

Chapter One

Praying in the Spirit

(Praying in Other Tongues, Praying in Other Languages)

I am not sure there is a more polarizing subject in all of Christianity than that of speaking in Tongues. Just mention Tongues in certain settings and see what happens to the surrounding environment. If you want to see people squirm and fidget, then just bring up the subject of the "baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in Tongues".

There are several viewpoints, opinions, and perceptions regarding this phenomenon described as a gift of the Spirit in the scriptures. You will hear everything from "it's of the devil" to "it's nothing but a bunch of gibberish". Cessationists argue that it has passed away with the apostles and is no longer needed. Many that believe this gift is still vital today contend it is only available to some and not all. Despite the numerous rejections or elitist views, the Baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in Tongues is an amazing gift bestowed to all who desire and yearn for more of the Holy Spirit.

The abuse and lack of knowledge of something does not extinguish or even minimize its unquestioned value. Even among those who believe in this gift and have received it for themselves have a limited understanding of what has been received. Despite using this gift to speak in Tongues, they seldom do so with any regularity or deep conviction. Some people are so uncomfortable and frightened by Tongues that it has caused entire churches to modify what they will allow and not allow. This restraint is rampant even among many Spirit-filled churches who do indeed believe in this gift. The question becomes: Are churches and individuals instituting wisdom or are we quenching the Spirit?

God bestowed this gift fully knowing that it would be abused and uncomfortable to so many, yet it is given freely for us to access the Spirit who brings heaven to earth. Misgivings and misunderstandings of 1 Corinthians 13 & 14 have harmed the true purpose and intent of this incredible gift. The potential for misuse is always a possibility when dealing with the gifts of the Spirit. Instead of teaching and correcting the abuses and crazy demonstrative expressions that can evolve, some have concluded that omitting its existence altogether is the proper course of action. It is my intention to address each of these issues mentioned above and illuminate why the Holy Spirit has given us this wondrous gift of praying in other languages.

Throughout this writing, I will use praying in the Spirit and praying in Tongues interchangeably.

We will consider scripturally how 1 Corinthians 13:1 and 1 Corinthians 14 communicate vital descriptions, appropriate identifications, and powerful insights to the value and necessity of this gift. We will address the following questions in this order:

1. Is Tongues a heavenly language that is unknown here on Earth?

2. Why do so many say that I should receive the gift of speaking in Tongues if scripture seems to state otherwise?
3. Are you violating scripture when you pray in tongues aloud publicly without an interpreter?
4. What is cessationism?
5. Is it true that you do not have the Holy Spirit if you don't speak in tongues?
6. Why is this gift given to the church today?

Chapter Two

Understanding the Gift of Tongues for the Body of Christ and FOR YOU!

In this chapter, we will look at the abuses and misuses with tongues, while also determining the difference between praying in Tongues and “praying in the Spirit”. We will first answer questions 1 through 3 mentioned in the first chapter.

- 1. Is Tongues a heavenly language that is unknown here on Earth?**
- 2. Why do so many say that I should receive the gift of speaking in Tongues if scripture seems to state otherwise?**
- 3. Are you violating scripture when you pray in tongues aloud publicly without an interpreter?**

Let’s address question number one concerning whether or not tongues is a known or unknown language. In the well-known segment of scriptures in Acts 2:1-12, we see this question clearly answered:

*When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ²And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³Then there appeared to them divided Tongues, as of fire, and one **sat upon each of them.** ⁴**And they were all** filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other Tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. ⁵And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. ⁶**And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language.** ⁷Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, “Look, are not all these who speak, Galileans? ⁸**And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?** ⁹Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹Cretans and Arabs—**we hear them speaking in our own Tongues the wonderful works of God.**” ¹²So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “Whatever could this mean?”*

Upon reading this portion of scripture, it becomes abundantly clear that speaking in Tongues is simply speaking in another language that you do not know in your natural man. It is not some kind of gibberish attributed to some kind of spiritual sphere somewhere out there. Just upon a quick analysis, there appears to be sixteen separate cultures or languages mentioned in this passage of Acts 2. Yet, the Holy Spirit chose as He willed which one to be bestowed on each one in the upper room. It is generally agreed by historians that there were over one hundred and twenty people who received the Holy

Spirit and began speaking in these other languages.¹ What were they speaking in these “other” languages? The wonderful works of God! Additionally, it is surmised that there are just under 7000 languages spoken in the world today. Other sources suggest that there are 7,100 languages spoken and another 573 extinct or dead languages.² The Holy Spirit can choose any of these languages to be given to a believer to exercise this beautiful gift.

We can safely say that Tongues is a known tongue or earthly language that is uttered by the Holy Spirit through you. Does this dismiss that some may be speaking with the Tongues of angels according to 1 Corinthians 13:1? It could be a possibility if indeed that’s even what that scripture is suggesting when it says “...*though I speak with the tongue of men and of angels...*”. Either way I cannot say unequivocally that this possibility does not exist, but we can confirm that the scripture validates Tongues as languages spoken on the earth. This brings us to question number two concerning whether the gift of Tongues is both useful and necessary today.

2. Why do so many say that I should receive the gift of speaking in Tongues if scripture seems to state otherwise?

In 1 Corinthians 12:27-30, it says,

Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. ²⁸And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of Tongues. ²⁹Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? ³⁰Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with Tongues? Do all interpret?

Paul is asking several rhetorical questions that imply the answer to each question above is “no”. The emphasis here is that every person does not have all the gifts that are given as parts of the body of Christ. However, it has been suggested that the Holy Spirit can manifest whatever gift is needed at a particular time and place in anyone He so chooses to usher in the fullness of Christ. One who does not operate in the gift of miracles could do so at the point of a need. This could possibly be true. I will not argue such a point, but the message is clear in these passages. Each one of us has a part and that part makes up the whole of the body, which manifest the fullness of Christ. It would appear, based upon the strength of these scriptures, that speaking in other tongues is not for everyone, but is simply *one* of the gifts that could be bestowed by the Holy Spirit. Before we rest on this notion, let’s look at Acts chapter two.

Most historians agree there were approximately 120 people who experienced the impartation of the Holy Spirit. This number can be argued for accuracy, but the main point is that *all* present received: “*All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began*

¹ 1. “How Many People Were in the Upper Room on the Day of Pentecost?,” Reference, accessed June 15, 2023, <https://www.reference.com/world-view/many-people-were-upper-room-day-pentecost-5c83d76e6bbdbe53>.

² 1. Stephen R Anderson, “How Many Languages Are There in the World?,” Linguistic society of america, accessed June 13, 2023, <http://www.linguisticsociety.org/content/how-many-languages-are-there-world>.

*to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*³ The Spirit “enabled” all present to birth the early church. This teaches us that the Spirit was not partial or selective in his expression and impartation on the day of Pentecost. This poses some interesting questions. Out of the approximate 120 that received the gift of Tongues, who received the gift of prophecy? Who received the gift of interpretation? Did they all demonstrate the working of miracles or the gift of healing? What about the discerning of Spirits? We can conclude that the only gift that was given to *all* was the gift of Tongues. A common retort to this argument is that the day of Pentecost was just a one-time event or a “one off” coincidence. Let’s take a deeper look at this consideration.

In Acts 10:44-46, Peter goes to Cornelius’ house and preaches the gospel to the Gentiles:

*While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon **all those** who heard the word. ⁴⁵And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because **the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.** ⁴⁶For they heard them **speak with Tongues and magnify God.***

There is no mention of other gifts being expressed in this instance except speaking with Tongues. We now have two concrete examples of Tongues being distributed to groups gathered together. Let’s look at Acts 19:5-7 where a third description of many being filled with Tongues when Paul “laid hands on them”.

Later in the book of Acts,

Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.” ⁵When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with Tongues and prophesied. ⁷Now the men were about twelve in all.

Once again, as the Holy Spirit came upon them, they spoke with Tongues and this time also prophesied. How many spoke in Tongues in this instance? The answer is 12. In other words, all of those gathered spoke with Tongues after the Holy Spirit came upon them. Once again, did these also show forth the gift of miracles, healing, discerning of Spirits, interpretation of Tongues? No, it is tongues that were given to all and, in this case, they also prophesied.

How do we reconcile these events in Acts 10 and 19 with Paul’s description to Corinth in 1 Corinthians 12? The Apostle Paul reconciles this question by establishing the context with which his entire writing should be viewed.

³ Acts 2:4 (NIV)

*I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all; **19 yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.***⁴

Paul gives context in 1 Corinthians 12 on how the gift of Tongues should be expressed in *the church*. Speaking in Tongues or “praying in the Spirit” is given to every believer for their own private prayers, yet Tongues is also given for the edifying of the church body. Public expression of Tongues requires contextual understanding described by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12 to benefit the body of Christ, while private expression is described as a gift to all who desire as stated in the events in Acts.

