

## TLCBiblical.com Video Lessons

### 307 - The Spirit Of The Age

#### 1. Introduction

A misunderstood, and controversial topic, in the New Testament concerns the actions and role of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. In this lesson we'll discuss **The Spirit Of The Age** and examine the scriptural record of the Holy Spirit's presence in the first century, his purpose and how that impacts our lives today.

#### 2. A cloud of misunderstanding

Controversy surrounding the role of the Holy Spirit in a believers life is second only to arguments about how one is saved. This has led to numerous doctrines and interpretations of the scriptures that have been adopted as fact but deviate from what the scriptures teach. Prevalent ideas about the Holy Spirit deal with personal empowerment, guidance, revelation and salvation among other things. To understand what the scriptures teach on the subject we need to understand the nature of the Holy Spirit, his relationship to the scriptures and believers. In this lesson we'll discuss ...

- a. The identity of the Holy Spirit
- b. The work of the Holy Spirit
- c. Christ, the apostles and the Holy Spirit
- d. Miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit
- e. The baptism of the Holy Spirit
- f. How spiritual gifts were transmitted

Let's take a look at each of these.

#### 3. The identity of the Holy Spirit

If I asked who you think the Holy Spirit is what comes to mind? For some people that's a hard question to answer and we can understand that. Some think the Holy Spirit is a description of God's power, or a summary of the Lord's collective actions. Others characterize the Holy Spirit as an impersonal force and still others find it impossible to come up with a clear answer. We can understand that. The Holy Spirit seems to be a mysterious and somewhat enigmatic force. In the Bible the Holy Spirit isn't always in the forefront as the scriptural narrative develops. When we come to the New Testament the Holy Spirit emerges as a central force and character in the events of the first century. We find that the Holy spirit is not an impersonal force but is an active member of the godhead. A brief survey of the scriptures provides insight into the identity of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit appears to be ambiguous in the opening verses of Genesis where we find that "*...the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*" (**Gen 1.1-2**). We see that it was the Holy Spirit who led Christ into the wilderness where he was tempted by Satan (**Matt 4.1**).

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Christ speaks of the Holy Spirit as a personage as he prepared his disciples for his death and later departure (**John 14.26, John 16.13-14**). Christ specifically refers to him as the “*comforter*” in **John 14**. Paul told the Ephesians they were not to “*grieve*” the Holy Spirit (**Eph 4.30**) and refers to the relationship they had with God through the Spirit. Paul informed the Romans that the Holy Spirit makes “*intercession*” for us when we pray (**Rom 8.26-27**). In this passage Paul refers to the “*mind*” of the Spirit and the relationship the Holy Spirit has with God.

The Holy Spirit is a spiritual being, and there’s a lot that we won’t understand completely. From these passages, and others, we see that the Holy Spirit is a member of the godhead having attributes similar to God and Christ with the added note that the Spirit, like Christ, is subject to God the Father. He’s not an impersonal force or metaphor for the actions of God. He’s an active part of the godhead and has been present and working since creation. What we need to understand is what the Holy Spirit does and how he works.

#### 4. The work of the Holy Spirit

The apparently obscure and vague descriptions of the Holy Spirit makes it difficult to determine just who he is, and what he actually does, and this ambiguity has fueled subjective speculation and false doctrines over the years. The scriptures provide objective descriptions of God and Christ that help us form a clearer visualization of them, their relationship and their activity. The Holy Spirit on the other hand is best understood when we examine his work and the result of his involvement. There are three main areas that involve the Holy Spirit:

- a. Physical creation and manipulation
- b. Revelation
- c. Proof, empowerment & preservation

Examining each of these areas will help us form a more accurate idea of who the Holy spirit is and what he does.

