

# THE TONGUES DECEPTION

## A BIBLICAL STUDY

by Thomas R. Durgin

First published 2001

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and

## The Line Drawn

by Miles J. Stanford

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## Preface

This writing did not start out to be something that was written to be published. These are the personal notes that I, Thomas R. Durgin, wrote as an aid to my own remembrance of the fruits of my personal study of this topic. As such, these notes were safely parked on my book shelf in hand written form until of late when the Holy Spirit, I believe, nudged me to bring them out and type them for someone who was interested. As the leadership of God in this matter was pursued, the need for the results of this study seemed to be evidenced in the many struggling saints who are searching for understanding and clear help on this volatile subject.

As is always the case with the saints of God, the Holy Spirit gives wisdom to discern between truth and error. This is so many times begun subjectively and only later proven to be God's voice as diligent obedience and study is pursued in the written Word of God. Many there are who would rather have the approval of man, especially in certain religious circles, than the approval of the very God Who has chosen to redeem them. This is not the position of the author. My position is to diligently listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit rather than seeking the approbation of man.

I have pursued a variety of sources in my investigation of the study of tongues. But this was written over thirty years ago. Writings of others were used which I find it impossible to identify at this time. I claim no originality of thinking but build upon the thoughts of other saints of God who have studied before me. I claim any errors as my own as well as any omissions. But I do remember relying on the writings of Spiros Zodhiates, a native Greek, as a framework. (Spiros Zodhiates, Th.D., AMG Publishers, Chattanooga, TN 37422) Thomas R. Durgin, February 2001

# Presuppositions

In any study, the beginning seems to be from the base of the student's presuppositions. These presuppositions are the starting point from which one begins the consideration of the matter to be investigated. It is no different with this study. You have your presuppositions, and that is as it should be. Without this base as a starting point the inquirer would be unable to have stability in its consideration. But with this stability, his mental and emotional stability, he is prepared for the exploration of new data with which he grows into a deeper understanding of the truth, especially the deeper truths of God.

A wise person is one who has progressed from an emotional, subjective, immature understanding of his own beliefs to the mental and spiritual awareness, the objective, and more mature understanding of what his true presuppositions are on a given subject. A wise person is one who knows how to hold his preconceived ideas loosely and how to let them go when it is the right thing to do. Belief, even belief in Jesus Christ as the Savior of those who believe, must pass through this procedure. So, one of the marks of wisdom is to know when to hold fast one's beliefs and when to let them go for a more true belief.

So it is with this volatile subject of *speaking in tongues*. Each reader has his own presuppositions. Some may be very strongly held in confidence while some might be more loosely grasped in desperation. Some may be "built on the sand" of man's religious thoughts while others might be "built on the rock" of proper biblical exegesis. Some presuppositions are so poorly held that they seem to require vigorous defense and argument. But for those who have begun their presuppositions by a sensitivity to the voice of the Holy Spirit and then moved on to build their presuppositions and solidify them upon the objective Word of God, there is the quiet, calm, peace of understanding. And truth is always self authenticating.

So as this discussion begins, I will present for your consideration some presuppositions with which to start. Some are historical facts. Some are obvious applications of these historical facts. Some are conclusions of logic. But all group together to bring practical logic out of chaotic confusion on this subject.

First of all consider that God wants His children to know the truth, predominantly in the confidence of the understanding of the mind, as opposed to the lack of confidence through the feelings of the emotions. To contend that the feelings of emotions are the evidence of truth must give way to the properly understood truths from the Word of God. Because the Bible, properly interpreted and understood, is the basis of all man's grasp of truth.

## Brief History of Corinth

Corinth was a city of about 250,000 free persons and 400,000 slaves in the days of the apostle Paul. Along with Athens, Corinth was a chief city of Greece in a number of ways. A crossroads for travelers and traders, it lay on an isthmus in southern Greece. It had two harbors, Chenchrea, six miles to the east and Lechaion, on the Corinthian Gulf, a mile and a half to the west. A road had been built by which smaller ships could be hauled fully loaded from one port to the other and by which cargoes of larger ships could be transported by wagons from one side to the other. Goods flowed through the city from Italy and Spain on the west and from Asia Minor, Phoenicia and Egypt on the east.