Let us take a much closer look by going to 1 Corinthians 14:2:

For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the Spirit he speaks mysteries.

Paul offers this powerful truth regarding praying in tongues in the context of establishing the difference between edification of the church and the edification of the individual who is praying in Tongues. This brings us to question number three stated earlier.

3. Are you violating scripture when you pray in tongues aloud publicly without an interpreter?

To answer this, let’s look at 1 Corinthians 14:1-5:

*Pursue love, and desire Spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. **2** For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the Spirit he speaks mysteries. **3** But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men. **4** He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. **5** I wish you all spoke with Tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with Tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification.*

Paul is not omitting Tongues to believers or diminishing its impact. Quite the contrary, he states that one who speaks in Tongues is speaking directly to God and speaking mysteries in the Spirit. He is simply stating that without an interpreter the church is not edified because there is no understanding. If one prophesies, those who hear will understand and be impacted. Subsequently, **in the church**, prophecy is greater than Tongues but only if the one who spoke in Tongues has no interpreter. Therefore, you are not in violation of scripture by not having an interpreter, but you are encouraged to prophecy. Paul’s purpose is to ensure that public expression gives clarity and understanding to those present. Prophecy will give them direction and purpose, whereas Tongues with no interpretation offers little guidance on what was spoken aloud.

⁴ 1 Corinthians 14:18-19 (NKJV)

Not everyone has the gift of Tongues for the edification of the church. Not everyone has the gift to interpret Tongues for the body. Yet, everyone is to receive the gift of Tongues to pray, not to men, but unto God. They are speaking the unsearchable mysteries of Christ and edifying or building up themselves. However, these mysteries and edification will not benefit the body because they will not understand what is being said. This is the entire context of 1 Corinthians 14.

Paul had to address these issues for the church in Corinth. The expressions of the gift of Tongues required an apostolic oversight that brought order and understanding to the public expression. Many have used this instruction and correction from Paul as an opportunity to diminish or extinguish Tongues altogether, but if you read these things closely, Tongues should be elevated and not extinguished. Is it said of any of the other gifts: *For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the Spirit he speaks mysteries...He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself.*⁵ Paul believed the gift of Tongues was to be offered to all believers and was teaching them how these gifts can operate to maximize their effect.

Praying in Tongues/Praying in the Spirit

Before we move further into this subject of the difference between the gift of Tongues for the edification of the church through interpretation, let us make the vital connection between the phrase praying in Tongues and “praying in the Spirit”.

Please look carefully at the following passages from 1 Corinthians 14:13-17,

*Therefore, let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. **14 For if I pray in a tongue, my Spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. 15 What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the Spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the Spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding. 16 Otherwise, if you bless with the Spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say “Amen” at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say? 17 For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified.***

Paul is undeniably clear that praying in Tongues is praying with the Spirit. He says that if one blesses with the Spirit or gives thanks with the Spirit, then those who hear cannot say “amen”. Why? Because blessing and giving thanks with the Spirit is done so in other Tongues. Some might say at this point...”OK, what’s the big deal?” It becomes a very big deal when we move into the value and purpose of praying in Tongues and what the scripture says about this eternal truth.

Jude 1:20 says this:

⁵ 1 Corinthians 14:2,4 (NKJV)

*But you, beloved, **building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,**²¹ keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*

The Greek word for building is *epoikodomeo* and it will not come as a shock to know the meaning is: “to build upon, to build up”.⁶ Let’s compare the word “building” in the Greek in Jude 1:20 to the word “edifies” in the Greek found in 1 Corinthians 14:4, which states, *He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself*. The Greek word for “edifies” is *oikodomeo*. It also means “to build (up from the foundation) to restore by building, to rebuild, or repair”.⁷ One builds himself up on his most holy faith. One edifies or builds up from the foundation when one prays in the Holy Spirit. Jude adds praying in the Holy Spirit, while 1 Corinthians 14:14 says, “*For if I pray in a tongue, **my Spirit prays...***” then in verse 15 he says, ***I will pray with the Spirit...***” The Holy Spirit is intertwined with our Spirit and we pray with our own Spirits *by* and *in* the Holy Spirit. The prayers we pray when our Spirit prays are led and originated by the Holy Spirit. We co-labor with the Holy Spirit by expressing the yearning of the Holy Spirit through our Spirit. I think it is important to also point out that the scripture says when one prays in the Spirit, “*you indeed give thanks well*”. You are building yourself up on your most holy faith, speaking mysteries to God and giving thanks well. You are edifying and constructing simultaneously as you pray in the Spirit.

Correcting the Abuse and Misuse

1 Corinthians 14 is all about the correct use and expression of all the gifts and especially that of Tongues and interpretation. By going deeper into this chapter, we can gain further clarity into the distinct difference between the individual gift of Tongues to all believers and the gift of Tongues for the edification of the church that is bestowed only on some.

When Paul was writing to Corinth, he was addressing a misuse of Tongues. His aim was to instruct them that the gifts should be expressed in love and order *in the church*. This was not a message stating that Tongues was to be diminished and ridiculed as so many today have done. In fact, the impartation of this gift was ridiculed the first moment that it was given to the church. Many who gathered for the Jewish festival mocked and ridiculed those expressing the gift as drunkards on the streets speaking gibberish.⁸ It is quite possible that this same criticism was given to the early Corinthian church who were misusing this gift in ways that seemed eccentric and erratic to observers. In the present church, many expressions can appear wildly demonstrative or even haphazard, but the depth and beauty of this gift needs to be taught not dismissed with man-made narratives from those who wish to rid the church of this vital gift. They do this largely because they

⁶ 1. “G2026 - Epoikodomeō - Strong’s Greek Lexicon (KJV),” Blue Letter Bible, accessed June 13, 2023, <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2026/kjv/tr/0-1/>.

⁷ 1. “G3618 - Oikodomeō - Strong’s Greek Lexicon (KJV),” Blue Letter Bible, accessed June 13, 2023, <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3618/kjv/tr/0-1/>.

⁸ Acts 2:13 (NIV)

are uncomfortable with the misuse or (in some cases) are simply uncomfortable with *any* manifestation of the gifts. Verses 6-12 of first Corinthians 14 demonstrate the emphasis of Paul's message:

But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with Tongues, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching? ⁷ Even things without life, whether flute or harp, when they make a sound, unless they make a distinction in the sounds, how will it be known what is piped or played? ⁸ For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle? ⁹ So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air. ¹⁰ There are, it may be, so many kinds of languages in the world, and none of them is without significance. ¹¹ Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to him who speaks, and he who speaks will be a foreigner to me. ¹² Even so you, since you are zealous for Spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel.

In verse 18 of the same chapter, he goes on to say,

*I thank my God I speak with Tongues more than you all; ¹⁹ **yet in the church** I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.*

The phrase "in the church" is the key to this entire message stated in 1 Corinthians 14. This is all about the gift of Tongues that is to operate for the edifying of the church. Look what he says immediately preceding this phrase, "*I thank my God I speak with Tongues more than you all.*"⁹ Paul is praying in his prayer language. He is speaking not to men but unto God. He is speaking the mysteries of Christ. He is building himself up on his most holy faith. He is doing so with possibly 10,000 words in Tongues. This benefits him in all these eternal ways but would be of no use for others in the church.

Paul culminates his discourse about the proper expression of the gift of Tongues *in the church* in verses 21-33. He states that Tongues should always be expressed with an interpreter so it has the same effect as prophesy for the benefit of the entire church.

*²² Therefore Tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe. ²³ **Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with Tongues, and there come in those who are uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are ^[OBJ] out of your mind?***

Paul "pulls no punches" with this statement that summarizes the entire discussion. When the church has no directive or interpreter when Tongues is expressed, the uninformed or

⁹ 1 Corinthians 14:18 (NKJV)

those who do not believe will inevitably say “you are out of your mind?” This is precisely what has been happening since Paul wrote this to Corinth. It is why Tongues has been resisted and ridiculed for centuries. The true intent of Paul was to instruct and correct, not diminish or extinguish. The purpose of this writing is to enhance and expound as Paul intended in his letter to Corinth.

²⁴ But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. ²⁵ And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you. ²⁶ How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. ²⁷ If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret. ²⁸ But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God. ²⁹ Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge. ³⁰ But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent. ³¹ For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged. ³² And the Spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. ³³ For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

Chapter Three

When the Perfect Comes

Now it is time to deal with an extremely important question surrounding Tongues:

4. What is cessationism?

There are many who consider the gift of Tongues to have passed away with the early church. Those who adopt this belief are known as Cessationists. The most common argument you will hear among those who fight so hard against the gift of Tongues is the narrative that it, as well as the other gifts, have passed away with the Apostles. In looking closely at their reasonings, we not only see that this viewpoint cannot possibly be accurate, but discover an even greater life-changing truth.

