

# Fulton County Gospel News

"The Churches of Christ Salute You"

Second Class Postage Paid at Mammoth Spring, Ark.

Volume 12

Mammoth Spring, Arkansas 72554

February 1971

Number 2

## Tongues and Miracles

(Part One)

By Clovis Ragsdale

The subject of miracles and speaking in tongues are a most interesting study. The Bible records scores of miracles, beginning with the events of the creation, and were manifested in all three dispensations of time. Because we no longer live under the patriarchal or Mosiacal age, we will confine our study to that of the Christian age.

Many miracles surround the life of Christ. The virgin birth, the many miracles he worked during his personal ministry, resurrection, and the ascension back to Heaven in the presence of his apostles from the Mount of Olivet are some that were recorded. Many were not recorded. Yet Christ lived and died under the age of the Law of Moses. He fulfilled the law and brought it to an end and set the stage for the Christian dispensation, even to the extent of informing his apostles to tarry in Jerusalem unto their would be endowed with power from on high. Acts 1:8. This occurred ten days before the Day of Pentecost.

The church began on the day of Pentecost when the first invitation was extended to those who heard the gospel preached in fullness for the first time. The Holy Spirit fell on the apostles and they began to speak in tongues. The speaking in tongues was simply the ability of the apostles to speak so that all the different nationalities that were present to hear in their native language. The apostles were unlearned men and could not have spoken the many different languages without the power from on high that was given unto them. This amazed the hearers and served to confirm the words the apostles spoke as being from Heaven and worthy of acceptance. The miracles of being able to speak in languages previously unknown by the speaker confirmed the message spoken, just as Christ proved by his miracles that He was from God. Matt. 11:2-5, John 20:30-31.

The gospel the apostles preached was a new message they were to take to all the world. How could they prove that Christ had sent them and was with them? They had no Bible, the New Testament had not been written. So the Lord promised them special power, Luke 24:46-48, Acts

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## "Let My Conscience Be Your Guide"

The Christian must be concerned with conscience. Paul sought to have a conscience void of offense (Acts 24:16). He taught Christians to obey the civil powers "for conscience sake" (Rom. 13:5). He recommended to Timothy a "Pure heart and a good conscience" (I Tim. 1:5) and said that deacons must "hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience" (I Tim. 3:9).

It is possible for one to have a seared conscience (I Tim. 4:2) or a defiled conscience (Tit. 1:15). When one ignores his conscience, he sins.

The word "conscience" comes from two words meaning "to know with," or "to know together with." The idea is that one must live consistently with that which he believes to be the truth.

### THREE ERRORS

1. Denominationalism has led many astray on this subject with the well-worn maxim, "Let your conscience be your guide" without bothering to explain that conscience reacts only to what it has been taught. If it has been taught properly, then it is a safe guide. But one may conscientiously do that which is wrong. Paul is the classic example. He said, "I have lived in all good conscience unto this day" (Acts 23:1). Yet, he devoted himself to the destruction of the church. While his conscience was clear, acting in harmony with what he was convinced was right, his deeds were wrong. When he learned of his error, change was made accordingly, but in both instances his conscience was clear.

2. A well-instructed brother must not use his knowledge to influence a weaker brother to violate his conscience. I Cor. 8:9-13 teaches that it is possible for a strong brother to engage in an act which is right within itself but which offends the conscience of the weaker brother because he is not acting in harmony with what he is convinced is right for him to do. This does not mean that the weaker brother is not to be taught, nor is he to interfere with the liberty of the stronger brother who is taught. One causes another to stumble in such instances when he influences him to do what he does with a clear conscience, while the other man's conscience hurts him when he does it. It is in this connection that Paul said, "if meat makes my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world

standeth, lest I make my brother to offend" (I Cor. 8:13) "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23).

It is therefore wrong to run roughshod over the sensitive conscience of weak brethren and to seek to compel them to have the same scruples, or lack of them, touching some point, which we have.

