

# Beyond the News

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## Gift of Holy Spirit (Part 2 of 2)

By Philip Tang

### Introduction

The Old Testament prophets predicted that the Spirit of God would be poured forth

*And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit... And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance (Joel 2:28-29,32).*

With the out pouring of the Spirit comes the knowledge and a new covenant

*Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers...But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people (Jer 31:31-33).*

Moses wished that God would put His Spirit upon believers

*"...would God that all the LORD'S people were prophets, and that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!"  
Num 11:29*

### Day of PENTECOST: Fulfilment of the prophesy

*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. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,*

*Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?... But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:*  
(Acts 2:1-12,17,18)

Pentecost, as described in Acts 2, marks the birthday of the Church of Christ in the NT. For the Church is composed of all those who, in one Spirit, have been baptised into one body, and this baptising work of the Spirit began on the day of Pentecost. **It marks the transition from the old to the new covenant, and signifies the start of the 'now' (2Cor 6:2) day of salvation. It is also the beginning of the 'last days' (Heb 1:2) and the dawn wherein through the Seed of Abraham the world would be blessed (Gen 22:18,Gal 3:14).**

### Significance of Pentecost

{Reversal of the judgment at Tower of Babel}

It is the reversal of the event that took place at the Tower of Babel, "...let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech...Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth..(Gen 11:7,9)"

On the day of Pentecost the disciples of Jesus spoke in tongues so that foreign visitors to Jerusalem heard the message in their own tongue (language). The message of reconciliation went out into the world in many tongues (languages) since the disciples had been empowered by the Spirit to

be witnesses of (Luk 24:48) and for (Mark 16:5) Christ.

{Tongues a sign for unbelievers and is a prophesy}

The prophesy of Joel was that 'your sons and your daughters shall prophesy', there was no mention of tongues as such, yet the miracles of tongues had a two fold purpose (i) if foreign tongues are **not interpreted** it is judgment to unbelievers (...*With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not... 1Cor 14:21-22, Isai 17:11-12*)

<<At this point it is appropriate to explain the biblical mode of revelation. God has revealed Himself to men not only in words, but first of all in actions, in deeds and in historical events. History is the vehicle of divine self-revelation.

As an illustration, consider Exodus wherein God said to Moses, "Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians" (Exo 6:6-7)

Israel would come to know God not because He spoke to Moses, or revealed Himself to Moses, and Moses told the Israelites about it. Rather, Israel would know God because of what He had done – His mighty acts and saving deeds in history. God not only acted to deliver the Israelites from the Egyptians but also interpreted His actions to them. God's works did not speak for themselves -- along with the event, He gave a divine word of interpretation. God acted and He spoke; **His word explained the event**

The revealing acts of God in history, accompanied by the interpreting prophetic word which explains the divine source and character of the divine acts is

the biblical mode of revelation. The deeds could not be understood unless accompanied by the divine word; but the word would seem powerless unless accompanied by the mighty works. >>

(ii) the miracles of tongues was not just a gift to speak a foreign language without having learnt it, it was **prophecy** in essence. In 1 Corinthians the Apostle Paul, under inspiration, insisted that tongues must be **interpreted**. Because he who speaks in tongues “...no one understands him; ...**he speaks mysteries NKJV (1 Cor 14:2).**

The people (men of Judea) present were puzzled, “...we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What **meaneth** this (Acts 2:11-12)?

The Apostle Peter explained that it was only 9 am and that the miraculous outpouring of the Spirit is designed to awaken them to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to join His church. Two things were highlighted: that it was the fulfilling of the scripture, and this event follows from Christ's resurrection and ascension.

{Transition from the old to the new covenant}

Moses went up Mount Sinai and came down with the Ten Commandments, the moral law of the old dispensation written on tablets of stone. Our Lord Jesus ascended to Heaven and the Holy Spirit descended to write the law in the hearts of believers and, to enable them to obey the law's command.

The Apostle Peter explained that the prophesying to which Joel referred to was fulfilled in the miracle of tongues speaking (whereby the hearers could understand the message in their own language). Peter thus regarded tongues speaking as the **functional equivalent of prophecy**.

The ‘pouring out’ of the Spirit is now on all types of people. In the old covenant, which is passing away, the Spirit generally comes upon the prophets. But now, sons and daughters prophesy, young men have visions and old men have dreams.

These were channels of communicating the knowledge of God in the old covenant to the prophets but now all of God's people possess the knowledge of God. Moses wished that all the Lord's people were prophet and that He would put His Spirit on them became true (Num 11:29).