The people of Corinth were interested in Greek philosophy and placed a high premium on wisdom. There were at least 12 temples there. One of which was the temple dedicated to Aphrodite, the goddess of love whose worshipers practiced religious prostitution. About one-fourth of a mile north stood the temple of Asclepius, the god of healing. In the middle of the city lay the sixth century B.C. temple of Apollo. The Jews had also established a synagogue there.

### Delphi

Across the bay from Corinth was Delphi, Greece's most famous center of oracles.<sup>1</sup> The happenings in Delphi were affecting Corinth and the believers who had just been led to salvation. There was also a Corinthian treasury at Delphi. Those who had a question about which they earnestly desired an answer, would first sacrifice a sheep, goat, boar, or other animal, after which if the omens<sup>2</sup> were favorable, they went into the room adjoining the Adyton, or inner shrine.<sup>3</sup> At the inner shrine, they waited in turn, which was determined by lot unless they had received from the Delphians the *promanteia*, or a prior right of consultation. They handed in questions written on leaden tablets (many of which have since been discovered). The *Pythia*, or priestess, (note that it was a priestess, not a priest) who delivered the oracle was a peasant woman over fifty years of age. At the height of the oracle's fame, there were three priestesses. After purifying herself in the Castalian fountain,<sup>4</sup> drinking of the water of the Kassotis,<sup>5</sup> and eating a laurel leaf, she took her seat upon a tripod which was placed over the chasm in the Adyton.

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<sup>1</sup> An oracle was an utterance of unknown content or character that came from one of the priestesses under intoxication. No one knew what was being said or meant. It was not interpretable.

<sup>2</sup> An omen is a supposed sign intended to be a communication with the "spirits" of "the other world". Note the satanic implication.

<sup>3</sup> Paul's mention of sacrifices to idols in 1 Cor. 8 indicates how closely the religious happenings at Delphi affected the Corinthians and their acts of worship even after becoming justified.

<sup>4</sup> Here is an example of a false baptism in the religion of Delphi. This was carried into the Corinthian Church with many other errors.

<sup>5</sup> Note the parallelism in 1 Cor. 12:13 "and we all drank of one Spirit".

Intoxicated by the fumes of the chasm, she uttered incoherent sounds which were “interpreted” in hexameter verse by a waiting poet. The interpretation, which was always obscure and frequently equivocal was handed over to the inquirer who usually returned home more mystified than when he had come. (Source: Stuart Rossiter, *Greece*; London: Ernest Benn, Ltd. P. 400) See also the Key Study Bible with notes by Spiros Zodhiates, Th.D., AMG Publishers, Chattanooga, TN 37422 U.S.A. Much of the following historic information has been taken from Zodhiates’ notes and writings and is not original with this author.)

What Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 14:33-40, therefore, was undoubtedly influenced by this pagan practice and the predominant participation of women at the oracles of Delphi. The average women were not allowed to go into the inner shrine, it was reserved for the women who were priestesses. Is it any wonder that Paul reacted to a practice so closely related to such paganism which had been brought into the Christian church.

### Questions and Reports

When Paul was addressing the Corinthians, he had the list of questions that they had asked as well as a list of the incursions in their attempts of corporate worship. The list has not survived, but we can accurately determine what was on the list by a careful analysis of Paul’s responses to them. <sup>6</sup> Their immature zeal was developing many unhealthy religious concepts and practices. They were overwhelmed by the “new religion” of Christ and they brought their zeal into the church. They were very active in their evil, worldly paganism and the emotional feelings that went with it; they brought that into the church. They brought the concept that women are the primary recipients of the Word of God into the church. They had heard from the evil spirit world through their oracles so they brought that into the church. This resulted in their eagerness to speak in an unintelligible “tongue” that carried with it no content and that no one could understand. Under their past experiences, God’s natural order is reversed with women being dominant over men. <sup>7</sup> Then there is the idea that feelings and emotions and other subjective experiences were the basic thing rather than the mind’s understanding of the content of the truths of God. In their ignorance they preferred the lack of accountability of personal feelings above the accountability of objective truth.