#### 4a. Physical creation and manipulation

As I’ve already noted, in the opening verses of Genesis we find that the Spirit “*moved upon the face of the waters.*” (**Gen 1.2**). In other lessons I’ve discussed creation and what the scriptures reveal. The first thing is that the word for God in Genesis 1 is plural. We find evidence to that effect in the first three chapters of the book as man is created and later driven from the garden (**Gen 1.26, Gen 3.22**). From the Gospel of John chapter 1 and Colossians chapter 1 we find that Christ is the “*word*” of God (**John 1.1**) and that it was through Christ that God created the physical universe (**Col 1.16**). This is also noted in Hebrews as well (**Heb 1.2**).

Drawing on these passages we can put together a picture of creation where God is the designer who commanded things to be done, Christ who spoke God’s will to initiate creation,

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and the Holy Spirit who brought things into reality. The entire process, and the relationship between the members of the godhead, is beyond our complete understanding as noted by Solomon who stated that God “...*hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.*” (Eccl 3.11).

The descriptions found in the book of Genesis and other passages have led some to the conclusion that the Holy Spirit is an impersonal force describing God’s power. To reinforce the idea that the Holy Spirit is a member of the godhead who comes in contact with creation and makes things happen can be seen in the birth of Christ.

When Mary was told by the angel that she would have a son she asked how this would happen since she wasn’t married. The angel responded, “*The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.*” (Lk 1.35). As the pregnancy progressed, Joseph, her betrothed, considered putting her away. The angel appeared to him as well stating, “*Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.*” (Matt 1.20-21).

This is a very abbreviated examination of the physical contact the Holy spirit has with the physical world. If we read through the Psalms and the New Testament we find that the Holy Spirit was involved in miracles throughout the Old Testament period. Transitioning to the New Testament we get a clearer picture of the Holy Spirit and his work.

#### 4b. Revelation

Aside from physical contact with the material world, the most significant part of the work of the Holy Spirit is that of revealing and preserving God’s word. The New Testament provides definitive statements about this part of the Spirit’s work.

Paul noted that “*All scripture is given by inspiration of God*” (2 Tim 3.16). Peter, speaking of the Old Testament prophets states, “*For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*” (2 Pet 1.21).

The scriptures are regarded as the product of humans who simply recorded their ideas, opinions or experiences. Many think that the scriptures are inaccurate and represent the transmission of oral traditions that have been altered over time. Throughout the scriptures we find prophets and inspired teachers and preachers delivering the message from God. The consistency and connections between all of these is unique to the Bible and while there are critics who deny the reality of divine inspiration, the fact remains that the harmony of the scriptures, when understood, identifies a single point of origin. The Holy Spirit not only revealed the word of God but is the agent who will preserve it in the world until Christ returns.

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#### 4c. Proof, empowerment & preservation

Whenever the subject of the Holy spirit comes up the emphasis is usually on the miraculous aspects of his work. Christ's identity as the son of God meant he was authorized to perform the will of God. To accomplish this, while in human form, he was empowered through the agency of the Holy Spirit as we'll see later. The performance of miracles by Christ, and later the apostles, were done through the Holy Spirit as a proof that the word being taught was from God.

Christ reinforces this in his response to two of John's disciples sent to Christ asking if he was the Messiah. He answered, "***Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.***" (Matt 11.4-5). This also fulfills a number of prophecies in the Old Testament indicating that miracles would be performed as a proof that the Messiah had come.

The writer of Hebrews clearly shows that the Messiah had come, the law of Moses had ended and the new high priest of the faith is Christ who sits at the right hand of God. The writer addressing the nature of what had been delivered and the proofs provided by God, states, "***How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?***" (Heb 2.3-4).

The Holy Spirit confirmed that Christ was indeed the Messiah based on the miracles performed. The apostles, and others who were later given limited gifts to perform miracles, were able to do the same thing. The Holy Spirit remained present in the world with Christ, returned as the helper and comforter to the apostles, then worked with those who received a variety of abilities to confirm, prove, reveal and preserve the word of God. To further understand this aspect of the Holy Spirit's work we can take a closer look at his relationship with Christ and the apostles.