### **Pentecostals/Charismatics view on the Pentecost**

Earlier we saw how the Pentecostals viewed what occurred in Pentecost as normative for all Christians and throughout all ages. Their theology of “baptism of the Holy Spirit” which is derived from the experiences of the Day of Pentecost can be summed up in 3 points:

- i) that the event is “distinct from and subsequent to the new birth”
- ii) that it is evidenced initially by the sign of speaking in other tongues.
- iii) that it must be earnestly sought .

### **Pentecost (and after) is a ministry of Jesus through the Spirit.**

Luke, the writer of the two books, ‘Gospel according to Luke’ and ‘Acts of the Apostles’ divides the ministry of Jesus into two parts as implied in Acts 1:1-2, “*The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He **through the Holy Spirit** had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen (NKJV)*”

Luke in the introduction in Acts wanted to connect the work of Jesus with the ministry of the Spirit. What Jesus did and continues to do is “through the Spirit”. The Holy Spirit's work is not independent of Jesus Christ but associated with Jesus' work. The Spirit is Jesus (2 Cor 2:13) at work in continuation with His ministry.

The work of the Holy Spirit is the extension of the ministry begun and now continued by Jesus Christ himself, and the deeds of the church (i.e. acts of

the apostles and saints through the ages) are the fruit and expression of that ministry.

### Theme of the Book of Acts from 1:8

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

When the Spirit shall come upon His people they shall receive power, not power for power’s sake, but to become “witnesses unto Me”, i.e. for Jesus Christ. The power of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is first and foremost a power to **join to** Christ, i.e. become Christians. The result of the power of baptism of the Holy Spirit according to Acts 1:8 is, first of all, not what men **do**, but what they **become**. The power of the Holy Spirit is His ability to join men to the risen Christ so that they are able to represent Him.

Acts 1:8 describes the way how God, through the Spirit employs extraordinary means to instruct the church in the universality and unconditionality of the Gospel; even for the racially and religiously suspect Samaritan (Acts 8), the spiritually unclean Gentile (Acts 10-11).

The first half of Acts is mainly an account of how the Church learns the nature of the Gospel – it is free, universal, promissory and, salvation is obtained simply by faith apart from the law. This fact is affirmed in the Jerusalem council (Acts 15).

The apostle Paul sums up Pentecost’s introduction succinctly, *“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law...that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”*(Gal 3:13-14)

### Baptism of the Holy Spirit is a gift.

In Acts 1:4-5, *“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; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now (NKJV).”*

The point to note is that the *baptism of the Holy Spirit* is a **promise** from God. This promise is freely given i.e. a gift (Acts 2:38) and is not to be sought after as advocated by the Pentecostals.

Jesus told the disciples (about 120 of them) to wait for the *baptism of the Holy Spirit* (Acts 1:5), and within a few days later all 120 of them received the *baptism of the Holy Spirit* (Acts 2:4); each and every believer present were given the Promise of the Father. In fact, there is no record in Acts of any believer, in a group of believers, failing to receive the promised Holy Spirit when He descended. It is given to every believer present.

### What meaneth this? Pentecost

The meaning of the Pentecost event is not to be found in the interior spiritual life of the disciples, nor in the miracles of tongues speaking, not even in the gift of the Holy Spirit but is to found in the preaching of the Gospel by Peter.

The Spirit-moved sermon convicted the hearts of the hearers. Luke relates here historically what Paul teaches systematically through his epistles; that it is the work of the Holy Spirit that causes a person to have faith in Jesus Christ (*‘And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us’, Acts 15:8-9; ‘And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.’ Act 13:48*)

What must the convicted sinners do? *‘...Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.( Acts 2:38-39)*

The baptism in the name of Jesus Christ includes both the forgiveness of sins and receiving the gift

of the Holy Spirit, together. This single two-fold benefit corresponds exactly to the OT promise of the coordinate forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Spirit (Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:25-27, “*Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.*”)

Baptism is, in the careful formulation “for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, since the occurrence Pentecost, Christian baptism becomes the centre of the Spirit’s reception in response to the Spirit’s pressure in preaching. Henceforth, Pentecost is baptism.

