

living 600 years later and beyond, for example people like us who can look back and marvel at the accuracy of prophecy.

Also, the vast majority of the book of Revelation was not relevant to the seven ecclesias of Asia Minor to whom the prophecy was sent. Nevertheless, God wanted the prophecy sent to these ecclesias. Brethren and sisters down through the ages, ourselves included, have benefited enormously from these prophecies.

Finally, to pick up on Brother Camplin's point about multiple start/finish dates for prophecies, personally I see this as a strength rather than a weakness in our method of interpretation. As mentioned in previous articles, I see the prophetic time periods as measuring rules connecting periods in history. For example, the seven times, or 2,520 years, spans the time from the Jewish captivity in Babylon to the end of the Diaspora in the twentieth century. The multiple start and finish dates can be likened to the individual planks of wood in a bridge. A bridge with more than one plank of wood is a more substantial structure than a bridge with a single plank.

*Stephen Hughes*

I would like to offer some further comments on this matter. The specific reference of Jesus to Daniel in the Mount Olivet Prophecy reads, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) . . ." (Mt. 24:15). The words in brackets may indicate that the reader needs some discernment regarding the application of Daniel's prophecy to the Roman suppression of the Jewish revolt of A.D. 66-70.

The idea of desolation first comes in Daniel

in 8:13, in relation to the little horn of the goat (Rome) and its destruction of the temple and its sacrifices, where we have a reference to "the transgression of desolation". Regarding this Roman power, 9:27 says, "for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate", in context another reference to A.D. 70. In 11:31 we have the first occurrence of the words quoted by Jesus: "they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate". Though this section of Daniel 11 is often applied to Antiochus Epiphanes, over 150 years before the time of Christ, I believe it applies more fittingly to the Romans, as is evidenced by verbal links between the Mount Olivet Prophecy and this part of Daniel 11. Three out of the four references in Daniel to a desolator therefore refer to Rome, as picked up in the Mount Olivet Prophecy.

Whilst it may be thought appropriate that time periods in Daniel should have A.D. 70 as their terminus, the periods given do not, on a day-for-a-year basis, fit either a terminus or commencement at that time. They fit better with a commencement at the time when the Muslims took over the Land. Hence the fourth reference to the desolator in Daniel, "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days" (12:11). Daniel 9:27 refers to "abominations" in the plural, and 12:11, as the last of the four references to the abomination, refers to a succeeding abomination, the Muslim one. The span of Gentile times is revealed in Daniel 4 to be 2,520 years, and the arrival of the Muslims in the Land separates this period into two halves.—*T.B.*

## The promise of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2

Aleck Crawford

I WOULD LIKE to offer the following comments in reply to [Brother Don Harrison's article](#) of the above title published in December 2006 (p. 442), in particular the concluding two sections under the headings, "The gift of the Holy Spirit" and "The Spirit gifts". Quotations from Brother Harrison's article are in italics with my replies following.

*I had Simon the sorcerer in mind when I visualised the number of fake repentants there would have been if the Spirit gifts had been bestowed as a result of baptism. The inspired record does not say Simon was a "fake repentant". It says the opposite: "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 . . ." (Acts 8:12,13). One of the gifts was "discerning of spirits", another "the word of wisdom" (1 Cor. 12:10,8). Would Christ have allowed "fake repentants" to receive the Spirit gifts? Obviously people can change after their baptism from their beliefs and sincere repentance, and several examples, including Ananias and Sapphira and Simon himself, prove this.

*There is no evidence that the 3,000 who were baptized on the Day of Pentecost did in fact receive Spirit gifts of any kind.*

In [my November article](#) (p. 412) I listed many scriptures that proved it was almost entirely the rule rather than the exception that believers in the first century received the Holy Spirit as promised by Peter in Acts 2:38. There are many additional scriptures that demonstrate this fact. That is why I referred readers in footnote 4 of that article to further reading, as an article is quite limited in how much material can be presented as proof. A few more from the book of Acts are added in what follows.

"Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy [Spirit] and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business . . . And . . . they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy [Spirit] . . . and Philip. . . And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people" (6:3,5,8). In explaining this passage, Brethren Whittaker and Carr say, "They were selected *because* they were 'full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom'. By the figure of speech hendiadys (the expression of one single idea by two separate terms) the phrase means they were chosen because they all had 'Holy-Spirit wisdom', which was a special miraculous endowment (1 Cor. 12:8, etc.) supplied to them by the Lord himself".<sup>1</sup> Obviously Stephen had the miraculous gifts of faith and miracles as well. We need to bear the following statement in mind when we discuss God's miraculous power poured out in the first century: "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:4; cf. vv. 9,10).