#### 5. Christ, the apostles and the Holy Spirit

I noted a moment ago that the body inhabited by the spirit of Christ was prepared in Mary's womb by the Holy Spirit (Lk 1.35, Matt 1.20-21). Rather than trying to dissect how God brought that about we'll concentrate on what we can understand and know.

The physical body created by the Holy Spirit and the placement of the spirit of Christ in that body was the work of the Holy Spirit. The identity of Christ however was linked to the entity whose spirit inhabited that body. The physical body was the vehicle that allowed Christ to be present with the people preaching and confirming God's word. The physical shell housing

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God's son was created for the purpose of being sacrificed for the sins of the world as the writer of Hebrews states (**Heb 10.1-14**) which quotes prophecies in the Old Testament of the Messiah. Here's where the confusion really ramps up. Was Christ human or spirit? The answer is yes!

Christ's intrinsic identity was that of the son of God. He left heaven and came to the earth in physical form to complete God's plan to save humanity (**Gen 3.15, Phil 2.5-8**). In the form of a human the body had to grow and develop as we all do. Christ felt all the things we do and was subject to the temptations and weaknesses we have but exercised his will to remain sinless and do the will of his father (**Heb 4.15**). The gospel accounts provide insight into the power Christ exercised over the physical world including the elements, illness and death.

Speaking of Christ, John the baptist reveals Jesus nature and mission. ***“For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.”*** (**John 3.34-35**). The notable fact revealed by John is that Christ acted through the power of the Holy Spirit while in the world and those abilities were unlimited. We'll compare that to others later but for now we can put together some clear ideas of the godhead and the Holy Spirit.

1. God designed, Christ spoke & the Holy Spirit made the physical world
2. The body to house Christ was created by the Holy Spirit
3. Christ was given all authority by God who sent him
4. Christ's power in the world through the Holy Spirit was unlimited

The next area that creates problems is the relationship between the disciples - specifically the twelve who later became apostles - including Matthias who replaced Judas - and the Holy Spirit. The scriptures are clear on this as well.

After three years of being with Christ the disciples still didn't understand many things and continued to be in the dark about a lot of things - but that was going to change. In preparation for his death, Christ spoke to his disciples and let them know how they would be able to continue the work he started. John records these statements so we can understand the apostles future relationship with the Holy Spirit.

***“These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”*** (**John 14.25-26**)

***“But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.”*** (**John 15.26-27**).

***“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when***

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*he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.” (John 16.12-14).*

Elements from these passages details the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the apostles as well as the purpose for it.

1. Christ had more to teach them but they weren't ready for that information
2. Christ was leaving them to return to the Father
3. The Holy Spirit was being sent to comfort, empower and guide them
4. They would be provided with what they needed to know through the Holy Spirit

From the passage in Hebrews we can add another point - confirmation of their teachings by the miracles they performed (**Heb 2.3-4**). On the day Christ ascended back into Heaven he told the disciples to remain in Jerusalem until they received power from on high (**Acts 1.4**). On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit fell on the twelve empowering them to speak the word the Holy Spirit revealed to them, perform miracles and record the revelation as it was given. On Pentecost the immediate aspect of this was that the varied nationalities of Jews represented heard what Peter and the apostles were saying in their own native languages (**Acts 2.6-8**). From that time the Holy Spirit acted as a partner to the apostles. Over time others were given limited abilities by the Holy Spirit.