### **Pentecost and Baptism of the Holy Spirit, a once for all event.**

Is the Day of Pentecost and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit a one-off, non-repeatable event or does it happened now and then? The evidence based on events recorded in the Book of Acts suggests that it is a once for all event, not to be repeated. The following points support this view:

i) In Acts 1, Jesus predicted the baptism of the Holy Spirit would take place, “not many days hence” (Act 1:5). This would seem to point to a definite and specific event rather than to a continuous process.

ii) Again, Peter's quote in Act 2:17-21 of Joel's prophecy showed that in Peter's mind the event which his hearers were then witnessing was the definite fulfilment of the words of Joel.

iii) The one other event in the New Testament that is described as the baptism of the Holy Spirit may be regarded as the completion of the Pentecostal baptism. The passage is contained in Acts 10:1-11:18 which described the following events:

(a) miraculous vision given to Peter on the housetop (Act 10:11-16) indicating that the things about to occur are of unique importance;

(b) The speaking with tongues (Act 10:45, Act 10:46);

(c) Peter declares to the brethren at Jerusalem that the Holy Ghost fell on the Gentiles in this instance of Cornelius and his household “as on us at the beginning”( *And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning*”, Act 11:15);

(d) Peter also declares that this was a fulfilment of the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, “*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?*”(Act 11:16-17)

(e) The Jewish Christians who heard Peter's account of the matter acknowledged this as proof that God had also extended the privileges of the gospel to the Gentiles (Act 11:18).

The baptism of the Holy Spirit upon Cornelius and his household is thus directly linked to the first outpouring at Pentecost. **This particular event shows plainly that the gospel has come to the Gentiles;** it is in complete harmony with the missionary significance of the first great Pentecostal outpouring. It adds a new dimension in the Messianic kingdom, for it completes the Pentecostal gift by showing that Gentiles as well as Jews are to be embraced in all the privileges of the new dispensation.

iv) Nowhere in the epistles of the NT do we find a repetition of the Baptism of the Spirit. This would be remarkable if it had been understood by the writers of the epistles that the baptism of the Spirit was frequently to be repeated. There is no evidence outside the Book of Acts that the Baptism of the Spirit ever occurred in the later NT times. In 1Cor 12:13 Paul says, “*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body... and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*” But here the reference is

not to the baptism of the Spirit, but rather to a baptism into the Church which is the body of Christ. We conclude, therefore, that according to the New Testament teaching the Pentecostal baptism, taken in conjunction with the baptism of the Spirit in the case of Cornelius, completes the Baptism of the Holy Spirit as a special event.

In all subsequent NT writings there is the assumption of this presence of the Spirit and of His availability for all believers. The various commands and exhortations of the epistles are based on the assumption that the baptism of the Spirit has already taken place, and that, according to the prediction of Jesus, the Spirit was to abide with us forever (Joh 14:16).

We should not therefore mix up other forms of expression found in the New Testament with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. When Christians are enjoined to “walk by the Spirit” (Gal 5:16) and “be filled with the Spirit” (Eph 5:18), or when the Spirit is described as an anointing (*chrísma*) as in 1Joh 2:20-27, and as the “guarantee of our inheritance” (*arrabõn*) as in (...when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it...Eph 1:13-14,NKJV), and when various other similar expressions are employed in the epistles of the New Testament, we are not to understand the baptism of the Holy Spirit. These expressions indicate aspects of the Spirit's work in believers or of the believer's appropriation of the gifts and blessings of the Spirit rather than the historical baptism of the Spirit.

The coming of the Holy Spirit was to be epochal, dispensational, as once-for-all as any other acts of redemption. A few days later, as Jesus predicted, He did come. Paul, decades later, would write of no similar waiting, not of a so-called second blessing, but of how “in one Spirit were we all baptised into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free. And were all made to drink of one Spirit (1 Cor 12:13 )

### **Miracles, signs and wonders.**

Miracles are performed by the messengers of God, or by God Himself, to authenticate the truth and reliability of Scripture, or to show that a person truly represents God. A miracle may be defined to be a plain and manifest exercise by a man, or by God at the call of a man, of those powers which belong only to the Creator and Lord of nature; and this for the declared object of attesting that a divine mission is given to that man.

For example, after Elijah raised the widow's son from the dead, she exclaimed “*Now by this I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is the truth. (NKJV)*” 1Kin 17:17-24

Elijah confronting the prophets of Baal prayed, “*And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, “LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. <sup>37</sup> Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You are the LORD God...Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. (NKJV)*” 1Kin 18:36-39

Jesus used miracles to demonstrate His deity, to prove He was sent by God, to support His messiahship, to minister in compassion to the needy multitudes, to prove that He has the power to forgive sins (Mark 2:10-11). The miracle of the incarnation, the resurrection, and the ascension are part and parcel of the divine plan that God came in the flesh to save mankind.

