

Cooke, TonyMiracles and the Supernatural Throughout Church History Study Guide

6. Lesson 3 — The Move of God in Northern Africa

Rick and Tony continue their study of the Holy Spirit's work through church history, drawing on Tony's book. This lesson argues that miracles and spiritual gifts did not stop after the apostles, and points to North Africa's role in Scripture and in the Early Church as proof. It focuses on three North African church fathers — Tertullian, Origen, and Augustine — who saw real supernatural power in their ministries.

Key takeaways

- Paul told the Corinthians they were 'enriched' (Greek *plousios* — abundantly rich) in gifts and that they should come behind in no gift until Jesus returns. So the gifts are meant to operate through the whole church age.
- North Africa matters biblically: Jesus fled there as a child, Simon of Cyrene (Libya) carried His cross, Egyptians and Libyans were at Pentecost, and Mark planted a church in Alexandria.
- 'Church fathers' are the educated, Scripture-soaked leaders who took the helm after the apostles died.

- Tertullian of Carthage recorded gifts in operation — word of knowledge, prophecy, discernment — and warned the gifts are 'tools, not toys.'
- Origen of Alexandria pointed to the power in Jesus' name to expel demons and heal, and tied the gifts to the fruit of the Spirit: if one continues, so does the other.
- Augustine of Hippo once doubted miracles until he saw them, then documented 70 in his own church.
- The Holy Spirit moves where He is expected; unbelief and man's traditions, not God, are what shut the miraculous down.

Passages worth keeping

"The gifts of the Spirit are tools, not toys."

Tertullian's warning that the gifts are for real ministry, not spectacle.

"Even now, therefore, many miracles are worked, the same God who worked those we read of still performing them, by whom He will and as He will."

Augustine, once a skeptic, affirming miracles continue in his own day.

How it connects

The lesson's backbone is that Jesus is 'the same yesterday, today, and forever' — so genuine experience of the Spirit's power should line up with Scripture, and Scripture settles the matter even where personal experience is lacking.

Scripture referenced

- **1 Corinthians 1:5-7** -- Believers enriched in every gift, coming behind in none until Christ returns.
- **Romans 12:6** -- Gifts differ according to grace given — the church expected them and saw them.
- **Mark 16:17** -- Signs follow those who believe — power activated by faith.
- **Acts 2** -- Libyans and Egyptians present at Pentecost.
- **Acts 8** -- Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch — the Gospel reaching Africa.