Paul’s comments in 1 Cor. 11:2-16 in regard to the covering of the woman’s head were a reaction to the existence of a thousand priestesses at the Temple of Aphrodite on Acrocorinth. These priestesses, or temple prostitutes, were commonly seen without any covering on their heads, and having short hair, which was unbecoming to the modest woman of those days. Paul’s concern was that Christian women should never allow themselves to be viewed in any way as resembling those of low moral stature. In 1

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<sup>6</sup> 1 Cor. 5:1 illustrates that Paul was aware of the actions of and happenings in the church there.  
1 Cor. 7:1 gives evidence of a list of questions the answers to which we have but without the list.

<sup>7</sup> No one who dismisses God’s truth can relate man and woman in the divine order.

Cor. 11:13, 16, his concern is that a woman in worship should very clearly be identified as a moral woman. If by nothing else than the long hair or the covering on her head. After all, if one of the prostitutes became saved, the only way she could enter an assembly of believers was to wear a covering (*peribolaion*, 4018, 1 Cor. 11:15) instead of long hair which would take a while to grow. This was the practice, particularly in Corinth, in view of the behavior which was so nearly Acrocorinth. It was a good custom that had local meaning at that time. It should not be flaunted to produce quarreling within the Christian church today. This was Paul's argument.

This passage becomes clearer if we examine the conclusion in verse 16: "But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God." Good customs that are meaningful locally ought not to be resisted, but to be kept for what they symbolize. This was the great principle enunciated in 1 Cor. 11:1-16 and similarly in 14:33-40 but this time not in regard to Acrocorinth, but in regard to Delphi. A priestess who speaks incoherently and leads men astray as in Delphi? Never! And that was Paul's point of view.

The main verse that constitutes the foundation of all that Paul says in 1 Cor. 14 is verse 33, "For God is not the *author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints". The word *author* does not occur in the Greek text, so the passage simply states that "He is not a God of confusion".

The interpreter of the oracles at Delphi always gave an ambiguous interpretation which would please the recipient and never expose the priestess who gave it; this is in contrast with communication from God who does not speak to confuse men. This verse applies to all that precedes it and to all that follows it concerning the speaking of women in the churches. Paul makes it clear that in all the other churches, there is no confusion such as there was in the Corinthian church to which he was writing. The peace in the other churches and lack of confusion was due to the fact that there was not the same practice of "speaking in an unknown tongue" as the Corinthians, perhaps allowing their women to imitate the Delphic priestesses. The prohibition of women speaking in churches may have come from such practices.

Another very important instruction of Paul is found in 14:39-40, closing this total discussion of gifts which begins with Chapter 12. Paul's conclusion is this, "Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy," or be zealous to proclaim God's Word. The tense indicates that they were admonished to be constantly giving forth the Word of God in understandable languages. Because of confusion among them, it did not mean that they should stop teaching and witnessing. "And to speak in tongues, do not prohibit" uses the Greek *koluete* (2967) meaning, "When a person does not speak in our own language, do not forbid him to minister in his own language which can be interpreted". In verse 40, Paul closes by saying, "Let all things be done decently and in order". The intent is to have everything to be done continuously and repeatedly in order.

This, as a principle, applies to all churches (vs 34) although it was born out of a practice existing only in Corinth. Therefore his instructions to the Corinthians are to be applied among all the churches. When Paul says in verse 34, "Your women in the churches, let them be quiet", it was not an instruction to the men in general in any church not to permit any woman to speak, but for husbands to guide and to teach

their own wives lest they produce confusion and disturbance in a meeting, particularly in the exercise of a gift that they thought they had and were so anxious to externalize; namely speaking in an “unknown tongue” as was the manner of the Delphic priestesses. (The above was freely taken from Spiros Zodhiates’ notes on this passage in the Key Study Bible.)