“*If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him. (NKJV)*”(Joh 10:37-38)

“*Therefore they [Paul and Barnabas] stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting*

*signs and wonders to be done by their hands. (NKJV)*”(Act 14:3)

*“...for in nothing was I behind the most eminent apostles, though I am nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds. (NKJV)*”(2 Cor 12:11-12)

*“how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will? (NKJV)*”(Heb 2:3-4)

It is evident that the miracles, signs and wonders of Scripture were not performed arbitrarily, but with a definite purpose. They are not mere wonders, exhibitions of power, destined to excite amazement, but have revelational significance as described earlier in the notes. It was by a miracle that God gave us both His special verbal revelation in Scripture, and His supreme factual revelation in Jesus Christ. The miracles are connected with the economy of redemption, a redemption which they often prefigure and symbolize.

### **Cessation of miracles, signs and wonders for advancing God’s Kingdom**

With the completion of the books of the Bible, the establishment of the new covenant, the NT Church and the Holy Spirit being fully given [“...*Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*” (Joh 4:13-14); “*He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)*” Joh 7:38-39] it is fitting that miracles, signs and wonders are no longer needed to preach the Gospel or live out the Christian life.

It follows from the verses below that we are in the period of the “last days”, and as such

*{{ God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; (Heb 1:1-2)*

*Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was **once for all** delivered to the saints (NKJV), Jude 1:3.*

*And are built [the Church] upon the **foundation of the apostles and prophets**, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; (Eph 2:20) }}*

The claims of miracle workers in Jesus’ name should be viewed with great suspicion and they are to be avoided. For our Lord warned, “*For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great **signs and wonders**; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect, (Mat 24:24) or “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not **prophesied** in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many **wonderful works**? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Mat 7:22-23).”*

Indeed the office of apostles and prophet came to an end when the apostolic age ended because one of the key criteria of choosing an apostle (to replace Judas) was that he “... *companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection (Act 1:21-22).*” The apostle Paul was a special case as he said, “*And last of all He [Jesus] was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles..*”(1Cor 15:8-9)),

### **Prophecy**

The word ‘prophecy’ has to be understood within

the context of the Scriptures; it is therefore needful to examine what the primary function of a prophet is.

**God's spokesman. God's will and revelation is revealed through him.**

*For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the Lord your God has not appointed such for you.... I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which he speaks in My name, I will require it of him. But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?'-- when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him. NKJV (Deu 18:14,17-22)*

**All true prophets of God speak with one voice. No contradiction.**

*If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods'--which you have not known--'and let us serve them,' you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God is testing you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. NKJV (Duet 13:1-3)*

**What was told the prophets are written so that it will be forever preserved.**

*And the LORD answered me: "Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it. For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end--it will not lie. If it seems slow,*

*wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay. ESV (Hab 2:2-3)*

**The revelations of the prophets and the letters of the apostles (or their appointed writers) become Holy Scriptures.**

*And remember, the Lord's patience gives people time to be saved. This is what our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you with the wisdom God gave him — speaking of these things in all of his letters. Some of his comments are hard to understand, and those who are ignorant and unstable have twisted his letters to mean something quite different, just as they do with other parts of Scripture. And this will result in their destruction NLT (2Pet 3:15-16).*

This is a categorical declaration of Peter that he regarded the writings of Paul as a part of the Holy Scriptures, and of course that he considered him as inspired. The word "Scriptures," as used by a Jew, had a technical significance - meaning the inspired writings, and was the common word which was applied to the sacred writings of the Old Testament. He addresses those to whom he wrote, not in such a way as to declare to them that the writings of Paul were to be regarded as a part of the inspired volume, but as is already known, and were an admitted point.

A prophet then, as taught by the Bible, is defined as a *speaker* of or for God. His words are not the production of his own spirit, but come from a higher source. For he is at the same time, also, a *seer*, who sees things that do not lie in the domain of natural sight, or who hears things which human ears do not ordinarily receive.

In a wider context 'prophesy' has two aspects to it, (a) foretelling, revelatory in nature, typical of biblical prophets (b) forth-telling, i.e. the ability to speak forth for God, i.e. to preach. However, going by the function of a prophet as described above, there is no biblical evidence of making any distinction between a prophet and one with the gift of prophesy.

