *passive* in both of its occurrences in verse 8.
  - b. On the other hand, *pauo* is future *middle*.
    - i. In the active voice *pauo* means "to make to cease" (cf. I Pet. 3:10).
    - ii. If Paul had wanted to say tongues will be made to cease by the coming of Christ, he most probably would have used the active voice.
    - iii. In the middle voice the verb simply means "to cease."
  - c. The conclusion seems to be even clearer than before. While the content of prophecies and knowledge will endure for the Church until the coming of the Lord, tongues will in and of themselves cease in the meantime.
3. Thirdly, we must note the omission of tongues in vss. 9, 12. It is more than mere circumstance that tongues are not mentioned in verse 9 while knowledge and prophecies are.
- a. In vs. 10 these latter two are said to be rendered useless.
  - b. The implication is that, tongues will not be in existence to be rendered inoperative when the Lord Jesus comes.
4. Fourthly, vs. 12 also seems to be looking at knowledge and prophecy. Knowing face to face is quite evidently a reference to prophecy as in Numbers 12:6-8 "<sup>6</sup>And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. <sup>7</sup>My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. <sup>8</sup>With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" (cf. Ex. 33:11; Deut. 34:10).

**Conclusion:** Significantly vs. 12 makes no mention of tongues as being in existence when Christ comes. Once again the inference is confirmed. Tongues cease in the church age before the return of Christ. Prophecies and knowledge will be completely surpassed by the presence of Christ Jesus.

In II Peter 1:16-18 the Apostle Peter reiterated his experience of the Mount of Transfiguration and then in vs. 19 he told us that written Scripture made him more sure of what he believed than that actual experience. How then can we say that our experiences are better proof of what we believe than the written Word of God?

**Extra note:** In First Corinthians Thirteen Paul is discussing spiritual things which abide (remain) and those which will not abide. In 13:13 he notes that *now these three remain: faith, hope and love...* These three things will continue after tongues ceased. However, *hope* and *faith* will cease at the rapture for the church and at death for the individual saint prior to the rapture according to Rom. 8:24, 25; II Cor. 5:7. Now if *hope* and *faith* are no longer needed after the rapture and yet it abides or remains and continues after the cessation of tongues, this means that tongues ceased sometime during the church age after which *hope* and *walking by faith* continued until the rapture.

#### V. A closer look at the misuse of tongues in I Cor. 14.

- A. I Cor. 14 was obviously written at a time before tongues will have ceased.
  1. In many conversations with those of the modern Pentecostal movement, the discussion revolves around the question of who is the most spiritual among us. We need to nail down verses 37, 38 where the Apostle Paul says that those claiming to be spiritually gifted are to be ignored if they ignore his clear inspired commands in this chapter.
- B. In 14:1 Paul exhorts the entire membership to desire spiritual gifts but especially the gift of prophecy. God wishes all saints to share the content of prophecy through teaching and preaching and testifying but he knows that not all will receive direct prophetic revelations from God. When speaking of the Body of Christ he notes that the gift of prophecy is unique (I Cor. 12:10, 29). Though not all are prophets in this sense, Paul wants all believers to desire the gift to teach the content of revelation, knowledge and prophecy (14:6). [cf. Heb. 5:12 *In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers.*]
- C. In 14:2 Paul gives a unique description (not prescription) of a man speaking in a church service in a tongue that no one understands and that was a mystery to the speaker as well. The man doing this is

aware that he is not speaking to other men but assumes that God is being addressed.

1. In 14:3 the one who shares the content of prophecy will strengthen, encourage, and comfort others in the church. That's why Paul used the word *especially* in vs. 1.
  2. Returning to Paul's description (not prescription) in vs. 2, the man doing this is edifying himself [he thinks] but not anyone else in the service.
  3. In vs. 5 Paul exclaims that the one who shares the content of prophecy is greater than the man described in verse 2 unless the church is being edified with the content of prophecy in the form of communicated revelation, knowledge, prophecy or instruction (vs. 6).
- D. In 14:9 Paul seems to clarify his description of the man in vs. 2. Unless intelligible words are coming off of one's tongue he is speaking to the air. Speaking to the air and speaking to God are two different concepts.
- E. In 14:12 Paul addresses those who are eager to have spiritual gifts and exhorts them to excel in gifts that would build up the church.
1. Do you believe in prayer? In vs. 13 Paul calls upon the Corinthians to pray that the experience of vs. 2 would not happen to them--that they would never speak a tongue that was a mystery to themselves as well as others in the room.
    - a. In 14:14 Paul says that if the description of verse 2 happened to him, it would be an unfruitful experience. How can an unfruitful experience be self-edifying or build up the church?
  2. Then Paul reminds the Corinthians that himself was a tongue speaker but with prescribed boundaries. In 14:15 Paul proclaims that he will not pray or sing anything that is not understandable to his mind. This precludes ever experiencing vs. 2.
  3. Paul is one who leads by example. Thus, in vss. 16, 17 he admonishes the Corinthians not to engage in something for the purpose of self-edification rather than the edification of others.



- F. In 14:18, 19 Paul reminds the Corinthians that he spoke in tongues more than all of them but that five intelligible words are preferred over ten thousand words coming from a verse 2 experience.**
- G. In the NT, spiritual maturity and spiritual gifts are two separate concepts. One can be extremely spiritually gifted and extremely unspiritual at the same time. In chapter 1:7 Paul was thankful that they did not lack any spiritual gift. Yet in 3:1-3 he rebukes them for being immature babies, unspiritual, and actually carnal.**
- 1. Now in 14:20 Paul calls the Corinthians to add spiritual maturity to their giftedness by giving them a theological lesson on the purpose of the gift of tongues.**
    - a. He does this in vs. 21 by quoting Isa. 28:11, 12 to show that the OT specifically prophesied the coming of the spiritual gift of tongues and why.**
    - b. The *this people* referred to in this passage can be none other than the Jewish nation.**
    - c. With the Isa. passage in mind, the gift of tongues would be a sign to unbelieving Jews (vs. 22a)—as they precisely were on the day of Pentecost. At the house of Cornelius in Acts 10:45 they were a sign to believing Jews who were in a state of unbelief regarding whether there was a place for uncircumcised Gentiles in God’s church.**
  - 2. Prophecy, however, was designed for believers (vs. 22b) and would contain doctrinal instruction as well as a clear presentation of the gospel of grace.**
- F. So, if the whole church is assembled and multiple people are speaking in tongues simultaneously, what would be the result of this? Would it be a sign to authenticate the gospel (Heb. 2:3, 4), would it sound like giving thanks to God or would it sound like a duck farm prompting them to conclude that they are out of their minds (14:23)?**
- 1. But if an unbeliever hears the content of prophecy [including the clear presentation of the gospel], this will become a sign to the unbeliever that God is among them and can result in a conversion experience (14:24, 25).**
    - a. Note that, in the NT, tongues were not a mode to communicate the gospel at Pentecost but rather a sign to authenticate the gospel. The Apostle Peter was not preaching in tongues when he presented the gospel at**

**Pentecost...*Fellow Jews...These men* [men who were speaking in tongues] *are not drunk, as you suppose...* (Acts 2:14, 15). It was Peter's presentation of the content of prophecy that resulted in three thousand conversions.**