Like any large commercial city, Corinth was a center of open and unbridled immorality. The worship of Aphrodite fostered prostitution in the name of religion. At one time there were 1000 prostitutes who served the temple. The widely known and practiced immorality was to a great extent the cause of numerous problems in the church there, such as is discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

### **More Presuppositions and Keys to the Understanding 1 Corinthians 14**

1. As the above historical material indicates, when the pagan was converted to Christ, he or she would bring their pagan thoughts and practices into the church. And it is only as they were taught and were able to assimilate Scriptural truths that they were able to move into biblically Christian living. So it is today.
2. There are three sources of tongues, words, thoughts and actions in the world.
  - A. God through His Holy Spirit
  - B. Self through man's spirit
  - C. Satan through an evil spirit

The two tongues in 1 Corinthians (singular and plural) are interwoven, and if not differentiated and identified, make it look like Paul is for and against the same thing. But he is not. So to take any single meaning for the word “tongue” or “tongues” leads to confusion, misunderstanding and error.

Today's instances of speaking in a tongue are mostly from self, motivated by unbiblical religious thinking, leaving the human spirit unguarded against intrusion by a demon who can take over the emotions, thoughts and voice and speak in a language which the demon has learned previously. Such wordage may even curse God in some language that is or has been used in the world. (1 Cor. 12:3) The Holy Spirit will never lead a person to speak in a manner that is not interpretable or one that causes confusion.

God may bring about special cases where His servants today, in isolated cases, speak in a language that they have not learned, but it will always be in the native language of the hearer, and that, to share the will of God and the Word of God with unbelievers, and that only temporarily.

3. **The seven usages of the singular tongue** The translators of the King James Version of the Bible, the KJV, saw the difference between the ecstatic, un-intelligible utterance or tongue which they correctly saw to be in error in the Corinthian Church, and the deliberate, intelligible use of the variety of human languages for the dissemination of God's Word. So they attempted to make that

difference clear to the reader by adding or supplying the italicized word “unknown” before the singular usages of the word "tongue". There are seven singular usages of the word in the passage but the KJV translators were a bit inconsistent in that they placed an italicized “unknown” before six of the singulars. They were telling us that the singular word “tongue” indicated a fault in the Corinthian's church life. These seven are found in verses, 2, 4, 13, 14, 19, 26, 27 and are all condemned in the context.

4. **The seven usages of the plural tongues** The translators saw the seven usages of the plural word “tongues” and let them stand as the plural word. In every case, they indicate human languages that are the native language for some nationality. Always, the plural “tongues” is approved and that for the getting out of the Gospel and for the building up of the saints. These seven are found in verses, 5a, 5b, 6, 18, 22, 23, 39 and are all approved.
5. **The seven usages of the word spirit** The text and context will show that the word “spirit” is used seven times. In each and every case the meaning is the human spirit of those to whom Paul was speaking. The source of the spirit was not from God nor was it from Satan, but from their own zealous drive and competition. And remember there are three spirits to consider: God's spirit, man's spirit and Satan's spirit. These seven usages of the word “spirit” all indicate man's spirit. These seven are found in verses, 2, 12, 14, 15a, 15b, 16, 32.
6. **The Greek word *laleo*** There are twenty some instances of the word “speak” or “*laleo*” in the Greek text. In every instance the meaning is that a sound was being uttered without any content or communicable meaning. These sounds could not be translated. When content and meaning was to be communicated, a different Greek word was used; this word is “*lego*”. The word *lego* is not used in any instances of speaking in a “tongue” in this chapter.

### **The Beginning Point**

In the study of tongues, as with any subject upon which God has spoken, do not begin with religion or self, but with God's written revelation. Do not try to verify the Bible by experiences, but *visa versa*. It is best not to discuss the modern tongues situation until first seeing God's truth on the subject; and every minute spent in God's truth is worth while.