3. But I fear that some of my brethren have fallen into a third error as touching the conscience and that is expressed in the title of this article, "Let MY Conscience be YOUR Guide." All of us have scruples on the application of some points which others of us do not share. That does not mean that the Bible teaches contradictory principles or commandments. It does not. But the application of these principles must be worked out by every man consistent with his own conscience.

For instance, one brother understands Romans 13 to teach that a child of God can bear the sword for the civil power in war, while another is convinced that this presses the principle to the point of violation of other clearly taught duties. One brother is convinced that he cannot be a policeman, while another, equally conscientious, believes he can. In such action, the conscience of neither is offended. One believes a man may serve on a jury and another believes he cannot.

One brother believes he cannot eat a meal in a restaurant which has a cocktail lounge on the side, while another, equally opposed to strong drink, sees no difference in that and in buying groceries from a super-market which has a counter full of beer, wine and the ingredients for mixing strong drinks.

In the church, there is too much of a tendency for some brethren to want to bind their own scruples on a variety of matters on the consciences of other brethren. Thus, their attitude is "Let MY Conscience Be YOUR Guide". There are some questions which, in the final analysis, have to be determined by each one in his own conscience. One cannot force his scruples upon another without sinning.

This is the gist of Romans 14 concerning the eating of meats offered in sacrifice to idols, and the esteeming of

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EDITORS: Clovis Ragsdale  
and James E. Henley.

## A DEBATE

There will be a public debate February 22-25 in the Community Center in Walnut Ridge, Arkansas, between Arthur C. Blackwell, Sr. minister of the Mid-West Church of Christ, St. Louis, Missouri, and James Ivy, minister of the Baptist Church of Light, Arkansas.

The proposition to be debated the first two nights is, "That an alien sinner receives pardon or salvation upon conditions of faith, repentance and water baptism, and the Scriptures so teach." Arthur C. Blackwell, Sr. will be affirming and James Ivy denying.

The proposition to be debated the last two nights is, "The Scriptures teach that, before the foundation of the world God elected or chose a certain number out of the human race and ordained them to eternal life; that their salvation is certain and unconditional through the death of Christ for them and only them." James Ivy will be affirming and Arthur C. Blackwell, Sr. denying.

Boyd E. Morgan of Paragould, Arkansas, and Shelby G. Floyd of Indianapolis, Indiana will be moderators for Arthur C. Blackwell, Sr.

## One Of My Gems

One time a preacher was visiting a home in the congregation. The woman complained that she could read and read the Bible but couldn't remember it. She was at the well at that time drawing a bucket of water. The preacher saw a basket nearby and asked the woman to please fill the basket. She agreed and some time later she said, "Brother James, it won't hold water." He said, "Yes, I know, but see how clean the basket is." (God's word cleanses us all)

## "Let My Conscience Be Your Guide" (Cont.)

some days unto the Lord which others did not choose to do. Paul said, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." (Rom. 14:5)

From all of this, we can draw some pertinent conclusions:

(1) One must act consistent with his own conscience. To do otherwise is to sin and sear the conscience.

(2) Yet, conscience is no safer a guide than the reliability of the instruction which moulded it. One may do wrong with a clear conscience because he is untaught.

(3) There are personal applications of divine truth which involve deciding how far one goes in his own duty. In such cases, each must respect the conscience of the other.

Many of the disputes which arise in congregations fall into the last category. Brethren have been known to divide congregations over them.

Be it known that I am not writing of matters which pertain to the work, worship or organization of the church nor of those which have to do with what a sinner must do to be saved. What I have said has to do only with that realm of private judgment which involves Christians in multitudinous decisions throughout a lifetime and in which they must act in harmony with their own conscience based on their own conviction of the truth. Let one not become so arrogant as to say in word or in deed, "Let MY Conscience Be YOUR Guide."

—Connie Adams

## News!

The Church of Christ in Mammoth Spring, Arkansas, will host a series of Bible Lectures March 22 through the 27th. Speakers will be announced next month.

The Church of Christ at Mammoth Spring, Arkansas, had a very good year in 1970, with attendance averaging 275 per Sunday. We thank God for his many blessings through the year of 1970.