Further examples are:

**Acts 8:5-7.** Philip did miracles and was an evangelist.

**Acts 9:17.** Ananias healed Saul's blindness and foretold his mission.

**Acts 11:19-21.** Believers from Cyprus and Cyrene preached, and "the hand of the Lord

was with them".

**Acts 11:27.** "Prophets" came from Jerusalem to Antioch.

There is much evidence in Acts, and especially the epistles, which proves that the miraculous gifts of the Spirit were received and used by many believers outside the circle of the apostles. (It has been demonstrated repeatedly in the literature and by the authors mentioned herein that all the gifts of the Spirit were miraculous in nature.)

*I feel quite strongly that when Peter said, "ye shall receive the gift of the Holy [Spirit]", he had in mind the words of Zacharias, by which we understand that the Holy Spirit through John Baptist would give knowledge of salvation in Christ. The baptism of those converts on the day of Pentecost was the very first occasion for anyone to be baptized into Christ. They had previously known only the Law, which could not take away sin.*

Brother Harrison's interpretation of the Apostle Peter's words, "ye shall receive the gift of the Holy [Spirit]", is conjecture, not in any way substantiated by the record in Acts 2:33-39, as we demonstrated contextually in the November *Testimony* under the heading, "Was the gift of the Holy Spirit the knowledge of salvation?". Brother Harrison has not sought to disprove that exposition, nor has he replied to the questions put to him at the end of that section. Feeling "quite strongly" about one's own opinion does not prove anything if that opinion cannot be demonstrated contextually from the Bible. Most of apostate Christianity feels strongly about their beliefs, but they cannot be found in the Bible because they ignore either the context or the historical context or both.

Brother Harrison's first statement and the third in the paragraph above are mutually exclusive. In the first he states that "John Baptist would give knowledge of salvation in Christ", in the third he says, "They had previously known only the Law, which could not take away sin". He cannot have it both ways, as his first statement contradicts his third. Mark 1:4 records that "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of *repentance* for the remission of sins", thus proving Brother Harrison's third statement false. Also, Christ taught these people for about 3½ years (Acts 2:22), but they rejected his words until after his glorification, when Peter proved by the Holy

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1. *Spirit in the New Testament*, pp. 163-4, published by The Testimony.

Spirit that they had crucified their own Messiah. Did Christ teach them the Law?

Additionally, if the work of Zacharias or John Baptist had given all flesh the knowledge of salvation, why is it that Brother Harrison claims that this knowledge is not really given until after baptism as the gift of the Holy Spirit?

*The word dōrea, translated "gift" in Acts 2:38, is said by Young's Concordance to mean 'a free gift' or 'present', and it is used in Romans 5:15,17, where it has nothing to do with the Holy Spirit.*

As I pointed out in my November article,

"The Greek word *dōrea*, translated 'gift' in Acts 2:38, always refers to the miraculous Spirit gifts throughout Acts; see 8:20; 10:45 and 11:17. To suggest that, because the Greek word *charismata* is not used in Acts 2:38, *dōrea* must refer to salvation or immortality is an invalid conclusion, because neither the word *charisma* nor its plural appears in Acts at all".

It is a well-known principle of Biblical exegesis that you cannot prove the meaning of a word in a given context by reference to other Bible writers and other books of the Bible. For example, you cannot define the meaning of *dōrea* in Acts 2:38 by saying that in Romans it has nothing to do with the Holy Spirit. When Paul uses the word in Ephesians 3:7 and 4:7 and in Hebrews 6:4, it does refer to the gifts of the Spirit, so that is seven out of eleven occurrences of the word where it does have that meaning.

*How fitting that Peter should tell those first converts that they were to receive, not 'a gift of the Spirit' but "the gift of the Holy [Spirit]", which was the knowledge of the salvation possible through Christ!*

There are several equivalent phrases in Acts that define what "the gift of the Holy [Spirit]" in Acts 2:38 means:

"... who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive *the Holy [Spirit]*: (for as yet [it, *Diaglott*] 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]*. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands *the Holy [Spirit]* was given, he offered them money . . . But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that *the gift of God* may be purchased with money" (8:15-20);  
"And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter,

because that on the Gentiles also was poured out *the gift of the Holy [Spirit]*" (10:45);

"And as I began to speak, *the Holy [Spirit]* 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 [Spirit]*. Forasmuch then as God gave them *the like gift* as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ . . ." (11:15-17);

"And they were all filled with *the Holy [Spirit]*, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (2:4).

As we can see from these comparable events, the description is slightly different but the overall meaning is the same.