I have personally never seen a Christian who spoke in a “tongue” as a practice or even who spoke occasionally in an “unknown tongue” or one who even used it occasionally in prayer who was stable in the Lord and a person of mature depth in the Word. Nor have I ever seen such a person who could walk by faith in the Lord through His Word. Nor have I even seen such a person who knew God's plan of the ages and the proper dispensational understanding of the Word. Nor have I even seen such a person who knew the biblical truths of the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

Without a clear understanding and the maturity that comes from proper biblical exegesis,<sup>8</sup> people become deluded and seduced by every wind of doctrine.<sup>9</sup> There is a great need in the church for people to be taught major biblical truths such as: biblical content, true prayer, the life of faith and trust, election, the New Covenant, dispensationalism, the methods of feeding on the Word, the errors of humanistic thinking, the person and work of the Holy Spirit, etc.

Without a clear understanding of biblical truths people, even religious people who name the name of Christ, will tear down the foundation (the Rock) of faith and build on an erroneous foundation (sand). God's way is quietly trusting; man's way is flesh and feelings and religion and emotionalism and spectacularism.

There are many who have a deceptive and a religiously acceptable "front". Such have great religious practices, service, building, fine speech, music, but the end thereof are the ways of death.<sup>10</sup>

Much confusion evidences itself to the believer who knows who he is and Whose he is from the biblical perspective. Without this stability, doctrinal errors creep in and bring confusion. They wonder: Am I truly saved? Can I ever be sure? Who or What is the Holy Spirit? What is salvation? How can I know about gifts and tongues? What about the baptism and filling of the Spirit? What is Grace? What is legalism? What is holiness? Can I ever be free from sin? How can I deal with this world and its evil? Can I really believe the Bible? How can I get rid of the inner gnawing of guilt? How can I pray so that God will answer? How can I draw near to God? How can I have faith and truly believe? How can I be sure that I have not been seduced by an evil spirit? What is speaking in tongues?

### **Speaking in a "Tongue"**

- Q. Is the phenomenon of speaking with tongues in the Corinthian church the same as the instances given elsewhere in the New Testament?
  
- Q. Did the Corinthians speak with tongues in the same manner that the disciples did on the day of Pentecost, or the Gentile believers in the house of Cornelius in Caesarea, or the believers in Ephesus who had previously received only John's baptism?

In Mark 16:17 and in every other pertinent passage in the New Testament the word translated "tongues" is *glossa*.

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<sup>8</sup> Exegesis is the getting from Scripture the truths of what it is actually saying. It is contrasted to eisegesis, which means putting into Scripture what one wants it to say.

<sup>9</sup> Ephesians 4:14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive...

<sup>10</sup> Proverbs 14:12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death.

The technical word *glossolalia* “speaking with tongues” has been coined from *glossa*. *Glossolalia* is used in connection with the Corinthian practice.

There are three meanings for “*glossa*”

1. *Glossa* means the physical tongue (the physical meaning). It is used in Luke 16:24 where the rich man in hades entreated Abraham for a drop of water for his tongue.
2. *Glossa* is used for the result of the tongues’ movements; our common word is language (the figurative meaning)
3. *Glossa* also means “a particular language” such as German or English etc. In 7 passages in Revelation *glossa* means a particular language (5:9, 7:9, 10:11, 11:9 13:7, 14:6, 17:5)

Summing up, *glossa* means: our physical tongue, our speech or language, our distinctive ethnic language.

### **Mark 16:17**

*And these signs shall follow those who believe: In my name shall they cast out devils (demons); they shall speak with new tongues. Mark 16:17*

Mark 16:17 has been used of many to say that all true believers should speak in “tongues”; but “those who believe” refers to those who had at that time already believed, that is, the apostles, not future believers. This was fulfilled in Acts 2 where the 120 disciples spoke in 15 different languages as the Holy Spirit used them. To make it refer to today’s believers is wrestling the Scriptures to one’s own destruction.<sup>11</sup>

The “new tongues” means new languages to the one using them, not an unknown or unheard of language. And notice that “tongues is plural, always means known human languages. “In my name” does not mean authority; but it means “to make my revelation known”.