We will be happy to announce any meetings in the paper. Dates and speakers should be sent in at least two months in advance.

We are always in need of good sound articles for the paper. If you have an article, or would like to write one, please send it to us at Box 184, Mammoth Spring, Arkansas.

## A CHILD LEARNS

Prov. 22:6 — "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

Recently our children were quite provoked that mother interrupted a television program (which they had already been instructed not to watch) for family worship. Typical human nature in them wanted to rush through worship during the commercial and get back to viewing the program. Mother carefully explained they had been instructed not to begin the program, that she did not enjoy interrupting an interesting program, but good programs are only good for us when we learn to control the television and not allow the television to control or master us. "Heaven and earth (and T.V.) will pass away, but God's word will never pass away." (Matt. 24:35) Worship is a pouring out our love to Him who first loved us. It is drinking of the LIVING WATER—the living word that abides forever. Worship is for the 'spirit-filled' individual. True worship to God cannot be given while the love of the world is uppermost in our minds, while we are desiring to rush back to a television program, etc.

I fall so short in training up the children He has entrusted to me. I need His strength every day. Thank God for His word teaching me to love Him with all my heart... and to talk of Him to these children as I rise up in the morning, as I walk by the way, as I sit in the house, and as I lay down at night; to trust Him with all my heart and lean not to my own understanding (Deut. 6; Prov. 3:5).

God was confident of Abraham and said: "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD." Can He be that confident of me? Bringing up a family for God is not a matter of luck! It is plain hard working together with God. It means being alert—watching and praying night and day, and remembering that God's plan is that parents, not children, direct the household. Children are considered. Parents have the responsibility and it cannot be neglected.

Charlie Combs wrote: "One of the gravest social problems the church faces in American is the deterioration of family life. Our complex society now demands so much time that the family unit is becoming a second rate institution. "Home Sweet home" is almost a thing of the past. Parents have become so involved in "other" activities that the one basic function of the home — a TEACHER - is neglected. The home of yesterday was a kind of school in which parents taught

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**“Did The Holy Spirit Fall On Any-  
One Before Baptism, Other Than  
Cornelius And His Family?”**

**First Things First**

Well first of all, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, as received by the apostles and Cornelius (Acts 10:47) was never received by any one else, before or after water baptism. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was a PROMISE, not a COMMAND and this promise was never given to anyone save the apostles! Jesus in speaking to the apostles (Acts 1:2-6) promised that THEY would receive power AFTER the “Holy Spirit is come upon you” (Acts 1:8). This did come upon the apostles ONLY. Begin reading in Acts 1:23 and read straight into chapter 2. Man divided the Bible into chapters, not the Holy Spirit! You can understand that the “they” of chapter two, refers BACK to Matthias and the eleven other apostles for the antecedent. Every pronoun, such as “they” must have an “antecedent”, (noun) to which it refers. Here it is so VERY PLAIN that the antecedent of “they” is NOT the “hundred and twenty”. Also, please observe that Peter “stood up with the eleven” (Acts 2:14), NOT STOOD UP WITH THE HUNDRED AND TWENTY OF ACTS 1:15. It is too simple for words to understand that the Holy Spirit with this SOUND FROM HEAVEN AS A RUSHING MIGHTY WIND AND THE TONGUES LIKE AS OF FIRE came to the apostles ONLY. THIS WAS TO GUIDE THEM INTO ALL TRUTH AND REMIND THEM OF THE THINGS JESUS HAD SAID UNTO THEM, John 14:26 and 16:13. After this, the apostles could speak in all languages, perform miracles, and give this power to others, so the baptism of the Holy Spirit was not necessary for each convert. The Holy Spirit gave the apostles the Gospel of Christ by word of mouth, as well as POWER to perform miracles to CONFIRM that they spoke for God. We today have the word of the Holy Spirit WRITTEN and the MIRACLES which confirmed the word, so we need neither today. Just preach the Gospel of Christ which is God’s power to save man, Rom. 1:16.