- b. How can the legitimate use of tongues, as a sign to authenticate the gospel to unbelieving Jews, be a source of strengthening to the whole church?**
  - i. Just as the content of prophecy is designed for believers and yet can result in the conversion of unbelievers, tongues, which were designed to be a sign to unbelievers can be a blessing to the saints when they are properly interpreted and praise God or magnify His mighty works.**
  - ii. In either case, the one practicing the spiritual gift is seeking the benefit of someone else.**
- c. Why always seek the benefit of someone else?**
  - i. Because the Apostle Paul commanded that all should be done for the edification or strengthening of someone else (14:26).**
  - ii. Because the Apostle Paul commanded that the Corinthian believers follow the way of love in the desire to use spiritual gifts (14:1).**
  - iii. Because the Apostle Paul defined love as *not self-seeking* (13:5).**
  - iv. Because the Apostle Paul affirmed that maturity would follow his commands regarding the use of gifts (14:37).**
  - v. Because the Apostle Peter exhorted that special gifts be employed in serving one another (I Pet. 4:10).**
  - vi. Because Paul (14:4) says that the one experiencing vs. 2 is pursuing self-edification.**
  - vii. Because Paul knew that, were he to pursue such a self-serving use of this spiritual gift, it would be unfruitful, unprofitable, and therefore not edifying to his mind at all (14:14).**

**G. In 14:27 the Apostle Paul begins to lay down boundaries for the use of the gift of tongues in the church.**

- 1. No more than two or three should practice the gift during a given service and then one at a time.**

2. **The one speaking in a tongue will know if there is an interpreter in the room and speak silently to himself and to God. This would not be an audible form of speaking at all. The Bible does not say that the tongue-speaker is under the complete control of the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, he is in complete control of when and where he lets these words come out of his mouth.**
  - a. **This is what Paul meant when he said: *The spirits of the prophets are subject to the control of the prophets* (14:32).**
  - b. **Regardless of whether one is prophesying, relating the content of prophecy or speaking in tongues, their tongue is under their own control and is subject to their own spirit.**
3. **Changing these rules for the use of gifts will result in disorder and this is not the will of God or the Holy Spirit (14:33).**
  - a. **These rules and boundaries were not just for the Corinthians but for all congregations (14:33).**

#### **H. Regarding the silence of women in the churches (14:34):**

1. **If this means that women are not allowed to speak at all in a church, then Paul contradicted himself when he assumed that women would be praying and prophesying during congregational meetings (11:5).**
2. **It is not likely that God only intended spiritual gifts to be distributed to men.**
3. **It is more likely that God does not want the unlearned to dominate the teaching time in the congregational services. Since the culture of that time primarily withheld education from most women, God would not have wanted them to disrupt the order of the services by asking many questions as the meeting progressed. This admonition would also apply to unlearned men in the fuller context of Scripture. That these women were to ask their husbands at home seems to imply that in that culture the men would be learned enough to answer the questions. This does not imply that there were not learned women in NT times but the dominant culture of the times withheld education from women. It is disgraceful for an unlearned person to interrupt a service with questions to the speaker unless it is a format that openly invites people to ask questions. (14:35).**

- I. These boundaries and rules that Paul has set forth are the Lord's command and the one who ignores them deserves to be ignored (14:37).
- J. Knowing that tongues had not yet been stilled (13:8) when chapter 14 was written, Paul exhorted that tongues were to be permitted (14:39).
  - 1. But the ultimate rule was that *everything* was to be done in a *fitting and orderly way* (14:40).
    - a. This way is the *way of love* (14:1) which is not *self-seeking* (13:5) but rather seeks to edify, strengthen and build up others (14:12) and seeks to serve others (I Peter 4:10).
    - b. Where does this leave the self-serving experience of verse 2?

**An Extra Note:** Matt. 6:7 *And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.* In this verse, Christ instructs His disciples to avoid meaningless repetition in prayer. The Greek is *battalogesette* and consists of two parts: *batta* which is not a word but a sound; and *logeo* which means "to speak" [W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (4 vols. in 1; Westwood: Fleming H. Revell, 1966), III, 281]. It has the idea of babbling in unknown syllables. It could be translated: *Don't say, "batta, batta, batta, batta" when you pray.* Jesus is telling His followers not to use repetition of meaningless sounds as prayer. The question we need to ask is this: Would the Holy Spirit of God cause a believer to utter unknown syllables over and over when the Lord Jesus called this practice pagan and strongly admonished against it?

## I. THE TESTIMONY OF THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS

- A. While we know that the gift was in operation during apostolic times, it is significant that the biblical gift is not directly alluded to in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers.
- B. Why is this silence important to observe?
  - 1. First, some of the Apostolic Fathers wrote from and to churches where the gift had been practiced during the time of the Apostles.
    - a) Clement of Rome wrote an epistle to the church at Corinth. If there was any church where tongues were being practiced it would be here. Yet Clement never

mentions the gift, even when speaking of their spiritual heritage (Clement of Rome, *To the Corinthians, I, II*).

- b) The same problem of disobedience to authority was there, but that of tongues had evidently been solved, perhaps by their having ceased. (*To the Corinthians XLII-XLIV*).
- c) Ignatius of Antioch wrote to the church of Ephesus where Christians spoke in tongues, but he, also, has nothing to say regarding the gift.
  - (1) Neither did Paul mention the gift in his letter to the Ephesians.
  - (2) The Apostle John commends the Church of Ephesus for its ability to detect the fraud of those falsely claiming the apostolic office (Rev. 2:2).

2. Secondly, the wide geographical coverage of the Apostolic Fathers makes their silence significant.

- a) Clement wrote from Rome to Corinth.
- b) Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, wrote to those at Philippi.
- c) Ignatius of Antioch wrote to the churches of Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Rome, Smyrna, Philadelphia.
- d) The Epistle of Barnabas was probably written from Alexandria.
- e) The Shepherd of Hermas may have been written from Rome.
- f) Papias was from Hierapolis in Phrygia.
- g) The Didache may have been written from Egypt or possibly from Syria or Palestine.
- h) The Epistle to Diognetus was probably written from Alexandria.

This covers practically every significant area of the Roman Empire. If the gift of Biblical tongues were prominent they would surely have been mentioned in some way.

3. **Thirdly, the doctrinal character of the Apostolic Fathers makes their silence significant. Their writings cover practically every major doctrine taught in the New Testament yet there is not discussion of biblical tongues.**
  4. **Forthly, the purpose of many of the writings make the omission of tongues significant.**
    - a) **The purpose of the Epistle to Diognetus was to answer his questions about Christianity (*Epistle to Diognetus*, I).**
      - (1) **The writer shows the folly of idolatry (1-2)**
      - (2) **The inadequacy of Judaism (3-4)**
      - (3) **And the superiority of Christianity (5-12). This would have been an excellent opportunity to present the gift of tongues as a proof of the supernatural character of Christianity.**
    - b) **Clement wrote to correct spiritual errors at Corinth, but he does not speak at all about tongues.**
    - c) **Irenaeus said regarding Polycarp's letter to the Philippians that those who "choose to do so, and are anxious about their salvation, can learn the character of his faith, and the preaching of the truth." (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, III, 3-4). However, Polycarp nowhere indicates that tongues are a part of the normal character of Christianity; in fact he does not even touch on the subject.**
  5. **From these observations, it is clear that the silence of the Apostolic Fathers cannot be simply dismissed as being of no consequence.**
- C. THE TESTIMONY OF JUSTIN MARTYR: Justin was born around A.D. 100 and was martyred somewhere between A.D. 163 and 167. (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, IV, 163, 7-8).**
1. **He traveled widely in the Roman Empire and should have come in contact with tongues. He was born in Samaria, converted in Ephesus, and traveled over the empire as a Christian teacher.**