Many have heard conclusions that Cessationists have made but may not have heard reasonings that led to their conclusions that the gifts have passed away. It is mandatory that we see the “why” behind this perspective. By doing so, we can see a broad perspective and develop an irrefutable, solid foundation to our position that the gift of Tongues is alive and well today and has not “passed away”.

To refute this argument, we need to take a deep dive theologically to uncover these truths. This chapter might feel cumbersome due to this fact, but I think it important to do so to refute but also expound upon why this gift is magnificent. If you can persevere for just a few minutes, we will break into the open field of illumination soon and you will see that this exercise was well worth the attention.

There is a large contingent of believers, mostly from the various denominational ranks, that ardently oppose the gifts of the Spirit and especially Tongues. They base their opinions on the segment of scripture in 1 Corinthians 13:8-10,

Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are Tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰ But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

From these two verses, a litany of theology has been offered. There are assumptions made from these two verses without regard to context or the inspired revelation of the Holy Spirit. There are a few main viewpoints that have gained traction from a significant following who wish for the gifts to be eliminated.

Cessationism

The term “Cessationist” refers to someone who believes that the gifts of prophesy, Tongues, and knowledge have ceased and those who still practice them do so erroneously. Cessationism is built upon verse 10, “*But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.*” It is believed by these that adopt this position that “the perfect” has come and as such that which is in part has been done away. Acceptance of this notion is universal among both Cessationists and even non-Cessationists (those

who believe the gifts are still in operation). In other words, both those who believe the gifts have passed away and those who believe they are still valid agree when the perfect comes these gifts will cease, vanish, or pass away.

I will be referring to the work of Don Stewart and his article entitled: “What did Paul mean by the statement “When the perfect is come the Imperfect will be done away?”¹⁰ Mr. Stewart does not try to offer a conclusion, but rather summarizes all the views that have arisen regarding questions arising from 1 Corinthians 13:8-10. I would suggest you read this article if you are interested in understanding the various positions and arguments concerning this topic. Becoming acquainted with all the various views and the counterviews has its advantages. I will be referring to some of the points and counterpoints as it relates to what the Holy Spirit has directly revealed to me.

The Completion of the New Testament is “The Perfect”

The various views generally published on this subject center around discovering how “the perfect” is defined. What exactly is “the Perfect”?’ Two views are espoused more than any other. The first is that the perfect is the completion of the New Testament. It is believed that since 1 Corinthians was written around 56 A.D. this would predate several books of the New Testament: 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Titus, 1 and 2 Timothy, Philemon, Hebrews, Jude, 1 and 2 Peter and the Book of Revelation.¹¹ It is argued that God had not completed the divine revelation at the writing of 1 Corinthians and there was still much more for the church to understand. Once the Canon or New Testament was completed, the Cessationist believed that revelation was completed. According to this perspective “the perfect” is the completion of the New Testament. Subsequently, there is no need for the gift of prophecy, knowledge or Tongues.

There are many issues with this perspective, but the most important is that of context. Where is the context for such a view? Is there any context in the preceding or forthcoming chapters that even remotely suggest such a conclusion? No...absolutely none! The view that the completion of the New Testament is “the perfect” was simply a self-contrived invention to rid Tongues and the other gifts from the church. Don Stewart skillfully points this out in his article with the following:

Some feel the canon view was a reaction to the abuse of certain Spiritual gifts. Instead of insisting that those who exercised the gifts should simply obey the rules that are given in Scripture, it was stated that these sign-gifts ceased at the end of the first century. Declaring the gifts were no longer operating solved the problem

¹⁰ 1. Don Stewart, “What Did Paul Mean by the Statement,” Blue Letter Bible, June 9, 2020, https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/stewart_don/faq/speaking-in-tongues/05-what-does-paul-mean-by-when-the-perfect-has-come-the-imperfect-will-be-done-away.cfm.

¹¹ “Letters of Paul to the Corinthians,” Encyclopædia Britannica, accessed June 17, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Letter-of-Paul-to-the-Corinthians>.

*of abuse. This, therefore, is an example of coming up with a new doctrine to deal with a contemporary problem. This is not how doctrine should be developed.*¹²

In the remaining sections of this chapter, we will continue to answer question number four concerning cessationism, while also presenting additional questions that arise concerning this doctrinal belief.

Will “knowledge” cease like Tongues and Prophecy?

Before we transition, I wanted to bring out one more counterpoint to the Cessationist view that Tongues has ceased or will cease. Take notice of the fact that Paul says, prophecy will fail, Tongues will cease and *knowledge* will vanish away. “Knowledge” is put in the same category as Tongues and prophesy in that it is going to cease. You cannot separate it from the other two. Yet, it has a completely different expression than prophecy and Tongues. Prophecy and Tongues are clearly one of the nine gifts spoken of in 1 Corinthians 12. They are also clearly mentioned at the outset of chapter 13 establishing the context of the rest of the chapter. The phrase “Word of Knowledge” is mentioned among the other gifts in chapter 12, but Paul simply uses the overall term “knowledge” in chapter 13. The word “knowledge” used in chapter 13 is the Greek word *gnosis* and it means “knowledge signifies in general intelligence, understanding. The deeper more perfect and enlarged knowledge of Christianity such as belonging to the more advanced.”¹³ Paul is not referring to the specific gift of the word of knowledge described in chapter 12 but simply knowledge of the Christian faith. In 1 Corinthians 13:2, Paul mentions this knowledge in the same thought as understanding all mysteries. The word knowledge here is *gnosis* which is the same word and same context as 1 Corinthians 13:8-10.

What’s my point? How can we say that prophecy and Tongues will or has passed away without saying that knowledge will or has passed away? If you accept the passing away of Tongues and prophecy, then you also have to say that knowledge or “general intelligence, and understanding” or the “enlarged knowledge of Christianity such as belonging to the more advanced” has passed away. We can agree that the notion knowledge has or could pass away is absurd. Subsequently, if this is an absurd notion then so is the thought that Tongues and prophecy has or will cease. We cannot have it both ways. As Mr. Stewart said, we cannot contrive a doctrine to acquiesce to our opinions. The conclusion is, of course, knowledge is not passing away because this is not what Paul was speaking of in the first place.

You will see some earnestly hold on to their man-made doctrine by saying that Paul was speaking of *new* knowledge, not what was given at the completion of the New Testament. In other words, there will be no new revelation except that what has been revealed in the New Testament. Of course, we will never add anything to the scriptures, but further illumination of what the scripture has hidden within never cease. The Holy

¹² Don Stewart, “What Did Paul Mean by the Statement...” Blueletterbible.org

¹³ 1. “G1108 - GNŌSIS - Strong’s Greek Lexicon (KJV),” Blue Letter Bible, accessed June 15, 2023, <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g1108/kjv/tr/0-1/>.

Spirit is continually dispensing revelation of the written word. Cessationism is defense of the indefensible. It requires contortions and leaps without context to make this view align scripturally. This message of the gifts passing away will never resonate as truth in your deepest inner man.

Is “the perfect” referring to when we die?

Many cessationists believe that when Christ returns, we will no longer need the gifts. This view suggests “the perfect” is the appearing of Christ. Most default to this notion because it makes common sense, but it lacks contextual proof. Is there any context supporting that “the perfect” is when Christ returns? It becomes increasingly difficult to make this connection as the only possible conclusion. I use the term “only” because without a doubt when He returns, we shall see Him as He is and be changed. However, I think we miss an intense revelation when we dismiss this passage to that view only. If we limit ourselves to only this view, we will miss powerful insight that with more context will become a rich revelation of this beautiful gift.

Some would suggest that the passage in 1 Corinthians 13:12 does indeed provide context for this conclusion:

“For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.”

Many would also refer to 1 John 3:2 to support this position:

“... it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”

However, 1 Corinthians 13:11 precedes the reference in 1 Corinthians 13:12. Verse 11 says this, “When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.” Seeing Him face to face is connected to the analogy of going from childhood to manhood. This is a reference of growth and maturity not an instantaneous change in the blink of an eye. If it was referring to death or Christ’s return, then why would the context be about maturing from child to adult?