#### 6. Miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit

Another area of contention and confusion surrounds the idea of miraculous gifts bestowed by the Holy Spirit. Today we have individuals claiming to speak in tongues, healing the sick and in possession of other powers given by the Holy Spirit. There are certain aspects of miraculous gifts and their transmission we need to understand but first we need to identify what the principle gifts of the Spirit were. These include -

- a. Speaking in tongues
- b. Prophecy
- c. Healing
- d. Other related abilities

Now we need to identify what each of these really involved.

a. **Speaking in tongues** - As seen on the day of Pentecost this was simply the ability to speak in and understand languages from other nations. The apostles were charged with carrying the Gospel to all nations and being able to communicate would have been a critical aspect of accomplishing this. Modern glossalalia, or tongue speaking, is often indecipherable and



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unintelligible to those who hear it. That's completely different from what we read in the New Testament account.

b. **Prophecy** - included telling the future and we have limited examples of this in the New Testament. The most prevalent form of prophecy was the ability to preach or teach God's word to others. Christ told his disciples that they would be given what they should speak when needed (**Matt 10.19**). As I noted earlier Christ stated that the Holy Spirit would bring all things to their remembrance (**John 14.26**). Beyond that were teachers and preachers inspired by the Holy Spirit who would be able to proclaim God's word through the Holy Spirit as well.

c. **Healing** - Peter, the other apostles and some who were given the gift of healing by the Holy Spirit were able to perform such things when needed. As we review the narrative we find that those who were healed, or raised from the dead, took place in a greater context in which others were led to believe and obey the Gospel based on the miracle.

d. **Other related abilities** - Paul alludes to the presence of other gifts in his treatment of the subject in **1 Corinthians 12-14**. There's also the added note that gifts were granted as the Holy Spirit saw fit (**1 Cor 12.8-11**).

We can see that the miraculous gifts were tools meant to confirm the word, teach and edify as the Gospel was preached throughout the world. At the same time the inspired writers of the New Testament recorded the final message God intended for us to have and the Holy Spirit has preserved that for us today in it's final form. So, the big question that we have to answer is - what about us today? Do these gifts still exist and how are they acquired? Before I answer that we need to examine the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

## 7. The baptism of the Holy Spirit

Individuals believe the Holy Spirit brought them to Christ, moves them to perform tasks, empowers them to heal and provides revelation from God, all of which they see as proof of being filled or baptized in the Holy Spirit. But is that true, and if not, what is the truth? To answer that we have to look at the only two examples of Holy Spirit baptism in the New Testament, then we need to understand how spiritual gifts were given and whether that continues today.

Christ stated he would send the comforter, or helper, identified as the Holy Spirit to the apostles to guide them into all truth, bring things to their remembrance and reveal things to come. The last item includes the final revelation of God's will. Christ told the disciples to remain in Jerusalem until they received this power which they did ten days later on the day of Pentecost. The promise Christ made was to the twelve. It was the twelve who were together and received this power on Pentecost. A careful reading of the text confirms this.

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Luke records the events on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter two. “*And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance*” (Acts 2.1-4). This was the fulfillment of Christ’s promise that the apostles would receive power from on high. At this point there are two things we need to understand clearly.

First, who was it on the day of Pentecost that “*were all filled*” with the Holy Spirit. Some teach that all disciples gathered received the Holy Spirit at this time and use that argument to support the idea of a miraculous endowment of power today. This is an example of how important it is to establish and maintain the context of a passage. From reading the first chapter of Acts we understand that there were about 120 disciples gathered with the twelve (Acts 1.15). Some of these were also present when Christ ascended into Heaven as we later see this as a requirement in the selection of a replacement for Judas in Acts 1.16-26. The narrative however narrows the focus to the apostles at the end of chapter one, not the collective group of all disciples (Acts 1.17,24-25). This is consistent with Christ’s promise that the apostles would be given this power to guide them. As we continue into the opening verses of Acts chapter two we find the focus remains on the twelve apostles which now includes Matthias who replaced Judas.

After Pentecost we see the apostles working to preach and teach the Gospel. The church begins to grow until finally a persecution is mounted against them and they scatter in Acts 8.1. The church however is limited to Jews at that time with the exception of those in Samaria, half blood Jews representing the Northern kingdom of Israel, who heard and believed Philip (Acts 8.5-8). For approximately ten years the Gospel was taught among the Jewish population until Peter is sent to the house of a Roman.