2. **There is one section in his work *Dialogue with Trypho* which might give rise to the idea that he knew of tongues.**
    - a) **In arguing that the prophetic gifts of the Jews are now transferred to Christians, he says: “For the prophetic gifts remain with us, even to the present time. And hence you ought to understand that [the gifts] formerly among your nation have been transferred to us.” (Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, LXXXII).**
      - (1) **Note how Justin states that the gifts he is speaking of were formerly among the people of Israel.**
      - (2) **However, the gift of tongues is only used in connection with the church.**
      - (3) **When Justin does speak of gifts he mentions seven, but the gift of tongues is not included (*Dialogue with Trypho*, XXXIX).**
      - (4) **In light of these facts it is evident that Justin did not have the gift of tongues in mind.**
  3. **The N.T. teaches that tongues were given as a sign to unbelieving Jews to confirm the message of the church. Since Justin’s *Dialogue with Trypho* was to show the superiority of Christianity over Judaism it would have been an excellent opportunity to point to the gift of tongues as proof of his thesis, since tongues were a sign to unbelieving Jews.**
  4. **When he writes his *Hortatory Address to the Greeks*, he states explicitly that he is going to examine accurately Christianity and heathen religion. By comparing the teachings of the two he states he will demonstrate that Christianity is the true religion (Justin Martyr, *Hortatory address to the Greeks*, I).**
    - a) **One of the strongest things he could have used would have been the gift of tongues, but he did not even mention them.**
- D. THE TESTIMONY OF IRENAEUS: “we hear many brethren in the Church...who through the Spirit speak all kinds of languages.” (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, V,6.1). What are we to make of this statement?**

1. **First lets look at what we know of his background.**
  - a) **As a boy growing up in Smyrna he heard Polycarp and was greatly influenced by him.**
  - b) **Some time around A.D. 177 Irenaeus traveled from Asia Minor to Lyons in Gaul where he became a presbyter under Pothinus who was also trained by Polycarp.**
  - c) **During this time he witnessed the severe persecution at Lyons and saw his faithful friend, Pothinus, brutally murdered. (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, V,1).**
  - d) **While still a presbyter, he was sent to Rome with a letter for the bishop Eleutherus...This was a letter written by a group of Montanists to try to persuade Eleutherus to have a kind attitude toward them (Eusebius, V.)**
  - e) **It was after the death of Pothinus that Irenaeus became bishop of Lyons where he served until he, too, died a martyr's death.**
  
2. **Two things in this background should be observed:**
  - a) **First, he came from Asia Minor and then ministered in Lyons.**
    - (1) **It was in Asia Minor and Syria that there were many unhealthy influences upon Christianity, and particularly the influence of Montanus and his perverted view of the Holy Spirit (Eusebius, V, 3).**
    - (2) **This association with the Montanist element did not cease when Irenaeus arrived in Lyons for there was a close connection between the churches of Lyons and those of Asia Minor.**
    - (3) **Also, Alexander from Phrygia and Attalus from Pergamon were among those residing in Lyons (Eusebius, V, 1, 3). It is in this light that Irenaeus' statement regarding tongues should be viewed. From his background he had evidently**



heard the spiritual excesses of those who were influenced by Montanus.

- b) The second thing to observe about the background of Irenaeus is that he was influenced by Polycarp. If the gift were of great importance, both the teacher and his pupil should have stressed it. They did not.
3. With these things in mind, let us examine Irenaeus' statement regarding tongues.
- a) First, observe that Irenaeus does not say he spoke in tongues.
  - b) Second, he does not classify those close to him as having the gift, for he uses the plural "we hear." The old Latin version uses the perfect *audivimus*, "we have heard."
  - c) Thirdly, because of his association with the Montanists, his rather vague statement may rest on some report as to the Montanists of Asia Minor.
  - d) Fourthly, when Irenaeus does discuss the events of Pentecost he gives no hint that the gift was operative during his day.
- E. **THE TESTIMONY OF TERTULLIAN:** This celebrated theologian of North Africa was another who came under the influence of Montanus. Although he traveled widely and was an outstanding scholar, his references to the gift of tongues are meager.
- 1. In trying to show that the soul has a kind of corporeality, he describes the soul's attributes, one of which is the ability to possess spiritual gifts.
    - a) To illustrate the point, he cites an example of a Montanist woman who says she has conversed with angels and has had other ecstatic experiences.
    - b) He does not actually mention the gift of tongues here, but he does describe her as having "gifts of revelation which she experiences in the Spirit by ecstatic vision..." (Tertullian, *A treatise on the Soul*, 9).

- c) **If this is a witness to the activity of the gift, it is a weak witness and certainly is far from the normal Christian experience of the day.**
2. **Tertullian makes a specific reference to the gift of tongues in his work *Against Marcion* (V,8). Even here he does not actually say anything about tongues in his time. He is taking Paul's epistles and pointing out the apologetic value found in each letter.**
- a) **He takes them epistle by epistle and chapter by chapter. When he comes to the spiritual gifts as mentioned in I Cor. 12-14, he acknowledges that all do not have the same gifts, but that the Spirit has given different gifts to different men. He makes no reference to the use of the gift in his time.**
  - b) **He calls on Marcion to duplicate these gifts as exhibited by the apostles, but does not say that he has seen or knows of any one who exercises the gift.**
- F. **THE TESTIMONY OF MONTANUS: About the only clear statement regarding the manifestation of tongues is found in Eusebius' description of the activity of Montanus. He writes: "So that he was carried away in spirit, and was wrought up into a certain kind of frenzy and irregular ecstasy, raving, and speaking, and uttering strange things and proclaiming what was contrary to the institutions that had prevailed in the church...." (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, V, 16-19).**
1. **The significance of the testimony of Montanus is seen in several observations.**
- a) **First, he was known for his challenge to the authority of Apostolic Tradition and was thus considered a heretic. He did not conform to the Scriptures and even those around him acknowledged this.**
  - b) **Secondly, his particular heresy was in the realm of Pneumatology and his emphasis on the chrismata.**
  - c) **Yet even with all this emphasis, the Montanist activity was considered to fall far short of the gifts as exercised by the apostles. (Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History*, V, 17) states "They will never be able to show that any of the**

Old or any of the New Testament were thus violently agitated and carried away in spirit.”

**G. THE TESTIMONY OF ORIGEN:** Recognized as being one of the ablest scholars of his day. He was not only acquainted with the affairs of his day through extensive reading, but he also traveled widely himself and had students from all over the world attending his classes.

1. If the gift were widespread or even practiced at all, certainly Origen should have known something about it and would have mentioned it somewhere in his voluminous writings.

a) Yet he has no clear statement regarding the gift and his testimony indicates that the extraordinary gifts were gone.