The ONLY other case of the Holy Spirit baptism is recorded in Acts 10, pertaining to the family of Cornelius the FIRST Gentile convert to the Gospel of Christ. You would need to read the tenth and eleventh chapters of Acts to understand that for about six years after Peter Preached in Acts two, that the Gospel was “for all them which are afar off” (Gentiles), that the Jewish apostles REFUSED to preach to any one save

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1—“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment, Matthew 22:37-38.

2—This is said of the churches of Macedonia, which included Thessalonica, Berea, and Philippi. They were so very liberal in giving to the Lord, though poor in material goods, that Paul had this to say about them, “And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God”, 2 Cor. 8:5.

3—Under the law of Moses, as well as today, our relationship one toward another will determine whether God accepts our worship. Concerning the offering unto the Lord under the law of Moses, God thought this so important that He (God) was willing to wait while differences between men were settled. When we worship God, we must first be right with our fellow-man, if at all possible. Note the words of Jesus, “Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath taught against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way: first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift”, Matthew 5:23-24.

4—Throughout God’s dealings with men, He has either been first or not at all. He took the first fruits of the crops and the first born of the people and animals. HE MUST BE FIRST TODAY, OR NOT AT ALL. AND THIS IS WHERE THOUSANDS FAIL HIM! Today, He takes the first day of each week for his children to support the Gospel (1 Cor. 16:2), to remember the Lord by eating the Lord’s supper, Acts 20:7. WHAT DO YOU DO ON THE FIRST DAY?

5—We are to be sure that we are living the proper life before we begin to point

out the short comings in others. Listen to the words of Jesus, “And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye. Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then thou shalt see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye”, Matthew 7:3-5. Just how many of us heed these words of the Master? It is so easy to see the “mote” in the eyes of others, but so very hard to see the “beam” in our own eye! Let us check self first!

6—Many of us worry about food, clothing, shelter, old age, illness, paying bills, keeping up with the Jones, what others think or do not think about us, the weather, the children, parents, jobs, and hundreds of other things! Should we really worry about these things? Be concerned, plan, act wisely and do the best we can to be sure! But should we worry about it? Jesus teaches that this is a lack of faith! He speaks of God feeding the birds who do not sow, reap, or store food. He speaks of the clothing of the lilies and the grass, and not even Solomon could equal the beauty of the lily of the field. Then he tells us that the “Gentiles” worry about all such as this. The “Gentile” under the law of Moses, is equal to the non-christian today. Jesus says to his children, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things will be added unto you”, Matthew 6:33. He had reference to food, clothing and shelter. WHAT ABOUT YOU, DO YOU WORRY?

**A Child Learns (Cont.)**

their children many lessons of life and religion. What are homes teaching today? Secular and religious education have improved over the years, but what about the first and greatest teacher — the home??? Have not many parents abdicated their responsibility to their children?

“When was the last time you sat down and listened to your child’s problems, regardless of how trivial they may have seemed to you? What about acknowledging their achievements and helping them over the crisis of failures, defeats and disappointments? When was the last time you took time to rejoice over your child’s accomplishments?

Martin Luther once said: “Spare the rod and spoil and the child is true; but besides the rod keep an apple to give him when he has done well.” A CHILD LEARNS . . . at home!

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# Jesus Said It Couldn't Be Done

Jesus said in Matt. 6:24: "No man can serve two masters." He didn't say that it was inadvisable or inexpedient. He didn't merely say it was unwise to do this. He says it is an impossibility! He went on to say: "Either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other.

Some people either don't know our Lord said this, or they don't believe what he said. They are trying to do what Jesus said can't be done. They claim to be members of the church and come now and then. But they love the world more than they love the Lord and they serve the devil more than they attempt to serve God.

Attempting this impossible feat — holding on to the devil with one hand and

trying to hold on to Christ with the other — only produces frustration. Their conscience and their claim to being a Christian keeps them from enjoying sin and they have just enough religion to make them miserable. That's why Jesus told us to be either "cold or hot". Don't straddle the fence!