So the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38)

= the Holy Spirit (8:15,17,18)

= the gift of God (8:20)

= the gift of the Holy Spirit (10:45)

= the Holy Spirit (11:15,16)

= the like gift (11:17)

= the Holy Spirit (2:4)

in these contexts. In particular, the inspired records about the Pentecost of the Gentiles in Acts 10 and 11 demonstrate that what was received was not "the knowledge of salvation", as Brother Harrison claims, but the miraculous ability to speak in tongues, which was one of the gifts of the Spirit. This was "the like gift" (11:17) that filled the disciples on the day of Pentecost (2:4), as prophesied by Jesus in Mark 16:17.<sup>2</sup>

That only the twelve apostles are mentioned in Acts 2 as speaking in tongues at that time is easily explained by the qualifying phrase, "as the Spirit gave them utterance", in verse 4. If the Spirit did not give them utterance then the other recipients would not be able to speak at that time. So what was promised in Acts 2:38 was what the 120<sup>3</sup> had received (Acts 2:4) and what the Gentiles (Cornelius, his relatives and close friends) received.

What was promised in verse 38 was miraculous, it was what they could "see and hear" (v.

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2. For more details on these verses see the two books mentioned in my comments in my November article: *'Spirit' in the New Testament*, published by The Testimony, and *The Spirit: a General Exposition of New Testament Usage*, the latter available from the author at [replies@chariot.net.au](mailto:replies@chariot.net.au) and also online at <http://www.christadelphia.org/books/spirit/index.html>.

3. For proof that it was the 120 see the comments on Acts 2:4 in my book or the website mentioned in the previous footnote.

33) and also limited by time. (Whatever is missing in Acts 2:39 as to the definition of time is clearly supplied in other places, such as 1 Corinthians 13:8-13.) It was "unto you [those Jews assembled], and to your children, and to all that are afar off [the Gentiles such as Cornelius and those referred to in the epistles]" (v. 39). This limit by time has been expounded by Brethren E. Whittaker and R. Carr, John Allfree, Ron Abel, Graham Pearce and myself, among others.

*The bestowal of the Holy Spirit gifts, such as we read of in 1 Corinthians 12, was a later development, the Holy Spirit being imparted by the laying on of the hands of the apostles.*

This is a complex statement, in fact two statements in one. Leave out the example of 1 Corinthians 12 and it is easy to observe that the statement is invalid, as we see in Acts 8, where the apostles bestowed the Spirit upon the baptized believers in Samaria. Who gave Philip the Evangelist the Spirit? Acts 21:8 says he was an evangelist or teacher, and this was a Spirit gift (Eph. 4:11). He was not an apostle, so it is incorrect to say only the apostles received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Either he was one of the 120 who initially received it at Pentecost or he was one of those 3,000 or

5,000 baptized who received the gift of miracles and perhaps healings (Acts 8:6,7).

It is true that 1 Corinthians 12 was written about twenty-five years after Pentecost, and the establishment of that ecclesia was about five years earlier. But these two events are not time markers as to when the Holy Spirit gifts were first poured out. What is recorded in Acts 8:18 was obviously occurring from the time Christ's twelve disciples became apostles (2:42,43). If it was really "a later development", when did these gifts get given to the apostles?

What Peter quotes in Acts 2 from Joel 2 proves that Brother Harrison's statement that "The bestowal of the Holy Spirit gifts . . . was a later development" is false. The expectation of those in Acts 1, and the dramatic events at Pentecost in Acts 2 when those believers who were assembled were filled with the Holy Spirit, describes in condensed form what happened. We get the details of the widespread outpouring of the Holy Spirit by reading the other chapters of Acts, and from the epistles.

*This exchange of views is now concluded—  
T.B.*

## The influence of Hellenism on Jewry

Malcolm Edwards

*One of the strengths of the Scripture record is that it never contrives to establish its own veracity. Yet much undesigned detail is found to establish its claim to be inspired truth. The evidence in the New Testament of Greek influence on Jewry at that time is just one important testimony to this.*

**T**HE QUESTION by the Roman captain to the Apostle Paul at the entrance to the fortress in Jerusalem, "Canst thou speak Greek?" (Acts 21:37), confirms what history itself declares, that in the eastern areas of the Roman Empire Greek was the main spoken language of that time, particularly amongst the educated classes. Rome had only been masters in the region for a little over 100 years, and to the average Jew in Palestine Latin was still a relatively new language. Hence Pilate caused the superscription on the cross to be written in the three commonly used current

languages: Hebrew (Aramaic), Greek and Latin.

Grecian influence, known as Hellenism, was still dominant in Judea at that time, having slowly infiltrated into Jewish culture over a period of some 250 years. However, this culture was a mixed blessing. Thus the

background of the New Testament is noticeably different from that of the Old Testament.

### Alexandria and the Septuagint

In 333 B.C. Alexander the Great defeated the Persians at Issus, and embarked on a career of conquest extending to India. His famous conquest of Tyre a year later robbed Persia of her Mediterranean power, and in 331 B.C. he penetrated further south, into Egypt, where he established a sea port in the Nile Delta, which was named Alexandria in his honour.