2. It is in his answer to Celsus that Origen has something to say about spiritual gifts (Origen, *Against Celsus*, VIII, 8-11).

a) Celsus made the charge that the O.T. prophets are like certain ones in Phoenicia and Palestine who go through foolish motions and gestures, then say they have a prophecy. He is quoted by Origen as saying: “To these promises are added strange, fanatical, and quite unintelligible words, of which no rational person can find the meaning: for so dark are they, as to have no meaning at all; but they give occasion to every fool or impostor to apply them to suit his own purposes.” (*Against Celsus*, VIII, 9).

b) Origen’s answer to such a charge is quite pertinent to this discussion. He says that though the Holy Spirit gave signs and outward demonstrations of his presence at the beginning of Christ’s ministry and after His ascension, these things have diminished and are no longer widespread. (*Against Celsus*, VIII, 8).

c) Furthermore he says Celsus is speaking falsely when describing what he had heard: “For no prophet bearing any resemblance to the ancient prophets have appeared in the time of Celsus.” (*Against Celsus*, VIII, 11).

**H. THE TESTIMONY OF CHRYSOSTOM:** After studying and ministering around the city of Antioch he became the patriarch of Constantinople. There he would be in contact with Christians and churches from all over the empire.

1. As he approaches his message on Spiritual gifts in I Corinthians, he confesses that the “whole place is very obscure,” and goes on to add: “but the obscurity is produced by our ignorance of the facts referred to and by their cessation, being such as then used to occur, but now no longer take place.” (Chrysostom, *Homilies on First Corinthians, XXIX, 1*). This statement is from the fourth century. Far from being the normal occurrence in the Christian circles, the gift of tongues is rather unknown.

**I. CONCLUSION:** After examining the testimony of the early Christian leaders whose ministry represents practically every area of the Roman Empire from approximately A.D. 100 to 400, it appears that the miraculous gifts of the first century died out and were no longer needed to establish Christianity.

1. Furthermore, it is very evident that even if the gift were in existence, in spite of all the testimony to the contrary, it was neither widespread nor the normal Christian experience.
2. The only clear reference to anything resembling the phenomena is connected with the heretic Montanus and those influenced by his erroneous views of the Spirit.
3. In many of their writings, the fathers sought to show the superiority of Christianity or the normal character of Christianity; yet, glossolalia is not cited as an example. The silence of the apostolic fathers must be regarded as most significant.

## **II. Testimony of the Middle Ages (590-1517).**

This was the period of Roman Catholic domination and doctrinal perversion. It has been aptly called the “Dark Ages” because the light of the Scriptures had seemingly gone out. And yet, even from this period comes echoes of glossolalia.

- A. Hildegard was called the great seeress and prophetess, the Sybyl of the Rhine. She was in ill health most of her life. She had many visions, especially during her sickness. Miracles and tongue-speaking have been attributed to her.
  1. (1098-1179) She was the abbess of the Benedictine convent of Disibodenberg, near Bingen on the Rhine and was the most prominent woman in the church of her day.

2. She received letters from four popes, Eugenius, Anastasius, Adrian, and Alexander III. She also received letters from the emperors Konrad III, Frederick Barbarossa, from Bernard and from many ecclesiastics in high office as well as from persons of humble position.
3. Her intercessions were invoked by Frederick, by Konrad for his son, and by Bernard.
4. Persons from far away were moved to seek her aid, as for example the patriarch of Jerusalem who had heard that a “divine force operated in and through her.”
5. Her convent was moved from Disibodenberg to Rupertsberg and she finally became abbess of the convent of Eibingen.
6. It is reported by her contemporaries that scarcely a sick person came to her without being healed.
7. She wrote “Lingua Ignota”: “...the manuscript, in eleven folios, which gives a list of nine hundred words of an unknown language, mostly nouns and only a few adjectives, a Latin, and in a few cases a German, explanation, together with an unknown alphabet of twenty-three letters, printed in Pitra.” “Hildegard,” *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: The Encyclopedia Press, Inc., 1913), VII, 352.

**B. Vincent Ferrer (1350-1419) :** A Dominican monk, was reported to have seen an apparition of Christ accompanied by St. Dominic and St. Francis. This experience led to a miraculous cure of a death sickness. He carried on an extensive miracle-performing and preaching ministry in western Europe.

1. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (XV, 438) stated: “It would be difficult to understand how he could make himself understood by the many nationalities he evangelized, as he could speak only Limousin, the language of Valencia. Many of his biographers hold that he was endowed with the gift of tongues, an opinion supported by Nicholas Clemangis, a doctor of the University of Paris, who heard him preach.”
2. So, his name is associated with the gift of tongues and with the sect of the Flagellants.
3. He was born in Valencia, joined the Dominican order, and pursued his studies in the universities of Barcelona and Lerida.

4. **In 1395, Benedict XIII, called him to be chief penitentiary in Avignon and master of the papal palace.**
  5. **Two years later he returned to Valencia with the title of papal legate.**
  6. **Able to speak only Spanish, his sermons, though they were not interpreted, are reported to have been understood in France and Italy.**
  7. **He was canonized by Calixtus III., 1455.....The tale is that Ferrer noticed this member of the Borgia family as a young priest in Valencia, and made the prediction that one day he would reach the highest office open to mortal man.**
  8. **On his itineraries Ferrer was also accompanied by bands of Flagellants. He himself joined in the flagellations, and the scourge with which he scourged himself daily, consisting of six thongs, is said still to be preserved in the Carthusian convent of Catalonia.**
  9. **The campaigns of the flagelants were penitential crusades in which the self-mortifications of the monastery were transferred to the open field and the public square and were adapted to impress the impenitent to make earnest in the warfare against the passions of the flesh. The first outbreak of their enthusiasm was in Italy in 1259, which, starting in perugia, spread to Northern Italy and extended across the Alps to Austria, Prag and Strassburg. Similar outbreaks occurred in 1296, 1333, 1349, 1399 and again during the ministry of Vincent Ferrer**
- C. The flagalent movement in the North---It was here that a spirit of independence of the clergy manifested itself. This is evident from the Flagellant codes of the German and Dutch groups, current at the time of the great pestilence and in after years.**
1. **During the campaigns, which lasted 33 ½ days, they were to ask no alms nor to wash their persons or their clothing, nor cut their beards nor speak to women, nor to lie on feather beds.**
  2. **It was provided that, so long as they lived, they should flagellate themselves every Friday three times during the day and once at night. The associations were called brotherhoods.**
  3. **They revived the use of popular religious song. Singing was a main feature of the earliest Flagellant movement, 1259. In hymns**

they would beseech the Virgin to prevail upon her son to stop “the hard death and pestilence”. Most of these hymns are filled with the thought of death and the woes of humanity, but the appeals to Mary are full of tenderness.

4. The hearers, in describing the impression made upon them by the melodies, mention their sweetness and their rhythm , “moving hearts of stone and bringing tears to the eyes of the most stolid.”
5. Altogether, the Flagellant movement during the Black Death, 1349, must be regarded as a genuinely popular religious movement.
6. According to the Pistojan writer, the movement had its origin in a vision seen by a peasant in the Dauphiné
  - a. After a midday meal, the peasant saw Christ as a young man. Christ asked him for bread. The peasant told him there was none left, but Christ bade him look, and behold, he saw three loaves.
  - b. Christ then bade him go and throw the loaves into a spring a short distance off. The peasant went, and was about to obey, when a woman, clad in white and bathed in tears, appeared, telling him to go back to the young man and say that his mother had forbidden it.
  - c. He went, and Christ repeated his command, but at the woman’s mandate the peasant again returned to Christ.
  - d. Finally he threw in one of the loaves, when the woman, who was Mary, informed him that her Son was exceedingly angry at the sinfulness of the world and had determined to punish it, even to destruction.
  - e. Each loaf signified 1/3 of mankind and the destruction of 1/3 was fixed, and if the peasant should cast in the other two loaves, all mankind would perish.
  - f. The peasant cast himself on his knees before the weeping Virgin, who then assured him that she had prayed to her Son to withhold judgment, and that it would be withheld, provided that he and others went in processions, flagellating themselves and crying, “mercy” and “peace” and relating the vision he had seen.
7. The peasant was joined by 17 others, and they became the nucleus of a new movement. Miracles were supposed to accompany their marches. Among the miracles was the bleeding of a crucifix.