One other note that is worthy of mention is the phrase “the perfect” in the Greek. It is translated in the Greek as τὸ τέλειον (transliterated *to telion*). This is literally translated in English to mean “that which is perfect”.¹⁴ Don Stewart explains further:

It is argued that the “perfect” in this context cannot refer to Jesus Christ because the words “to telion” in the Greek are in the neuter gender. If Paul were

¹⁴ 1. “G5046 - Teleios - Strong’s Greek Lexicon (KJV),” Blue Letter Bible, accessed June 15, 2023, <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g5046/kjv/tr/0-1/>.

referring to a person, he would have not stated it in this way. Therefore, the subject must be something other than Christ.¹⁵

In summation, “the perfect” is not referring to when we die and meet Christ or when Christ returns. Continue reading for a thorough unveiling of what “the perfect” means and how it relates to the phrase “that which is in part will be done away” in 1 Corinthians 13:10. For now, we will continue to look at the phrase “face to face” and if it corroborates the notion that it is referring to Christ’s return.

Is “Face to Face” Only When Christ Returns?

1 Corinthians 13:12 says this, “*For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.*” Many surmise that this “face to face” encounter will either be when Christ returns or when we die. A deeper understanding of “face to face” allows us to unearth a significant revelation of Christ and our relationship to Him as promised earlier. This view has less connection with the end of our life and aligns with the context Paul refers to in 1 Corinthians 13:11 regarding maturity from child to adult.

Let’s look at 2 Corinthians 3:18,

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Let us compare this segment of scripture along with others with 1 Corinthians 13:12 and how we are to see the glory of the Lord with unveiled face. This was in reference to the law of Moses that veiled the liberty of the New Testament Spirit. In the same thought Paul begins to reveal the meaning of the glory of the Lord just a few verses later in 2 Corinthians 4:3-4,

*But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the **light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.***

To be unveiled is to receive by revelation the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, the revelation of Christ in us, the hope of glory. The mirror we are looking into is the revelation of the mystery of Christ. This mirror reveals Christ and we see the image of God and are changed into that same image.

A few verses later, in 2 Corinthians 4:6, we are given the same thought and context:

¹⁵ Ibid. Don Stewart.

*For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God **in the face of Jesus Christ.***

We with unveiled face can behold as in a mirror the depth of the glory of God which is the knowledge of the mystery of Christ. It is reflected in the **face of Jesus**. We can look in the face of Christ and be changed into His same image! This is not spoken in the context of when we get to heaven or when He returns because “...**we have this treasure in earthen vessels**, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.” We are looking intently into the face of Christ by the revelation of the cross being revealed in us. This light is changing us into His same image by the Holy Spirit not the law or our own efforts. In verses 10 and 11 of this same chapter, the scripture speaks of the life of Christ being manifested in our body or mortal flesh. These references to seeing the face of Christ is not in the context of our resurrected bodies but rather in our mortal bodies.

If you would like additional insight on this topic, then visit <https://speaktotherocktoday.com/watch/> to watch a four part teaching titled “Beholding as in a Glass”.

How could I see in a mirror dimly?

With these things firmly in your thinking, let us go back and read 1 Corinthians 13:12, “*For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face.*” This leads us to our next question: How could I see in a mirror dimly? To answer this question, let’s recap the context of what Paul was describing. The Spirit of the Lord changes me into the same image of Christ when I look into the mirror of the glory of God. This glory is the light of the gospel, the glory of Christ, and is the image of God. This is the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ that becomes a treasure in my earthen vessel. This ultimately leads to the life of Jesus being seen and realized in my mortal body.

How could you look in the glass clearly and see Christ in such a way as to be changed into the same image but also be looking into a glass dimly? How can these two realms possibly co-exist? We become what we behold. When we behold Christ, we become Christ. What was dim and vague becomes clear and tangible. We are changed into the same image of Christ when we behold the Word made flesh. This does not just occur when we are “face to face” in heaven but now in our mortal body or earthen vessel. The conclusion that Paul is referring to our death or Christ’s return in 1 Corinthians 13:12 is misrepresenting what 2 Corinthians 4:6 and 2 Corinthians 3:18 call a “face to face” encounter with Christ as looking into the Word and becoming more like Christ. If we determine that 1 Corinthians 13:12 is not found in our mortal bodies but in death, then scripture is not interpreting scripture. 2 Corinthians 4:10 says “that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.” By determining that “the perfect” is not referring to Christ and that the “face to face” encounter is looking at Christ in our mortal bodies, then we can surmise that 1

Corinthians 13:10 & 12 are not able to justify the end of Tongues as a gift to the body of Christ.

Is “the Perfect” describing a mature church?

A third view has emerged that reckons “the perfect” in 1 Corinthians 13:10 refers to the perfection or maturation of the church. This is the only view that has contextual validity.

But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. ¹² For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

This position states that “the perfect” is speaking of the church or body of Christ progressing from childhood to manhood. The dim mirror represents the child or infancy of the church, while the “face to face” symbolizes the church fully mature. In the light of what we just discussed, one can easily see that this viewpoint is both sensible and contextual. In my estimation, this is by far the most plausible definition of “the perfect”, but this gives rise to even more questions. What is full maturation of the church? Has this happened? Is this some future goal that one day the church will ascend and grasp? This view has validity at its core, but there is much more to see and understand.

Finally, all these views are seeking to define “the perfect” with the intent to prove the gifts have ceased. This was not the intent of Paul’s writings. I contend with all confidence that Paul was in no way trying to let us know when Tongues, prophecy and knowledge would cease. He is not saying this at all. Let’s discover more about what is meant by “the perfect” and how it effects the Body of Christ and the love of God.

Chapter Four

The Mystery of “When the Perfect Comes”

The Apostle Paul ends his discourse on the gifts of the Spirit with 1 Corinthians 12:31 which directly leads us into Chapter 13 of 1 Corinthians: “*But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.*” What is the “more excellent way” and what does this “more excellent way” teach us about the spiritual gifts, specifically the gift of Tongues?

The next words he writes are,

“Though I speak with the Tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. ² And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³ And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

He just finished writing about all the spiritual gifts. Then, he specifically mentions many of the gifts like Tongues, prophecy, and faith in the above passage which were the gifts he just spoke of in chapter 12. He also adds understanding “mysteries”, “all knowledge”, and the good works of “feeding the poor”. However, in mentioning the gifts again he does so this time to fully set them under the canopy of the love of God because if you have not *love* you are nothing. Apart from love, the gifts are useless.

The Love of God Defined

He goes on to clearly define love,

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵ does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶ does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.⁸ Love never fails.

Therefore, without question, the “more excellent way” is the love of God. This is the clear central thought behind Paul’s replies to the Corinthian church that was obviously not being manifested in the gifts as they were being expressed. Why else would he go to such great lengths and completely interrupt the flow of teachings concerning the various gifts with this impassioned revelation of the love of God? He then puts an exclamation on the entire thought by proclaiming “*Love never fails.*” We, by necessity, must read the next verses in the continuation of this thought process. It cannot be taken out of this context to suddenly gain a life of its own and be about the gifts passing away. One cannot view this next section of scripture in a vacuum void of the previous thoughts.

But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are Tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰ But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

Those who would wish to convince others that the gifts have passed away focus fully on this objective and the previous context of love is unable to penetrate their thinking. Subsequently leaving them bereft of the far more impacting message that the Holy Spirit is trying to deliver to the church through the Apostle Paul.

Let us begin to make some definitive statements at this point in plain talk. The Corinthian church was beginning to operate in all the gifts of the Spirit. However, they were doing so in ways not motivated and originated by love. Paul was trying to teach them the “more excellent way”! The gifts outside of love will become nothing. They will fail. This word fail is *ekipto* in the Greek. It is the same word used when Paul wrote, *Love never fails*. It is defined as “to fall out of, to fall down from, to fall off”. A more poignant definition as it relates to this passage is “to fall powerless, to fall to the ground, to be without effect.”¹⁶

Paul says that Tongues will cease, prophecy will fail, and knowledge will vanish away. “Vanish away” is the word *katargeo* and its meaning is virtually a synonym of *ekipto*. *Katargeo* is defined as “to deprive of force influence or power, idle, inactivate, inoperative.”¹⁷ The word cease is *pauo* and it means to “*make cease or desist, to restrain a thing or person from something.*”¹⁸

I thought it necessary to define these words because those who would try to dismiss the gifts virtually tie themselves in a knot trying to make these words say more than they do. For example, the Cessationists point out the word *pauo* or “cease” is the verb used in the middle voice which indicates they will cease of themselves as opposed to the influence of an outside force. This somehow, in their view, really points the finger at getting rid of Tongues. It's all such Christian psycho-babble full of man's wisdom that does not resonate as truth because the gifts passing away was never his point. Therefore, the need to formulate a doctrine that argues for Tongues ending or ceasing excludes Paul's overriding context of love. Paul is not contending that the gifts will cease, vanish or end. **His point is that the gifts will cease if they do not originate in love.** The spiritual gifts will become nothing. They will fail. They will fall to the ground as useless and ineffective. They will be bereft of power and have no effect. Tongues without love will cease altogether. Therefore, Tongues will cease or *pauo* if they are not demonstrated

¹⁶ 1. “G4098 - Piptō - Strong's Greek Lexicon (NIV),” Blue Letter Bible, accessed June 15, 2023, <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4098/niv/mgnt/0-1/>.