As such, we can conclude that **the office of prophet (and hence prophesy) have ceased after the completion of the books of the Bible** (Heb

1:1-2, Jude 1:3, Eph 2:20). If not, it would be very difficult disproving false prophets making spurious claims they are from God. Any claims made by preachers can be judged by what is written in Scriptures.

### Gift of tongues.

The Apostle Paul said that he “*would rather speak five words with my understanding...than ten thousand words in a tongue.(1 Cor 14:19)*” The Corinthian church was having a crisis because of abusing the gift of tongues. There was disorder and, confusion seems to reign in their church meetings. The situation is not unlike some Charismatic churches today, where an outsider is disturbed over the pandemonium going on in their rather chaotic worship services.

We saw how the gift of tongue is the ability to speak a language without having learned it. When tongues are interpreted, it is **revelatory** in nature, much like the gift of prophecy. Because to speak in tongue is to utter mysteries (Greek ‘*mysterion*’) and in the NT context it has a very specific meaning which is essentially a communication of divine revelation from God.

The term ‘mystery’ occurs more than twenty-five times in the New Testament. The consistency of meaning maintained in Scripture is striking:

*Matthew 13:11: Jesus says, ‘To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom.’ These ‘mysteries’ are no longer hidden from Jesus’ disciples. Kingdom mysteries are truths revealed rather than concealed.*

*Romans 11:25: Paul explains, ‘I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery.’ The ‘mystery’ about Israel should no longer be a matter of ignorance, for the truth of the ‘mystery’ has been revealed.*

*Romans 16:25: Paul’s preaching is ‘according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past but now revealed and made known.’ Paul can*

*preach with confidence because the ‘mystery’ of the gospel now has been revealed.*

But when there is **no interpretation**, it becomes gibberish and Paul said, it is a sign to unbelievers. So, what Paul is saying is that for a congregation to break into speaking in tongues is anything but a church of Jesus Christ.

### Cessation of the gift of tongues and prophecy.

In 1 Cor 13:8, Paul writes, “*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.*”

There are several reasons why they have ceased, failed or disappeared.

i) This follows logically from what was discussed earlier; all the revelatory gifts of knowledge, prophecies and tongues will come to an end soon after the Church of Jesus Christ was firmly established with the completed Scriptures with Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone.

ii) In 1 Cor 13:10 “*But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.*”

The ‘perfect’ is better translated ‘complete’. It refers to the completion of Scriptures. Therefore that which is ‘in part’ refers to the revelatory gifts; these would be done away.

This method of interpretation is further supported by verse 13, “*And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*” Notice the “now,” “now” as a matter of time (Greek, *nuni not de*). When? Now--this present age. These things (faith, hope, love) abide now, even though those gifts are gone.

Faith and hope will not be a part of the Christian’s experience in heaven, or Paul and the writer to the Hebrews would be wrong in these statements.

*For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? (Rom 8:24)*

*For we walk by faith, not by sight (2 Cor5:7)*

*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.(Heb 11:1)*

The Christian now walks "by faith and not by sight," because he is not yet present with the Lord. But when he sees Him, faith will be no longer needed, nor will hope.

iii) Jesus Christ spoke against gibberish prayers.

Matthew 6:7 is better translated in the LITV (Literal Translation) as:

*But when you pray, do not be **babbling** vain words, as the nations; for they think that they shall be heard in their much speaking. (Matt. 6:7)*

He reproveth another fault in prayer, a multiplicity of words. There are two words used, but in the same sense: for βαττολογία is "a superfluous and affected repetition," and πολυλογία is "unmeaning talk." Christ reproveth the folly of those who, with the view of persuading and entreating God, pour out a superfluity of words. .. the grace of God is not obtained by an unmeaning flow of words.

## Conclusion

The positive contribution of the Pentecostals/Charismatics is their mission mindedness for the Church of Christ. However because of their erroneous theology of the Holy Spirit quite a few in that movement have become heretics e.g. espousing the health-and-wealth gospel and causing many Christians to stumble.

We do well to remember the words of our Lord Jesus regarding the Holy Spirit, "*the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*"

God has sealed the Holy Spirit in us on the very day we believed, "*In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with*

*the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. ESV." (Eph 1:13-14)*

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## Disclaimer:

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**Philip Tang** is a lecturer in Mathematics and Statistics in a polytechnic in Singapore, where he has been for about 30 years. Baptized at age 17, he has been a Christian for more than 40 years. He is an evangelical Christian with a high view of Holy Scriptures, and a member of a Bible-Presbyterian Church in Singapore since 1971. His current interests are Christian Apologetics and the challenge of Islam to the Christian Church.