8. The pope went so far as to bestow upon them his blessing and showed them the handkerchief of St. Veronica.

**CONCLUSION:** If the Bible is the Word of God then what must we say of the charismatic gifts attributed to Hildegard, Vincent Ferrer and the Flagellant movement?

### III. The Testimony of the Reformation Period (1517-1648).

This was the period of doctrinal revival. Through the ministries of Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and Knox, the truth of “justification by faith” was re-discovered and presented. There was a change from ritualism to Bible study and simple worship, and yet there was no attempt to recover glossolalia. However, it is reported that some did speak in tongues.

- A. Martin Luther (1483-1546). His defense of the faith against the threats of the papacy and the empire is admired by all.

1. Thomas Zimmerman, once general superintendent of the Assemblies of God, contended that Luther also spoke in tongues. He cited this statement from Erich Sauer’s *history of the Christian Church*:

“Dr. Martin Luther was a prophet, evangelist, speaker in tongues and interpreter, in one person, endowed with all the gifts of the Holy Spirit.” (Thomas Zimmerman, “Plea for the Pentecostalists,” *Christianity Today*, VII [Jan. 4, 1963], 12)

2. However, no statement from Luther’s own writings is cited as proof for this claim.
  3. Sauer may have been referring to Luther’s ability to read and to speak German, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew.
  4. Brumback, an advocate of glossolalia, recognized this possibility when he wrote: “We have not been able to determine the author’s conception of the nature of tongues, and therefore we would hesitate to enter this quotation as conclusive evidence. (Carl Brumback, *What meaneth this?* [Springfield, Mo.: The Gospel Publishing House, 1947], p. 92)
- B. Francis Xavier (1506-1552). Although he was no reformer, he was a significant figure of the reformation period. It is claimed that he performed miracles and spoke in tongues.
    1. However, as a Roman Catholic missionary to the Orient, he devoted his entire first year to learning the Japanese language. When he was able to express himself, he then began to preach.



- C. To the persons listed under the Middle Ages and the Reformation could be added the names of Louis Bertrand (1526-1581) and many other Catholic saints.
1. However, this is unnecessary because their experiences are similar in character to those listed.
  2. There is a definite question as to whether the phenomenon of tongue-speaking did occur in these periods. The claims may also be false.
  3. Schaff, an outstanding church historian, concluded: “What may be claimed for St. Bernard, St. Vincent Ferrer, and St. Francis Xavier is not a miraculous heteroglossolalia, but an eloquence so ardent, earnest, and intense, that the rude nations which they addressed in Latin or Spanish imagined they heard them in their mother tongue...Not one of these saints claimed the gift of tongues or other miraculous powers, but only their disciples or later writers.” (Schaff, I, 240-241. Proof for Schaff’s conclusion will also be found here).
  4. The tendency of Roman Catholicism to elevate and to venerate their saints must always form the background for any evaluation of their claims to miracles, whether they be healings or tongue-speaking.
  5. For this reason, any claim to glossolalia from Catholic sources must be regarded as suspect.

#### IV. The Post-Reformation period (1648-1900)

This is the period of Protestant advance, from the Reformation to the Twentieth Century. During this time, “Christianity” spread throughout the world, including America. This period was also marked by the development of cults and sects which sprang up spontaneously or were the result of church splits or dissatisfaction. In many groups, speaking in tongues became an integral part of their worship services.

- A. *Cevalal Prophets*. During the latter part of the seventeenth and early part of the eighteenth centuries, great persecution broke out against the French Huguenots in the southeastern part of France. In the midst of this tribulation, ecstatic experiences including prophesying and tongue-speaking broke out among the people. Morton T. Kelsey described the outbreak:

“The first occurrence of tongues grew out of the prophetic utterance of a ten-year old, Isabeau Vincent, who had fled from the mistreatment of

her father and had seen the king's soldiers bayonet women and children worshipping together in their own church. In an ecstatic experience she called for repentance....

Soon children all over the Cevennes were seized by the spirit and prophesied. Children as young as three were known to have exhorted the people in religious discourses. Adults, too, were seized by the spirit and found themselves speaking words of French they did not understand."

(Morton T Kelsey, *Tongue Speaking*, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1964, pp. 52,53)

1. **Their physical actions were quite excessive. They fell backwards with the body extended at full length upon the ground. Their bodies went through many contortions including the heaving of the chest and the inflation of the stomach. When their physical actions ceased, they began to prophesy, exhorting the people to repentance and denouncing the Roman Catholic Church.** (Robert Chandler Dalton, *Tongues Like As Of Fire*, Springfield, Mo.: The Gospel Publishing House, 1945, p. 19).
- B. ***Jansenists.* Started by Cornelius Jansen, were a reform element within the Roman Catholic Church in the seventeenth century. Experience, not reason, was their guide.**
1. **They were opposed to the teaching of Justification by faith.**
  2. **They believed that the relationship of a person to God was only possible in and through the Catholic Church.**
  3. **Glossolalia has been attributed to this group which was later condemned by Rome.**
- C. ***Quakers.* Started in England during the seventeenth by George Fox (1624-1691).**
1. **His aim was to promote the revival of primitive Christianity.**
  2. **He stated that the "Inner Light" was in every man. There was no need for an ordained ministry. They sat in silence in their services until God revealed Himself directly to someone.**
  3. **The Bible was regarded as inspired by God, but it was only a secondary rule, subordinate to the Holy Spirit and to the "Inner Light."**
  4. **Experience therefore sat in judgment upon the Bible, rather than vice versa.**
  5. **It is reported that speaking in tongues took place among Quakers.**
- D. ***Irvingites.* Edward Irving (1792-1834) was a Scotch Presbyterian who was greatly interested in eschatology. This interest was caused partially by the French Revolution which had provoked in England a strong interest in apocalyptic thought and was increased through Bible studies in**

the home of Henry Drummond. He was also noted for his heretical belief in the sinful substance of the body of Christ.

1. Speaking in tongues broke out among his parishioners in their homes and later in his church services.
2. The Irvingites distinguished between the Pentecostal glossolalia in foreign languages and the Corinthian glossolalia in ecstatic, unknown languages. They only practiced the latter.
3. A later development of the Irvingites was the Catholic Apostolic Church. It restored the position of the twelve apostles and degenerated into a distorted Catholicism, embracing such rites as transubstantiation, extreme unction, candles, incense, and holy water.

E. *Mormons*. Established by Joseph Smith (1805-1844), denies salvation by the grace of God, the Trinity, the absolute authority of the Scriptures, and the reality of hell.

1. However, the seventh article of faith of the Latter-day Saints states that they “believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, etc.”

F. *Various Revivals*. The phenomenon of speaking in tongues has been reported to have taken place among the Readers in Sweden (1841-1843), during the Irish revivals (1859), and among the Methodists.