The second occurrence of Holy Spirit baptism takes place in the home of the Roman centurion Cornelius in Acts 10. I’ve discussed these events in two other lessons so I won’t review all the details here. The short version is that Peter was summoned to Cornelius home after seeing a vision of unclean animals and being told to kill and eat. Peter refused to do so since he had never corrupted himself with an unclean animal. He was given a final statement that what God had cleansed was not to be considered unclean which he didn’t understand at the time. When Peter arrived at the centurion’s home and began to speak the Holy Spirit fell on the Roman and his household. Why did this happen? Was it a normal occurrence that signified salvation as some teach today? Answers to both of these questions is found in Acts 11.

When the brethren in Judea heard that Peter had gone to the house of a Gentile and preached to them they were ready to argue (Acts 11.2). In their minds this wasn’t something that should be done. They were Jews and although they were Christians they hadn’t realized that the new law was for all people.



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Peter was literally called on the carpet so to speak to explain his actions. He met with the brethren and recounted the entire episode beginning with the vision that he saw. He then described what took place at Cornelius home. Peter stated, ***“And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?”*** (Acts 11.15-17). The appearance of the Holy Spirit hadn’t saved the Gentiles, but did provide the proof needed to convince well intended Christians to change their way of thinking as the Gentiles were acceptable to God. Luke records, ***“When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.”*** (Acts 11.18). Every other example of conversion involves several elements including combinations of hearing God’s word, repenting of one’s sins, confessing one’s belief in Christ and being baptized for the remission of sins as Christ commanded (Matt 28.18-20, Mk 16.15-16). The baptism of the Holy Spirit was the fulfillment of a promise to the apostles on Pentecost, and a sign to the Jews of the fulfillment of God’s promise to save all nations made in the beginning (Gen 3.15).

If the baptism of the Holy Spirit was a unique occurrence, only took place twice, and had a specific purpose how were spiritual gifts given to other believers? We can find an answer to that in the scriptures as well.

#### 8. How were spiritual gifts transmitted

We can see how spiritual gifts were given in examples in the New Testament. Philip the evangelist had gone to Samaria to preach the Gospel. Philip was one who had spiritual gifts and used them to perform miracles confirming the word. When the Samaritans heard Philip’s preaching and saw the miracles they were persuaded to obey the Gospel (Acts 8.5-13). When the brethren in Jerusalem heard about Philip’s preaching and the conversions in Samaria Peter and John were sent to them (Acts 8.14).

***“Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.”*** (Acts 8.14-17).

Notice that in this account spiritual gifts were absent until the apostles, Peter and John, prayed and laid their hands on the believers. This denotes several things. First of all is the fact that the gifts of the Holy Spirit were not automatically received when one was converted to Christ. Secondly, in spite of the fact that Philip performed miracles, which led to the conversion of those who obeyed the message, he apparently lacked the ability to give this power to others. The apostles were the only ones who were able to do this as we’ll see in a moment. Also of note

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is the fact that Peter and John prayed first before bestowing such gifts. This indicates that the power of God would be bestowed on those to whom the Lord saw fit to give such power.

After praying about the matter Peter and John physically laid their hands on the believers who then, and only then, received the gifts. Throughout the New Testament there are no examples of anyone other than the apostles who were able to do this. Another event which occurred in Samaria at this time clarifies this point.

An episode involving one of the converted Samaritans demonstrates this point. *"But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, this man is the power of God. And to whom they had regard, because that of a long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done."* (Acts 8.9-13).

After seeing Peter and John bestowing spiritual gifts to believers Simon was intrigued by this. *"And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."* (Acts 8.18-22).

Peter's response tells us that the apostles, having a full measure of the Holy Spirit, had the ability to bestow spiritual gifts through prayer and laying their hands on the recipient. God and the Holy Spirit then granted an ability or multiple abilities based on the individual based on the individual's ability and God's will. Peter's response to Simon confronted his misguided intentions and informs us that the ability to bestow spiritual gifts was restricted to the apostles only. I've covered this in more detail in other lessons but this example illustrates the mechanism and purpose of the gifts as well as limitations that existed. Paul provides a more in-depth discussion of spiritual gifts and their purpose in **1 Corinthians 12 - 14**. One other thing that we learn is that spiritual gifts were also time limited.