¹⁷ 1. “G2673 - Katargeō - Strong's Greek Lexicon (NIV),” Blue Letter Bible, accessed June 15, 2023, <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2673/niv/mgnt/0-1/>.

¹⁸ 1. “G3973 - Pauō - Strong's Greek Lexicon (NIV),” Blue Letter Bible, accessed June 15, 2023, <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3973/niv/mgnt/0-1/>.

and exercised in love, not because they will vanish or cease on their own because the canon is complete and these gifts are no longer necessary. Love is the root of all spiritual gifts. God is love and the Spirit of God will not continue to motivate the gifts unless they are expressed in the “more excellent way”. They will just simply wither because they have become empty, futile and ineffective. *This* is the message that the Apostle Paul is trying to relay. It has nothing to do with *when* the gifts will pass away. The gifts will never pass away until the end of the age.

The “More Excellent Way” is Established as the Root of the Gifts

Let’s remember that the segmentation of scripture into chapter and verse was a later occurrence after the Canon was formed.¹⁹ Therefore, Paul’s integration of the nature of love is not a separate thought but a continuation of his critique on the expression of the gifts. He begins with 1 Corinthians 13 saying, *“Though I speak with Tongues, though I prophesy, though I have all faith but not love, I am nothing.”* He says that love never fails, but these gifts will fail if not originated in love.

It is in this flow and context that Paul then says, *“But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.”* This “more excellent way” is the love of God. He moves into chapter 13 to establish love as the origin and catalyst of all the gifts.

Let me repeat the sequence again communicated in chapter 13. He has just mentioned that you can speak with Tongues of men and angels. You can prophesy. You can have all knowledge and know all mysteries. You can feed the poor and do all manner of sacrifice, but if you do not have love, you are nothing. Then he offers the characteristics of love that should accompany the gifts as they are expressed.

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵ does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶ does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.⁸ Love never fails.

Some might say at this point, "Wait a minute. Paul says in the very next breath, *“For we know in part and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰ But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.”* Yes, he does, but the part that shall be done away simply cannot be the gifts and "the perfect" cannot be the completion of the New Testament, when we die or the return of Christ. You cannot separate these verses from all that was said previously. Rather, we must interpret, *“For we know in part and*

¹⁹ 1. “How and When Was the Bible Divided into Chapters and Verses?,” How and when was the Bible divided into chapters and verses? | Bible.org, accessed June 15, 2023, <https://bible.org/question/how-and-when-was-bible-divided-chapters-and-verses>.

we prophesy in part. ¹⁰ But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away... by what was said previously concerning love.

It is obvious that the Corinthian church was not expressing the gifts in the love of God. Look at the points of emphasis in chapter 12. He goes to great lengths to reveal how the body of Christ is like our human bodies. Each part is vital and integral to the proper function of the whole. He then reveals the root of division and issues that arise. Please look with me at 1 Corinthians 12:20-26:

But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. ²¹ And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." ²² No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary.

Why would Paul feel it necessary to speak this way unless this unbalanced viewpoint was present in the church at Corinth? Those in the church who were operating in certain gifts had begun to deem one more important or worthy than another. Yet, Paul corrects this mindset by saying all the gifts come from one Spirit, though there may be great diversity of manifestation and operation. Those gifts that are more visible and demonstrative can easily be seen as more important. Therefore, an unintended caste system or hierarchy is born that can quench the Spirit.

²³ And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, ²⁴ but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, ²⁵ that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. ²⁶ And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

Why would Paul say these things, "...there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another."? This is because there were schisms or divisions in the church. A hierarchy was being established as the members were beginning to assess how important each of them were. This is the antithesis to the love of God and would diminish the spiritual gifts truest intent.

All parts are equally necessary and each part functions in its fullest capacity only while being connected and honoring the other parts. If one part begins to take preeminence above the other parts, this part will become ineffective and will not function to its fullest measure. The emphasis is on each part bringing its contribution so the body functions and is expressed to its created purpose. Just as each member cannot deem his/her gifting above another and say, "I have no need of you." Neither can any member consider their part as less significant to realizing the fullness of Christ manifested in His body, the church. Paul was addressing going off the ditch on both sides of the road.

If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? ¹⁸ But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. ¹⁹ And if they were all one member, where would the body be?²⁰

Not too long ago, the Lord revealed to me how the love of God described in 1 Corinthians 13 effects the body of Christ pertaining to the gifts in 1 Corinthians 12. Like some, I was baffled by 1 Corinthians 13:8-12 and had concluded that "the perfect" was when we die or Jesus returns. This was the case until I had a radical shift in my paradigm of the how the body of Christ is fitly joined together in love.

I share this benchmark change in a series of video devotionals titled "Voice of Today". You can click this [link](#) or visit speaktotherocktoday.com > blog > scroll to bottom of page > choose page 3 > and start at Day 21 thru Day 26. If you would like additional insight on how the Body of Christ functions as the fullness of Christ, then I would encourage you to access these teachings. It was a life changing insight that has changed my entire personality and approach to relationships. It was within this life-altering change that I began to look deeper into this passage concerning the gifts and the love of God.

Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

Is Paul saying that the gifts will cease? Absolutely not. **He is saying that which is in part will be done away.** You might argue, "Yes, but that which is in part is the actual gifts, right? We are about to go on an exciting, revelatory journey that the Holy Spirit led me on that emphasizes the capacity and grandeur of Christ's love.

Understanding of "That Which is in Part Will be Done Away"

To truly understand what part that is to be done away, we must look closer at chapter 12 and make a revelatory connection with the fourth chapter of Ephesians. First, let us clearly establish a relationship with the word "perfect" and other corroborating places in scripture. I trust we have established beyond a doubt that it is not the completion of the New Covenant because there is zero context for this perspective.

However, the context of love at this point in chapter 13 is irrefutable. Is the word "love" ever used in connection with the word "perfect"? I would say so! Please meditate on the

²⁰ 1 Corinthians 12:15-19 (NKJV)

following passages to make a definitive connection between *telios* (“perfect”) and the love of God.

*If we love one another, God abides in us, and **His love has been perfected in us.***²¹

***Love has been perfected among us** in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.*²²

*There is no fear in love; but **perfect love** casts out fear,*²³

And most importantly:

*But above all these things put on **love, which is the bond of perfection.***²⁴

These passages of scripture will have great significance as we move ahead. It is important to review these passages because we are trying to understand what is meant by “the perfect”. To unveil the true revelation of “the Perfect” and to understand the part that shall be done away with, we must first establish these truths. Now, let us go to Ephesians 4 and make the most dramatic connection to understand the “Perfect” and the use of the word “parts”.

Connecting Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 13

On so many occasions the Apostle Paul would speak of the same subjects in various places in scripture, but would do so with slightly different words. He often added thoughts in some places that were not in others. I keep referring to Paul as the author, but as we know, it is the Holy Spirit writing *through* Paul. There are things said in one place that add color, texture, and context to places said in another. The Holy Spirit paints a tapestry from a much higher viewpoint. You have heard the phrase, “the view from 30,000 feet”. When you are on the ground and viewing something below, sometimes going up higher allows you to see the big picture that is being painted or constructed.

We are going to take a close look at the fourth chapter of Ephesians. What you will begin to see emerge is an identical flow in chapter 12 and 13 of 1 Corinthians. As we have established, the message of 1 Corinthians chapter 12 and 13 are all about the various parts of the body of Christ expressing the gifts of the Spirit in the love of God. We have also established an unmistakable correlation between the word “Perfect” and that of “perfect love”.

²¹ 1 John 4:12 (NKJV)

²² 1 John 4:17 (NKJV)

²³ 1 John 4:18 (NKJV)

²⁴ Colossians 3:14 (NKJV)

Please take a little time with me and let's read through the first 16 verses of Ephesians 4 together, while connecting them with 1 Corinthians 12 and 13. We will toggle back and forth from Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 13. This will require a bit of academic rigor, but hang with me because it will be worth it! Comparison of these two chapters is the only way to truly understand “the Perfect”.

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, ²with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, ³endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Look at verse 2-3, “...bearing with one another in love, ³endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” The context of love and unity is established from the outset. Compare verses 4-6 above with these verses from 1 Corinthians 12:4-6,

There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. ⁶And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.