1. The nineteenth century has produced isolated testimonies of those who spoke in tongues without recognizing the significance of the event.
2. Some have claimed that both Moody and Finney, the great evangelist, spoke in tongues when they received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. However, such evidence for this claim is poor. There is no record that Finney or Moody engaged in tongue-speaking.
3. Tongue meetings may have started as the result of their meetings without their sanction or knowledge, but this does not mean that they actively promoted the phenomenon.

G. *Summary*. The Post-Reformation period was a time of confusion. Glossolalia appeared, but in the strangest places. Children as young as three years allegedly spoke in tongues. The physical convulsions are hardly in harmony with the Biblical standard of self-control. Glossolalia was totally unrelated to orthodox beliefs. Roman Catholics, Mormons, and false sects (Quakers, Irvingites, Shakers) all reported glossolalia as part of their church life..

Read Jeremiah 23; Ezek. 13:3, 6-7.

**V. The Modern Period (1900- forward).**

**Pentecostalism itself cannot be dated much earlier than 1900.**

- A. Some did live before that time who claimed “Pentecostal Holiness,” and “Pentecostal Fullness,” while others engaged in “Tarrying and Speaking” meetings. However, very few of these things occurred before 1900.**
- B. A. Rev. David Awrey of Delaware, Ohio, claimed he had the Spirit of fullness in 1890.**
- C. In 1897 a Holiness convention was held in New England composed of “gift people.”**
- D. In the year 1900 Charles F. Parham opened the Bethel Bible School in Topeka, Kansas, and this school held that the signs of tongues and healing should be normal for the Church.**
  - 1. Then W.J. Seymour became greatly enamored with the message of Pentecost and started the Azusa Street Assembly in Los Angeles in 1906.**
  - 2. This is considered by most to be the birthday for the modern Pentecostal movement.**
  - 3. One of the members of this group, G.B. Cashwell, left Los Angeles and went to North Carolina, and in 1908 preached at the annual meeting of the Church of God in Cleveland, Tennessee, where the leader, H. A. Tomlinson, got the baptism and the Church of God became Pentecostal.**
  - 4. Even the Christian and Missionary Alliance could not escape the influence of it and in 1907 some tongues appeared on the campus at Nyack, but A.B. Simpson refused to commit himself to say that tongues were necessary. However, his hymns have been used by Pentecostals since.**
  - 5. The Assemblies of God have always noted their indebtedness to A.B. Simson. The first General Council of the Assemblies of God was held in 1914 in Hot Springs, Arkansas, and from this has come the largest group of Pentecostals in this country.**

E. **It is interesting that histories of tongues movements and Pentecostal groups do not go back much before 1875.** (the most recent one is that by Carl Brumback, *Suddenly...from Heaven: A History of the Assemblies of God*).

1. Therefore, it is admitted by all that this is an extremely modern movement. It has not been, it is not, nor can it be based on church history and a stream of witnesses to tongues down through the centuries.
2. The voice of church history, when read in its total ramifications, would indicate that God has been guiding His people and that he has been teaching them His Word down through the centuries through the Scriptures.
3. The voice of history also tells us that God has majored on those things which are given priority in His own Word and not on those things which men claim by experiences.
4. The voice of church history, therefore, is against the modern tongues movement and would stigmatize it as being an unscriptural and unhistorical phenomenon arising out of the experiences, tempers, moods, tensions, upheavals, upsettings, fears, frustrations, longings, desires, and emotional impulses so common in the last century.

### **Why We Believe That Verbal Revelation from God Ceased With The Completion Of The Apostolic Tradition [The Sole Authority Of Scripture]**

The following is extracted from chapter 8 of Dr. Hosler's full length book entitled *The Baptismal Regeneration / Believers' Baptism Debate*.

There has always existed, within Christendom, a superstitious view of biblical authority and interpretation which can lead to a *talismanic* view of one's own heart, conscience, intuition or of the consensus of the Church as a community. We have observed this same error among the Jewish leaders in the NT. In addition to the written Torah, the Pharisees and rabbis recognized an oral Torah which comprised specific applications of the general principles of the written Torah. In Christ's day the oral traditions went beyond application to the establishment of an extra-textual orthodoxy which was assigned equal authority with the Scriptures. According to Christ, this practice literally resulted in the cancellation of the written Word of God (Matt. 15:2; Mark 7:9, 13; Col. 2:8).

This same error is being committed today in the name of *The Living Logos* or the *inner illumination of the Holy Spirit*. Some contemporary theologians attribute to themselves, or to the community of believers, the same authority that was

possessed by the apostles. This present work, on the other hand, interprets the words *dynamis* (ability, power) and *exousia* (right, power, authority) within their contextual usage and not merely by their lexical definitions. In so doing, we can observe that the power and authority of the sacred text is of a different domain and thus not the same as the *exousia* of government (cf. Lk. 19:17), the Sanhedrin (Acts 9:14), or Pilate (Lk. 20:20). It is also different from the God-given power of self-determination in the believer (Acts 5:4) the satanic power of kings (Rev. 17:12), and the *powers that be* (Lk. 12:11; Rom. 13:1). It is not the same as the sphere of the state's dominion (Lk. 23:7), the domain of spirits (Eph. 2:2), nor of the spiritual powers (I Cor. 15:24; Eph. 1:21; Col. 1:16; I Pet. 3:22).

First, God possesses *exousia* as the source of all power and legality (Lk. 12:5; Acts 1:7; Jude 25; Rom. 9:21). Secondly, all natural forces derive their *exousia* from God (Rev. 6:8; 9:3, 10, 19; 16:9; 18:1). Thirdly, God's will also encompasses Satan's sphere of dominion (Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13). Fourthly, God's *exousia* and *dynamis* are fully possessed by Jesus Christ in His deity (Matt. 28:18; Rev. 12:10).

That the Church has a power of self-determination is clearly seen in Acts 15. But this is a freedom to embrace as well as to reject error. When Christ prophesied the immediate entering in of false prophets, He was declaring that God would not with force prohibit error in the church (Mt. 7:15, 22, 23). It was the Church's task to defend itself from error (Jude 3). But by what rule? If there was not a rule distinct from the body of saints that would serve as an effective tool, then either the will of the saints would become the rule or else the will of the ecclesiastical hierarchy would become the authoritative canon law for the Church. In the latter case we would have a repetitious parallel to the Pharisees and Scribes negating the *exousia* of the sacred writings (Matt. 15:6, 9).

We hold that the Bible is the rule or canon for the Church. Because of our fleshly natures, we are not an extremely humble race. Therefore, we must take steps to protect ourselves from our own pride. Thus doing, we should attempt to require that none of our Christian doctrines will have originated with ourselves or our denomination. They must have originated with Christ and have been delivered to the Church via the original apostles and passed down through the Scriptures. Although the redeemed of the Church Age are universally *in Christ*, doctrines which originated from within that body, since the death of the apostles, are not catholic (universal).

Thus, the doctrinal *exousia* chain of command begins with the entire Trinity and is delivered to the Church through Christ and the Holy Spirit to the original apostles. Even before the Scriptures were complete the *apostolic tradition* had become a closed system of doctrine—

*Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them (Rom. 16:17).*

*Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every*

*brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us (II Thess. 3:6).*

*Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3; cf. Gal. 1:6-9).*

It is the nature of a canon to be closed. But upon what grounds was the NT canon closed and how were the twenty-seven books therein chosen? *The Cambridge History Of The Bible* summarizes the process as follows:

...The Canon of the New Testament was the result of a long and gradual process in the course of which the books regarded as authoritative, inspired, and apostolic were selected out of a much larger body of literature. Such a process of selection necessarily involved both selectors and grounds on which the selection would be made.