### 9. The end of spiritual gifts

We've seen that spiritual gifts and miracles performed were for confirming the word of God (**Heb 2.3-4**). Paul addresses problems that existed in the church at Corinth. One of the things they had problems with had to do with competition over who had the best or most important spiritual gift (**1 Cor 12.15-19**). Paul gives a detailed review of the gifts, their purpose,

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how they were to be used and the relationship between them in the local congregation in these chapters. As he closes chapter twelve he states, “***But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.***” (1 Cor 12.31). Chapter thirteen then begins a discussion concerning love with the conclusion “***And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.***” (1 Cor 13.13). In his discourse Paul settles the debate over who had the best spiritual gift with a view of what was to come. He writes, “***Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.***” (1 Cor 13.8-10). This statement bears a closer look.

Paul first tells us that love, or charity, never fails or ceases. In contrast he notes that prophecies, tongues and knowledge will “***vanish away***”. How? The prophecies, tongues and knowledge are all gifts that were given by the Holy Spirit to enable the apostles and others who were given a gift to do the work that was needed to spread the Gospel or edify the saints. This is consistent with Christ’s statement earlier that the apostles would be given what they needed to say when the time arose. Then Paul makes a note about these gifts when he states, “***For we know in part, and we prophesy in part...***”. Spiritual gifts supplied things that were needed at specific times for the purpose of confirming the word as I’ve noted. But there’s an incompleteness to them since not everyone possessed the same gifts. Paul expands on this and explains it in his next statement.

Paul states, “***But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.***” So we have a contrast. Knowledge, prophecy and tongues are partial in nature and would come to an end. Paul states this will take place when “***that which is perfect is come***”. The word for perfect in this passage means complete, or completion. In other words, the spiritual gifts, partial in nature, were in place until such time as there was something which had not been completed. What was he referring to?

Christ had already come into the world, offered himself as the final sacrifice for sin and ascended to his Father in Heaven. The Holy Spirit, promised to the apostles had been sent to guide them and those they bestowed gifts on. The only work in progress at this time, the first century, was the final record of God’s revelation in written form. The Holy Spirit was guiding those of the first century to insure the unity Paul speaks of (Eph 4.1-6). The Holy Spirit inspired the writers of what we recognize as the New Testament to record the word in a final form for the final age of the world. When that work was done, and the apostles died, there were no more spiritual gifts, nor was there a need for them. The final revelation of God would be in the world, protected by his providence and available as a permanent record for all time.

In our time we have the word, referred to as the sword of the Spirit, recorded as the writers were directed by the Holy Spirit himself. We have a duty to study the word, understand it, teach it as it’s written and practice it faithfully. The written word is the unifying factor that will

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bring believers together as a cohesive unit as the church.

#### 10. What we've learned

- a. The Holy Spirit is a personality / entity
- b. He's part of the godhead
- c. He was involved in the creation of the universe
- d. Miracles were performed through the Holy Spirit
- e. The revelation of scripture is a work of the Holy Spirit
- f. The Holy Spirit created the body inhabited by the spirit of Christ
- g. The Holy Spirit served as a guide to the apostles
- h. The Holy Spirit empowered some to perform miracles in the first century
- i. Miraculous gifts ended when the apostles died and the final revelation was complete
- j. The inspired word exists in the world today as the sword of the spirit

This hasn't been an exhaustive study of the Holy Spirit but the main points have been examined and presented in a way that we can understand what the scriptures teach on the subject.

#### 11. Next

The grace of God is understood by some as representing the Gospel era. In the next lesson we'll define the term and examine the fact that **But For The Grace Of God**, no one would be saved or have survived in the past, present or future.