Now he begins to introduce the gifts in the same way that he did in 1 Corinthians 12.

*But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. ⁸Therefore He says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, **And gave gifts to men.**”*

Is it not insignificant that the first thing that Christ did after He ascended to His place of dominion was to give these gifts to men. So, the context is clear. He is now speaking of the spiritual gifts. Notice he says, “But to **each one** of us grace was given.”

Let's toggle between Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 12:6-11.

In 1 Corinthians 12:6-11, he also establishes the gifts given to *each one*. It is expressed as *to each one* and *to another* and *to another* and finally *to each one individually as He wills*. Let's read the entire passage.

*“And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. ⁷But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to **each one** for the profit of all: ⁸for **to one is given** the word of wisdom through the Spirit, **to another** the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, ⁹**to another** faith by the same Spirit, **to another** gifts of healings by the same Spirit, ¹⁰**to another** the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of Spirits, to another different kinds of Tongues, **to another** the interpretation of Tongues. ¹¹But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing **to each one individually** as He wills.*

What is another way to express “to another”, “each one”, or “individually”? Are they not all the **parts** of the body of Christ? Parts that must come together for us to realize the fullness of Christ!

By seeing the depth of the connection of Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians chapters 12 and 13, we see a much greater revelation than either could reveal as isolated thoughts. Paul is speaking of the exact same subject in both places, but he is inspired by the Holy Spirit in such a way as to add illuminating elements in one passage and then also create a life changing revelation in the other passage. I have found this progression to be hidden all over the Word of God, and how it shows the magnificence of the Holy Spirit and the true inspiration that this is indeed the Word of God. Now, let’s return to Ephesians 4:9-10:

⁹ (Now this, “He ascended”—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰ He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

Though Paul is much briefer in his emphasis on the gifts in Ephesians 4 the context is nonetheless established. Now, the emphasis moves from the gifts themselves to their purpose in the body of Christ to reveal the fullness of Christ. If you will recall 1 Corinthians 12, Paul did the very same thing when he began to connect the parts of the body with the gifts they bring to the body. I will not list those passages here again but you remember, “...*And the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you”, nor again the head to the feet.*” Once again, I interject this here to show the contextual connectivity of Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 12.

Look closely at what is said in verses 11-12 of Ephesians 4:

¹¹ And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

The gifts are for the edifying or building up of the body of Christ. It is about the parts coming together to reveal the fullness of Christ. This becomes so vital to understanding “the Perfect” which we are about to see. Remember Ephesians 1:22-23, “*And He put all things under His feet and gave Him to be head over all things to **the church**, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*” This one of the most powerful and illuminating statements in all the Word of God. The fullness of Christ is realized in all the individual parts that make up His body coming together into the unity of the faith, in the perfect bond of love. This is how we experience the fullness of Christ.

“The Perfect” Revealed

Let's continue by looking at Ephesians 4:13-14 and begin to see the unmistakable connection of 1 Corinthians 13:10-12, "...till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a **perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;**" Paul has just said that Christ has given grace in the form of gifts to men. He appointed some to be Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers for the **perfecting** of the saints until we all come into the *unity* of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God. What is the next phrase? **To a perfect man.** This is magnificent! Who or what is the "perfect man"? It is not an individual. It is the unity of the body of Christ realized in the faith and knowledge of the Son of God! **This is "the perfect" referred to when Paul said, "But when that which is perfect has come."**

In Ephesians 4, Paul begins speaking of "love, unity, bond of peace, one body, one Spirit, to gifts given to the body, to perfecting of the saints unto a Perfect Man" which is the stature and measure of the fullness of Christ. This is the exact progression he takes in 1 Corinthians 12 and 13. Please attend to the very next verse in Ephesians 4:14 and compare with 1 Corinthians 13:11 listed below:

Ephesians 4:14 (NKJV)

14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,

1Corinthians 13:10-11 (NKJV)

But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

Ladies and Gentlemen, "the perfect" is the unity of the body of Christ. The gifts, operating in the love of God, are the vehicle that bring this unity to fruition. The gifts are perfecting the saints in the faith and knowledge of the Son of God to full unity in Christ. **The "parts" that are done away with are the individual parts that are making room for the fullness and wholeness of Christ.** The only way Christ can be fully realized in oneness and unity is when the body of Christ is unified in love. We all have a part but we only exercise that individual part. The part that is to be done away is just that... *the part*. The part is superseded by the "Perfect Man" revealed in the stature

and fullness of Christ. The perfect is the parts coming together in love to reveal the fullness of Christ. *“And He put all things under His feet and gave Him to be head over all things to **the church,** ²³ **which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.**”*

Look at this next verse to establish, validate, and confirm these things, *“... but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— ¹⁶ from whom **the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies,** according to the **effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.**²⁵*

The Whole is Greater than the Sum of its Parts

All the components to establish the connection between 1 Corinthians 12-13 and Ephesians 4 are summarized in verses 15-16 above. Look closely at these words that are prominent in both passages: “gifts”, “love”, and “growth”, while the phrases “parts knit together by what each joint or part supplies”, “no longer children”, “perfecting of the saints”, “unto a perfect man in the stature of the fullness of Christ”. All these concepts are deeply rooted in both places in scripture. The word “joint” means “bond, connection, to fasten together...as a ligament.”²⁶ What is the perfect bond? *But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.*²⁷ In chapter 12 of 1 Corinthians, Paul begins the letter speaking of all the gifts that Christ has graced the church. He details them all one by one. He calls each individual member as absolutely necessary. He warns that one part cannot say to another they are more important or have no need of another part no matter how insignificant they believe the part to be. Likewise, no part should view themselves as less than or not as important as another. We are all members of one body, one Spirit, one Father of us all.

For this reason, there should be no divisions. We should have the same care for one another, if one suffers, we all suffer, if one rejoices, we all rejoice. We are the body of

²⁵ Ephesians 4:15-16 (NKJV)

²⁶ 1. “G860 - Haphē - Strong’s Greek Lexicon (NIV),” Blue Letter Bible, accessed June 16, 2023, <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g860/niv/mgmt/0-1/>.

²⁷ Colossians 3:14 (NKJV)

Christ, yet members individually. This is love and this is the “more excellent way” that Paul begins to express more fully in chapter 13 offering us the finite aspects of the love of God. He stops the emphasis on the gifts themselves for a moment to interject the love of God into them or they will be ineffective and fail. He then focuses on how love, the bond of perfection, will weave all the parts that were being expressed as just a part into the beautiful tapestry of the fullness of Christ.

It is in this union that the greater works are waiting to be revealed. You have heard the phrase, “The Whole is Greater than the Sum of its Parts”. There is no more prolific way to describe the body of Christ and what the Holy Spirit is trying to teach us than this statement. Parts of anything left to themselves will *never* reveal or express what could be expressed when all parts are fitly joined together. This creates something that could not be revealed if the parts were left alone. For example, if you tried baking a cake and laid out all the ingredients, you would notice that each ingredient left to its own is limited. Each ingredient like baking powder, flour, sugar, eggs, etc. is only useful when it is joined with the other ingredients. One ingredient may seem more important than another, but the truth is you’re not getting a cake without all of them mixed or joined together. I think we can all agree that the cake is far better than the individual parts combined to make the cake. When we submit to one another in love and deference to all the gifts represented by the individual parts of the body of Christ, we become an expression of the fullness of Christ. This full expression will be unlike anything we could have ever experienced if we remain separate. Strongholds that would not move when we were trying on our own will be destroyed. Realms of life will begin to emerge that we simply could not have received on our own. This union is “the Perfect” and all the individual parts will pass away, giving full sway to the fullness of Christ, that can only be expressed in the unity of His body.

Chapter Five

Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Let us now answer the fifth question that we posed at the outset of this writing.

5. Is it true that you do not have the Holy Spirit if you don't speak in tongues?

If you ask someone if they have the Holy Spirit or have been baptized in the Holy Spirit, it is often met with offense or nervous admittance. If you ask someone who has been born again, they will look at you with a scowl and say, "Of course! I was saved when I was 9 years old." Let it be spoken here without reservation or question that if one has believed and confessed Christ they did so by the Holy Spirit and are sealed with that same Spirit. This confirms that they have received the Holy Spirit. Yet, the scriptures clearly speak of receiving the Holy Spirit *after* you believe in power. It speaks of the Spirit coming upon you. In addition, when this occurred it was always with the evidence of speaking in Tongues. This is what the scriptures teach without argument.

You Shall Receive Power

What is the difference between believing on Christ by the Holy Spirit and receiving the Holy Spirit after you believe with the evidence of speaking in Tongues. Jesus said it had to do with power. Let's look at Acts 1:4-5, and verse 8.