...Selection thus involved not only comparison among books but also comparison with a norm viewed as relatively fixed. Before this norm, among early Christians regarded as the faith of the apostles, reached a relative fixity of expression it was not possible for a definite Canon to come into existence. About A.D. 170, when opponents of the enthusiastic movement known as Montanism endeavored to cut the ground from under it by rejecting the Gospel and Revelation of John, their own theological ideas had not incorporated Johannine insights, and their rejection of the Johannine books was destined to fall because the theology of the Church as a whole was coming to be increasingly Johannine. This is to say that the development of the Canon and the development of Christian theology were closely interrelated, and supported one another.

...The question of canonicity or, to put it more historically, authority—since the term *canon* was not used until the fourth century—did not and could not arise until the idea of orthodoxy had clearly arisen out of the second-century anti-gnostic debates.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *The Cambridge History Of The Bible: From the Beginnings to Jerome*, P. R. Ackroyd And C. F. Evens, Editors (Cambridge, London, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1970), Vol. I, pp. 284- 285.

The early post-apostolic church sought to protect itself from error with a closed system of pre-canon orthodoxy known as the *apostolic tradition*. Since the actual term *canon* was not in use until the fourth century, instead we will use the word *authority*. The recognition of doctrinal authority can indeed be observed in the second-century anti-gnostic debates. The primary criterion in such debates was the usage of this closed system of doctrine among groups known to have held the traditional *faith of the apostles*.

John 14:26 was spoken by Christ to the Apostles when He proclaimed that the Holy Ghost would *teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you*. In John 16:13 Christ said that the Spirit of Truth would guide the apostles into *all truth*. This was a promise of total accuracy based upon total recall of what was spoken by Christ. We understand that neither we nor the community of believers possess such an authority today. We only have the information that was delivered to us through the apostles, as Paul said to Timothy: *And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also* (II Tim. 2:2). Therefore believers are members of *the household of God; and are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone* (Eph. 2:19b-21). Jude called the NT body of doctrines *the faith* and exhorted Christians to *...earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints* (Jude 3).

Clement, the third bishop of the congregation at Rome, who was conversant with the apostles, refers to a pre-canon closed system of orthodoxy in his First Epistle to the Corinthians:

[Chap. XLII] The apostles have preached the Gospel to us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ has done so from God. Christ therefore was sent forth by God, and the apostles by Christ. Both these appointments, then, were made in an orderly way, according to the will of God. Having therefore received their orders, and being fully assured by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and established in the word of God, with full assurance of the Holy Ghost, they went forth proclaiming that the kingdom of God was at hand.<sup>2</sup>

Ignatius of the church of Antioch in Syria is remembered as a co-disciple of the Apostle John along with Polycarp. He also refers to a pre-canon orthodoxy in his Epistle to the Magnesians:

(Chap. XIII) Study, therefore, to be established in the doctrines of the Lord and of the apostles, that so all

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<sup>2</sup> *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: First Epistle of Clement* [Chap. XLII], Rev Alexander Roberts, D.D. and James Donaldson, LL.D., Editors (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), Vol. I, p. 16.



things, whatsoever ye do, may prosper, both in the flesh and spirit, in faith and love....<sup>3</sup>

Thus, true catholic unity must be based on a closed system of apostolic doctrine.

In his Epistle to the Romans, Ignatius distinguishes between his authority as a bishop and the authority of the apostles:

(Chap. IV.) I do not, as Peter and Paul, issue commandments unto you. They were apostles of Jesus Christ, but I am the very least [of believers].<sup>4</sup>

Irenaeus, the disciple of Polycarp, states the case for us in the preface to his third book *Against Heresies* wherein he points out that his truth is qualified in that it did not originate with himself:

But in this, the third book, I shall adduce proofs from the Scriptures, so that I may come behind in nothing of what thou hast enjoined; yea, that over and above what thou dost reckon upon, thou mayest receive from me the means of combating and vanquishing those who, in whatever manner, are propagating falsehood. For the love of God, being rich and ungrudging, confers upon the suppliant more than he can ask from it. Call to mind, then, the things which I have stated in the two preceding books, and, taking these in connection with them, thou shalt have from me a very copious refutation of all the heretics; and faithfully and strenuously shalt thou resist them in defence of the only true and life-giving faith, which the Church has received from the apostles and imparted to her sons. For the Lord of all gave to His apostles the power of the Gospel, through whom also we have known the truth, that is, the doctrine of the Son of God; to whom also did the Lord declare: "He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me, and Him that sent Me."<sup>5</sup>

Again in (Chap. I) Irenaeus states that:

We have learned from none others the plan of our salvation, than from those through whom the Gospel has come down to us, which they did at one time

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians*, [Chap. XIII "To Be Established In Faith And Unity"], Vol. 1, p. 64.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans*, [Chap. IV "Allow Me To Fall Prey To The Wild Beasts"], Vol. 1, p. 75.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Irenaeus Against Heresies, Book III* [Preface], Vol. 1, p. 414.

proclaim in public, and, at a later period, by the will of God, handed down to us in the Scriptures, to be the ground and pillar of our faith.<sup>6</sup>

He describes heretics as those who claimed to have received new truth from God to be added to the apostolic tradition and demonstrates the task of the presbyters as that of keeping the system closed:

(Chap. II.) But, again, when we refer them to that tradition which originates from the apostles, [and] which is preserved by means of the successions of presbyters in the Churches, they object to tradition, saying that they themselves are wiser not merely than the presbyters, but even than the apostles, because they have discovered the unadulterated truth.<sup>7</sup>

Irenaeus tells us that it is this closed system that makes Christian doctrine public and therefore catholic (universal):

(Chap. III.) It is within the power of all, therefore, in every Church, who may wish to see the truth, to contemplate clearly the tradition of the apostles manifested throughout the whole world; and we are in a position to reckon up those who were by the apostles instituted bishops in the Churches, and [to demonstrate] the succession of these men to our own times; those who neither taught nor knew of anything like what these [heretics] rave about. For if the apostles had known hidden mysteries, which they were in the habit of imparting to "the perfect" apart and privily from the rest, they would have delivered them especially to those to whom they were also committing the Churches themselves.<sup>8</sup>

He further illustrates this point by listing in succession the first twelve bishops of the Church at Rome in relation to their obligation to keep the system closed:

(Chap. III.) ....In this order, and by this succession, the ecclesiastical tradition from the apostles, and the preaching of the truth, have come down to us. And this is most abundant proof that there is one and the same

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., [Book III, Chap.I.1], Vol. 1, p. 414.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., [Book III, Chap.II.2], Vol. 1, p. 415.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., [Book III, Chap. III.1], Vol. 1, p. 415.

vivifying faith, which has been preserved in the Church from the apostles until now, and handed down in truth.<sup>9</sup>

Irenaeus continues by using Polycarp to illustrate the *sole authority* of the apostolic tradition:

(Chap. III.) But Polycarp also was not only instructed by apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also, by apostles in Asia, appointed bishop of the Church in Smyrna, whom I also saw in my early youth....and, when a very old man, gloriously and most nobly suffering martyrdom, departed this life, having always taught the things which he had learned from the apostles, and which the Church has handed down and which alone are true. To these things all the Asiatic Churches testify, as do also those men who have succeeded Polycarp down to the present time....He it was who, coming to Rome in the time of Anicetus caused many to turn away from the aforesaid heretics to the Church of God, proclaiming that he had received this one and sole truth from the apostles.<sup>10</sup>

This is precisely why Irenaeus considers it unnecessary to seek for extra-apostolic information regarding the will of God:

(Chap. IV.) Since therefore we have such proofs, it is not necessary to seek the truth among others which it is easy to obtain from the Church; since the apostles, like a rich man [depositing his money] in a bank, lodged in her hands most copiously all things pertaining to the truth...<sup>11</sup>

This same idea of the sole authority of the apostolic tradition is equivalent to the belief in the *sole authority* of the Scriptures for faith and doctrine. Irenaeus makes this very conclusion:

(Chap. V.) Since, therefore, the tradition from the apostles does thus exist in the Church, and is permanent among us, let us revert to the Scriptural proof furnished by those apostles who did also write the Gospel, in which they recorded the doctrine regarding God,

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., [Book III, Chap. III.3], Vol. 1, p. 416.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., [Book III, Chap. III.4], Vol. 1, p. 416.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., [Book III, Chap. IV.1], Vol. 1, p. 416.

pointing out that our Lord Jesus Christ is the truth, and that no lie is in him.<sup>12</sup>

*Sole authority* would mean, for Irenaeus, a closed, fixed system of doctrine to which no theological truth claims could be added nor taken away:

True knowledge is [that which consists in] the doctrine of the apostles, and the ancient constitution of the Church throughout all the world, and the distinctive manifestation of the body of Christ according to the successions of the bishops, by which they have handed down that Church which exists in every place, and has come even unto us, being guarded and preserved, without any forgoing of Scriptures, by a very complete system of doctrine, and neither receiving addition nor [suffering] curtailment [in the truths which she believes]; and [it consists in] reading [the word of God] without falsification, and a lawful and diligent exposition in harmony with the Scriptures, both without danger and without blasphemy...<sup>13</sup>

We will note one final quotation wherein Irenaeus defines orthodoxy as the true Church standing for the closed system of apostolic tradition through the written Scriptures:

(Chap. XX.) Now all these [heretics] are of much later date than the bishops to whom the apostles committed the Churches; which fact I have in the third book taken all pains to demonstrate. It follows, then, as a matter of course, that these heretics aforementioned, since they are blind to the truth, and deviate from the [right] way, will walk in various roads; and therefore the footsteps of their doctrine are scattered here and there without agreement or connection. But the path of those belonging to the Church circumscribes the whole world, as possessing the sure tradition from the apostles, and gives unto us to see that the faith of all is one and the same, since all receive one and the same God the Father, and believe in the same dispensation regarding the incarnation of the Son of God, and are cognizant of the same gift of the Spirit and are conversant with the same commandments, and preserve the same form of ecclesiastical constitution, and expect the same advent of the Lord, and await the same salvation of the

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., [Book III, Chap. V.1], Vol. 1, p. 417.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., [Book IV, Chap. XXXIII.8], Vol. 1, p. 508.

complete man, that is, of the soul and body. And undoubtedly the preaching of the Church is true and steadfast, in which one and the same way of salvation is shown throughout the whole world. For to her is entrusted the light of God; and therefore the "wisdom" of God, by means of which she saves all men, "is declared in [its] going forth; it uttereth [its voice] faithfully in the streets, is preached on the tops of the walls, and speaks continually in the gates of the city." For the Church preaches the truth everywhere, and she is the seven-branched candlestick which bears the light of Christ.... Now, such are all the heretics, and those who imagine that they have hit upon something more beyond the truth.... It behoves us, therefore, to avoid their doctrines, and to take careful heed lest we suffer any injury from them; but to flee to the Church, and be brought up in her bosom, and be nourished with the Lord's Scriptures.<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, the use of the *kerygma* (proclamation) as an overall term to denote the substance of the message of the New Testament, and a skeleton framework underlying it, is well founded. Paul's Gospel was the same as the preaching of Jesus (Rom. 16:25), and any departure from it was to be avoided (Rom. 16:17; II Thes. 3:6; Acts 20:25-31). Thus, the true *kerygma* was committed to the Church originally through the preaching of the apostles (Titus 1:3; II Tim. 4:17).

Therefore, there is not a divine extra-biblical *kerygma* to be recognized by the Church today. If there is, we will never have the inerrant ability to distinguish it from the claims of false apostles (II Cor. 11:13). Our only hope of getting close to the truth is the *sole authority* of the Bible. The contemporary game of *preacher roulette* is one wherein the sinner gambles his soul on a guess as to which *prophet* is really speaking the oracles of God.

The New Testament Church has an *exousia* (authority) which is a freedom for the community, but this is not a freedom to correct the Scriptures with spiritual authority in the name of the *Living Logos*. When the Apostle Paul spoke by *concession* or *permission* (*suggnome*), he was only offering personal advice and made it clear that this was not a commandment from God (I Cor. 7:6). Though Timothy and Irenaeus were indwelt by the *Living Logos*, they received no new doctrines that were not already handed down from the apostles—*And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also* (II Tim. 2:2). The Christian community is free to enter into error but not authorized to pontificate that the error is a *revelational mandate* from Christ. When the Christian community rejected the heliocentric view of the solar system, it proved to the world that the canon for the church was not the consensus of the community nor of the hierarchs. The community's freedom

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., [Book V, Chap. XX.1], Vol. 1, pp. 547, 548.

is from the curse of the law (Rom 6:14) and from the theological commandments of men (Col. 2:20-22), but not a freedom and authority to issue new commandments (I Tim. 4:1-4). Thus, community *exousia* is not intrinsic divine autonomy from the authority of Scripture. Contemporary Christian gnosticism seems to have developed a freedom along the lines of the extremists at Corinth (I Cor. 5:1 ff.) wherein men established their own autonomy in moral and theological issues as if God had certainly approved. In the apocryphal Acts, as is often the case today, *exousia* was a mystically extorted power deployed for one's own ends.

Although God reveals Himself in nature (Rom. 1:20) and in the conscience of man (Rom. 1:18, 19), these revelations contain no doctrines which are not already declared in Scripture (Rom. 2:14). We are often charged with limiting God to the content of the Scriptures and thus putting Him in a box. On the contrary, we know that God is infinite and therefore cannot be limited. However, we would be attempting to limit God if we proclaimed that He is incapable of placing scriptural boundaries on what He will allow us to know regarding His will for mankind. The Apostle Paul was a limited agnostic. Although there is infinitely more to God than is revealed in Scripture, we should consider with Paul that extrabiblical information about the will of God is past finding out (Rom. 11:33; James 4:13-16). So it is not that the infinite God is limited to this Book. The limitation is that we are small and finite, and therefore, our understanding is confined to the boundaries of the canon.

The Body of Christ has a mission and the Scriptures contain all the doctrinal furnishings necessary to perform every work within that objective:

All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works (II Tim. 3:16,17).

Never let it be once said that God cannot reveal new truth beyond the Scriptures. However, it would be limiting God to insist that He must reveal extra-biblical truth to us whether or not He desires to do so. It would be limiting God to say that He cannot close the canon.