The person who is attempting this impossible task will find that his grip on Christ and things spiritual is slipping. He won't even attempt to serve Christ as he once did. He will hate the one and love the other — or he will hold to one and despise the other — just as Christ said he would do. It is folly for a man to try to do something that Jesus said he could not do.

By Raymond Kelcy

## Tongues And Miracles (Cont.)

1:5-8, to prove that what they preached was a divine message and should be believed.

The apostles had power to lay their hands on others and likewise enable them to confirm their message of truth with signs and miracles. This is taught in Acts 6:6, 8:6, and also verses 8-14 in this eighth chapter of Acts. No place in the New Testament teaches that the power to work miracles or to speak in tongues could be given to a third party by those who received their power from the apostles. The apostles alone had the power to confer this power on others. This is a basic truth that must be kept in mind as one studies this subject. Another important truth to be remembered is that early churches did not have the New Testament as we do today to study and guide them in knowing how to worship in the church. They were taught and guided by gifts of teaching and knowledge received by the laying on of hands of the apostles. 1 Cor. 12:1-12 offers a good explanation of how it was carried out.

Paul speaks of this in the introduction to his letter to the church at Rome, Romans 1:11. I believe that most everyone will agree on the facts we have stated so far in this article. There is a difference in understanding of a question that we will discuss in the next article: have miracles and tongues, as well as the other gifts mentioned in the early church ceased, or have they continued until today? We believe the Lord, through his word, has plainly answered this question and will cite scriptures that can settle this question, without having to depend on human opinions. This is an important question for if tongues and miracles are facts today it would be a sin to oppose or disclaim the work, and if they have ceased, it would be sinful to teach such as truth.

(To Be Continued)

## "Did The Holy Spirit Fall" (Cont.)

another Jew. So in Acts 10, God had taught Peter that the Gospel was for ALL men and all men were (clean) according to God. It was then that Peter LEARNED "that God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34-35). When Peter and the SIX other Jews who were with him saw that "the Holy Spirit fell on them (Cornelius and his family) as on us at the beginning" (Acts 11:11-17) and that they received a (like gift, verse 17) they then could command water that they be baptized "which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we", Acts 10:47.

In other words the Holy Spirit fell on the FIRST Gentile converts just as on the apostles, to prove to the Jews that the Gentiles were acceptable to God under the same conditions of the Gospel of Christ as the Jews, ACTS 15:6-11. Here it is STATED that "bare them (Cornelius and family) witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us." He further stated that there was no DIFFERENCE in the two races, verse 9. So the ONLY TWO cases of Holy Spirit baptism on record are explained by God. Acts two, to give the apostles the ability to preach a Gospel they had never heard in languages which they had not learned and confirm it all by miracles. Also the power to IMPART gifts of miracles to others, 1 Cor. 12, that they too, could preach and confirm the word, but these on whom the apostles bestowed this power, could not pass it on to another. Then the house of Cornelius was for the purpose of confirming to the Jews that God was no respecter of persons, but saved all men the same way, and WOULD save all who obey him.

## Eyes Upon Your Cross

By Art Smith

The Texans sing a song, "The Eyes of Texas Area Upon You". Christians should be constantly reminded that "The Eyes of the World Are Upon You". Upon the shoulders of every child of God is the cross of Jesus Christ, and each day the world observes how well you carry that cross.

Do you carry this cross high and proudly, or do you abuse it? Do you carry it every day, or is it just something you pick up on Sunday mornings? Is the cross you carry so small that many of your closest friends are not aware that you have one? Our Lord said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Luke 9:23) Is this the cross you bear?

The way you carry your cross determines what others think of Christianity and God Himself. Jesus stated, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 5:16) Does your life cause mankind to glorify or scorn God? Think about it.

## BITS OF WISDOM

To be without some of the things you want is an indispensable part of happiness.

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The rung of a ladder was never meant to rest upon, but only to hold a man's foot to enable him to put the other foot somewhat higher.