*And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, which He said you have heard from Me; 5 for **John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.** But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

The people assembled appeared to already be believers.

And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas the son of James. 14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and

supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.²⁸

The Disciples were in the upper room among the 120 who received the Holy Spirit. Just prior to this in John 20:22 it says,

*So, Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” ²² And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, “**Receive the Holy Spirit.***

Jesus breathed on them and they received the Holy Spirit. However, he tells them later to wait in Jerusalem until they received the Promise of the Father. The Disciples had received the Holy Spirit, but Jesus said they needed to be “Baptized in the Holy Spirit” later. Jesus said, “***you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.*** Then He went on to say, *But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you...*” The Disciples **received the Holy Spirit** in John 20:22 but they were **baptized in the Holy Spirit** in Acts 2 and **received power when the Holy Spirit came upon them.**

There appears to be a distinct difference between the Holy Spirit leading them to believe in Jesus and the Holy Spirit imparting them power that gifts them with Tongues or the “Baptism in the Holy Spirit”. Jesus was well aware that He had breathed on them the Holy Spirit, but still knew they needed to be “baptized in the Holy Spirit” to receive power they did not yet possess. The Holy Spirit came upon them as a result of this separate experience of being “baptized in the Holy Spirit”.

This Occurred More Than Once

Some may argue at this point that this was the first release of the Spirit and from now on once you believe you will automatically receive the Holy Spirit. This first instance was not a single occurrence. This same pattern happened repeatedly.

⁴ Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, ¹⁵ who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶ For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷ Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.²⁹

²⁸ Acts 1:13-14 (NKJV)

²⁹ Acts 8:14-16 (NKJV)

Here we have, once again, people who had received the word of God but had not received the Holy Spirit. Once they received this power, there had to be some kind of outward manifestation because Simon the Sorcerer wanted to purchase this power.

And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, ¹⁹ saying, "Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit."³⁰

Can it All Happen at Once?

Can you receive salvation as well as the "baptism in the Holy Spirit" upon conversion? Yes, because it happened this way when Peter preached the gospel to Cornelius in Acts chapter 10:44-46:

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. ⁴⁵ And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. ⁴⁶ For they heard them speak with Tongues and magnify God.

"Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

I offer you one more piece of evidence that this phenomenal gift of the Holy Spirit is received by faith. Acts 19:1-7 states the following:

*And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples ² he said to them, "**Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?**" So they said to him, "**We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.**" ³ And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism." ⁴ Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a*

³⁰ Acts 1:18-19 (NKJV)

baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.” ⁵ *When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.* ⁶ ***And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with Tongues and prophesied.*** ⁷ *Now the men were about twelve in all.*

All these men were believers in Christ, yet none had received this experience that was given at Pentecost until Paul laid his hands on them to receive.

Chapter Six

The Purpose and Depth of Praying in the Spirit

Let us now attend to the final question that we posed in Chapter 1:

6. Why is this gift given to the church today?

We have mentioned previously some of the powerful expressions of praying in the Holy Spirit.

For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.³¹

He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself,³²

When you pray in the spirit you are speaking mysteries. The word “mysteries” literally means “secrets”.³³ Do you think the Holy Spirit chose to use the word “mysteries” arbitrarily? The word “mysteries” is chosen because when we pray in the spirit, we are voicing secrets and mysteries of the depths of God. What mysteries do you suppose we are probing? It is no coincidence that Paul uses the word mystery to describe the revelation of Christ in us the hope of Glory. This mystery has no end and is unsearchable in our own thoughts and words.

What Mystery are We Praying?

*I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, **the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.** ²⁷ To them God willed to make known what are **the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.**³⁴*

When we pray in tongues the Holy Spirit is revealing the depths of the mystery of Christ and how the depths of the cross are applied to our every need. When we pray in the Holy Spirit, the Spirit is searching our hearts and all things that Christ has accomplished for us. He is searching the inheritance of Christ, the deep things of God. Things that we have not seen, heard, or even thought. These things have been beyond our previous comprehension but not beyond the searching of the Holy Spirit.

9 But as it is written:

³¹ 1 Corinthians 14:2 (NKJV)

³² 1 Corinthians 14:4 (NKJV)

³³ 1. “G3466 - Mystērion - Strong’s Greek Lexicon (NIV),” Blue Letter Bible, accessed June 17, 2023, <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3466/niv/mgnt/0-1/>.

³⁴ Colossians 1:25-27 (NKJV)

*“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,
Nor have entered into the heart of man
The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”*

10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. ¹¹ *For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.* ¹² *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.* ¹³ *These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*³⁵

Of course, the Spirit searches all things, the deep things, in ways other than just praying in the spirit but when we pray in the spirit, we can rest assured we are unveiling what our eyes have not seen, nor our ears have heard, nor has it even entered our thoughts. Then it goes on to say, *“These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”*³⁶ Many other translations essentially say, “expressing the spiritual depths of God with the spiritual words of God”. Still, other translations add, “speaking spiritual things to spiritual people”.

*...of which depths we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual depths with spiritual words.*³⁷

The Spirit Makes Intercession

This truth dovetails into Romans 8:26-28,

Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. ²⁷ *Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.* ²⁸ *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

This is one of the most powerful passages in all of scripture. When we do not know what or how to pray (which is often) *“...the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”*³⁸ Of course, there are those who do not recognize

³⁵ 1 Corinthians 2:9-13 (NKJV)

³⁶ 1 Corinthians 2:13 (NKJV)

³⁷ 1 Corinthians 2:13 (Legacy Standard Bible)

³⁸ Romans 8:26 (NKJV)

this passage as praying in tongues but the references are unmistakable. The Spirit Himself is praying! He is making intercession for us with groanings which means “to sigh as an expression of reaching for a deep desire.”³⁹ It represents deep desires of a place you long for but do not know how to grasp. 2 Corinthians 5:2 depicts this truth, “*For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven,*” These longings are so deep you cannot offer words to express them. So, the Spirit Himself searches your heart. He is searching the depth of your need. He then searches all things, the deep things of our inheritance in Christ. We know that the Spirit searches *all things*. All things are our inheritance in Christ!

Remember Romans 8:32,

*He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, **how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?***

He knows the mind of the Spirit as He searches the deep things of God. He knows the will of God for your deep sighs and longings. He now brings forth the voice of the deep things of God that have been given to us by inheritance. This voice is the intercession of the Spirit expressed by praying in the Spirit. The voice from this beautiful treasure is praying in other tongues.

I included the famous Romans 8:28 in this passage because you cannot possibly truly understand the phrase “All Things Work Together for Good” unless you understand the context with which it was said. There is so much to be said on this vast subject that we cannot include here, but you are encouraged to visit <https://speaktotherocktoday.com/watch/> or go to [Speaktotherocktoday.com](https://speaktotherocktoday.com) > Watch > “All Things Work Together”.

The Magnificence of Groans Expressing Deep Longings

With these things settled in our minds, let us move forward into the most powerful aspect of praying in Tongues. Groanings or deep longings are compelled by the first fruit of the Spirit given to us. It is the voice of the unseen. The voice of His resurrection life being joined to our mortal lives. It becomes the voice of the unseen hope that is beyond natural hope. It is the voice of an eternal salvation already finished, completed, and ready to be possessed. It is the eternal weight of glory of an unseen hope that surpasses everything that is seen. It is the voice of His resurrection life being manifested in our mortal lives. It is the voice of all that is mortal being swallowed up of life. The voice of Christ in us, the hope of Glory. These phrases may seem lofty or even unattainable, but I promise if you avail yourself to additional teachings from <https://speaktotherocktoday.com/watch/> you will be ignited with the wonder and magnificence of this incredible gift. We encourage you to refer to the teaching titled “Behold as in a Glass (Part 4), The Voice of the Unseen, and also the e-book *Carrying*

³⁹ 1. “G4726 - Stenagmos - Strong’s Greek Lexicon (NIV),” Blue Letter Bible, accessed June 17, 2023, <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4726/niv/mgnt/0-1/>.

His Death. Upon reading this book about tongues and viewing these accompanying messages, the entire picture will be borne in your heart and you will never be the same again!

I have made bold statements that groanings are deep longings, and I referenced 2 Corinthians 5:2 to support this view. Upon reading verses 1-3 we see that it says,

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. ² Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, ³ because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked.

One most certainly would draw the conclusion that this longing is simply a desire for our heavenly body in the day of redemption. He is talking of when we die and receive our redemptive bodies, however, a closer look reveals he is saying far more. He is in fact using the reality of one day receiving our resurrected bodies as a comparison with the resurrection life of Jesus that is made manifest *in* our mortal bodies. **He is comparing this longing with the longing we have while still in this body!** The Apostle Paul does this on other occasions as well, specifically in Romans 8. I speak in detail of this in the other teachings referenced above. Suffice to say, Paul speaks clearly of our longings for our eternal house in heaven but does so in the context of our longings when beset with distress, perplexity, persecution and being cast down. It is vital to clearly see the context with which Paul writes 2 Corinthians 5:1-3. It is said in the same thought and flow as what was written in chapter 4. Again, Paul is not writing in chapter and verse. He is writing in the flow of the Spirit. These are the phrases Paul uses in 2 Corinthians 4 to describe all the things that afflict us in this life: “pressed on every side”, “perplexed” (which means you do not know what to do), “persecuted”, “cast down” (which means crest fallen, thrown down to the ground, it can mean depressed).⁴⁰

Let us look a little further in 2 Corinthians 5:4-7,

***For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.** ⁵ Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. ⁶ So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. ⁷ For we walk by faith, not by sight.*

Earthen Vessels, Our body, & Mortal Flesh

At the risk of being repetitive, I offer this short summary of what is occurring in 2 Corinthians 4 and 5. 2 Corinthians 5 is spoken in response to deeply connected truths

⁴⁰ 1. “G639 - Aporeō - Strong’s Greek Lexicon (NIV),” Blue Letter Bible, accessed June 17, 2023, <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g639/niv/mgnt/0-1/>.

1. “G2598 - Kataballō - Strong’s Greek Lexicon (NIV),” Blue Letter Bible, accessed June 17, 2023, <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2598/niv/mgnt/0-1/>.

expressed in chapter 4. Paul establishes in 2 Corinthians 4:6-18 what is to be seen in detail in 2 Corinthians 5:1-8. He first speaks of receiving a **treasure in earthen vessels**, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. Then says, “we are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed. He speaks of “...always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the **life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body**” and then immediately says, “For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, that **the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh**. The message is firmly established. Paul is speaking of **earthen vessels, in our body, our mortal flesh**. He is *not* setting a context of going to heaven when we die. This message does *not* change as we flow into chapter 5 and its subsequent developing revelation. As he moves through his illumination in verse 17-18 he writes, “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, ¹⁸ while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

Look on the Unseen

In chapter 4 of 2 Corinthians, Paul is saying, we are pressed and persecuted. However, amid these things the light of the knowledge of the glory of God emerges. We are seeing an eternal weight of glory in the unseen. Look on the unseen, not the seen. Look on the eternal weight of glory of what your faith is seeing. Yearn for it, deeply desire it. Are we to believe Paul is suddenly going to tell us that none of these incredible things will happen until we die? Paul gives these impassioned pleas to look on the unseen not the seen so that we can experience this in our “mortal bodies” or “earthen vessels”.

Paul is simply saying, “Hey guys, we know that when the...earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. We know that when we die all will be well, but we are pressed *now* in this body! We are perplexed, persecuted, and cast down *now*!” The resurrection life of Jesus is waiting to be manifest in your mortal life! Meditate on this next verse and let the light of this truth illuminate your entire being to where when you feel perplexed, persecuted, and cast down, you can begin to experience the life of God in your flesh.

2 Corinthians 5:4 says this, “**For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.**”

Another way Paul could say this is, “we are groaning to be clothed with the same glory as that which will be given to us when we die now in this mortal flesh. We are groaning for this resurrection life in the face of the pressing. We are not groaning to be unclothed and die so we can experience His life. No, we are groaning while still in this tent or mortal body and not be unclothed.

What is he saying in plain talk?

We are groaning for Christ's resurrection life in this body **not** when we die. We do not want to have to die to experience the eternal weight of glory. *No!* Rather, we desire to be swallowed up and joined to the resurrection of Christ ***in this mortal body*** by faith.

Please remember the continuation of the context from chapter 4, "earthen vessels", "in our body", or "in our mortal flesh". Paul offers this analogy because he knows we will experience this when we die. However, he wants us to know that through faith in the death and resurrection of Christ "mortality [can] be swallowed up by life", or our mortal bodies can experience the resurrection life of Christ by faith. What is available to us at the redemption of our body is available to us now through faith in His death and resurrection.

Of course, the redemption of our bodies only takes place when we die, but the life from our inner man that will manifest in our bodies is available to us now. Only the Holy Spirit can cause us to grasp and possess the life that is available to us while still in this mortal body through faith. May the Holy Spirit teach us all what life looks like when the life of Jesus is made manifest in our mortal flesh. So many are putting off to the afterlife what is to be possessed in our mortal lives now.

Look at this next verse in 2 Corinthians 5:5: "*He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, **who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.***" The Spirit is given to you as a down payment on your inheritance. This is the Spirit that is groaning in you for your full possession of your inheritance. Let's continue in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 verse 6: *So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. ⁷ For we walk by faith, not by sight.* He concludes this thought by saying all of this is through faith in the cross of Christ. It is possible through faith in Him.

There is so much to say about all these things and they are finitely addressed in the other teachings. It is my purpose to demonstrate the magnificent role that praying in Tongues has as we face pressing, perplexity, and persecution.

When we are pressed, perplexed, persecuted and cast down, we carry in our mortal bodies the death of Jesus; His death *to* those things. He has gone before us and experienced every feeling, emotion, pain, torment and anguish that these things could bring to our lives. He has died to all these things and we are conformed to His death. If we have died with Him, we shall also live with Him. As faith is released in His death for us, His resurrection life is now working in our mortal bodies. This is the New Testament faith delivered to the church.

This faith in Christ, in *His* death and *His* resurrection, will begin to reveal an unseen picture of being joined to *His* life manifested in our mortal bodies. This can happen right now amid the pressing. This picture of resurrection power in your imagination becomes the "*far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*".

The Voice of the Unseen

The Holy Spirit desires for you to focus on the eternal glory of the unseen. He is showing you the vision of what being raised together with Christ looks like customized to your specific need. If your finances are a wreck, He wants to give you the resurrection vision of Christ's abundance flowing to you. If your body is full of disease, He wants to establish the unseen vision of your body full of life and health. Whatever the malady, there is an eternal weight of glory in the unseen place of faith in Christ. This is an expression of the well-known promise, "Christ in you, the hope of glory".

This unseen glory, if contended for and stood upon against the raging of what is seen, will soon far exceed the affliction that was once heavy and formidable. Grasp and contend for this reality and as you do the raging of the unseen will become momentary and light in comparison with the eternal weight of glory of the unseen as it grows brighter and brighter.

Now...there is a ***voice of the unseen realm!*** This voice is the voice of groans of the Spirit that is making intercession for you. This voice has searched *all things*, even the deep things of God. This Spirit searches the depths of your heart and now accesses the mind of the Spirit and the will of God from the deep things of God. These things now are spoken in the language of the Spirit beyond your existing comprehension, for the purpose of bringing forth the salvation of Christ on your behalf. This is all being produced out of your mouth as you utilize and activate the gift of speaking in Tongues. You will also begin to hear the words of the Spirit become the words of your understanding as illumination begins to take place and you begin to interpret the mysteries coming out of your spirit. Now you are expressing the depths of God with the words of God.

The unseen realms of the finished salvation of Christ are waiting to be released by faith to bring deliverance, peace and life to your pressing, perplexity, and persecution. This process all originates as you articulate the voice of the Spirit by the wondrous gift of praying in Tongues. These are the prayers of the Spirit. This is the "Voice of the Unseen". This is the awesome purpose and benefit of praying in other tongues.

When you go into prayer and you purpose to pray in the Spirit, pray this prayer below:

Father, I come into your presence to pray to you and not to men. I will speak the hidden mysteries of Christ in the Spirit. The first fruit of your Spirit is in me yearning and desiring for my full possession of my inheritance in Christ. He is voicing deep groans, deep longings for me to be clothed with my heavenly clothing while still in this body by faith. I will give voice to the unseen resurrection life of Christ and all that is mortal in my life will be swallowed up and surpassed by His life in me. I know my mind may be unfruitful for a time and may seem a bit boring. Nonetheless, I will not be distracted in these moments but continue to pray releasing my faith that these things are true and coming to pass. I will stay engaged praying with my Spirit and praying with my understanding

also to engage my entire being. I will be anticipating my understanding to be enlightened with new revelation and begin to speak these things in my understanding. I expect interpretation to come sometimes immediately and sometimes to evolve through my thoughts over a season. I will pray in the Spirit in faith.

I trust after reading this little book you will now say just as the Apostle Paul,

I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all...

And you will let no one ever rob you of this vital gift purchased by the blood of Christ for all people.

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