There are 5 signs or miracles which went together to authenticate the apostle’s message as being from God; and all of the five were functioning by the apostles during the time when the message of Christ’s being the Messiah was being delivered to the Jews. And remember that visible, public miracles ceased with the Jew’s final rejection of Jesus as the Messiah.

1. Exorcism
2. Using new languages
3. Taking up serpents
4. Drinking poison
5. Healing of the sick

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<sup>11</sup> This would be a good example of the error of “isogesis”.

And there are 4 periods of miracles given in the Scriptures; and every time of miracles had the purpose of authenticating the message of the messenger.

1. In Moses' time
2. In Elijah's time
3. In Jesus and the Apostles's time
4. In the future Tribulation

Observe that Mark's gospel is the only one stating this and that there is no mention of the Holy Spirit in this passage; nor is there a binding connection between the Holy Spirit and these miracles. However, they were part of the Apostle's testimony.

### **Three Historic Instances of Speaking with Tongues**

A careful study of the biblical text will show that the only three historic instances of speaking with tongues. All other references to speaking with tongues in the Scriptures are discussions about it, not historical records of fact or occurrence. The three historic instances are:

1. Acts 2:4-11 At the time of Pentecost at Jerusalem
2. Acts 10:46 At the house of Cornelius at Caesarea
3. Acts 19:6 At Ephesus

#### **The First Historic Instance of Speaking with Tongues, Acts 2**

The first historic instance of speaking with tongues occurred Acts 2:4-11 at Pentecost in Jerusalem. This is the fulfillment of Mark 16:17. Pentecost is a once for all completed fact of the birthday of the church, and the first filling of the disciples with the Holy Spirit. Like the death of Christ or the rending of the Temple Veil, it would never be repeated. God's will for the unfolding of history was being accomplished. There were 15 nations and languages present and there were 120 believers. There were 3000 converts for an average of 200 converts per language and 25 converts per disciple. Note the sequence:

1. The 120 were in one place and accord
2. A loud rushing sound came from heaven
3. The sound filled the house
4. There appeared unto them split tongues which looked like fire
5. It sat upon each of them
6. The 120 all yielded control to the Holy Spirit (filling)
7. They began to speak with other languages as the Holy Spirit gave the message
8. Each of the many visitors to Jerusalem at this time of Pentecost heard them speak in his own language vs.6
9. Each of the 15 languages was actually used for witnessing and preaching by the 120 believers. Probably the 120 disciples each witnessed to little groups of Jews for 2 or 3 hours in their native languages before Peter got up to speak as indicated in vs 13-14.

The “other” in vs 4 is *heteria* meaning other in quality as one human language differs from another. This same Greek word is used in 1 Cor 14:21.

There was a need to proclaim the Gospel to the end of the world and God miraculously met it. His Grace was proclaimed, fulfilling Mark 16:17.

1. The believers spoke in extant languages “new” to them
2. They spoke to unbelievers, not believers
3. The ability to so speak was for witnessing, not fellowship
4. Those who so spoke were believers
5. This resulted from the unique, one-time, visible coming of the Holy Spirit to the church

Verse 12 shows the amazement. Specifically, it was that unbelievers heard the disciples speak in their distinct language (not the disciple’s language). It was known that the apostles did not know all these languages and that was the amazing thing to them.

Note that these same disciples were servants of Christ all their lives, but there is no evidence of any of them ever using these foreign languages again. None of them used tongues for preaching later. Even Paul preached to many nations, but in Greek, or Hebrew, or Aramaic, but never a repeat of this. When one compares this to 1 Cor. 14:18, We see that Paul probably did speak in several known human languages. No disciple acquired the permanent knowledge of one or more foreign languages supernaturally. In each of the 3 historical instances, speaking with tongues was the instantaneous temporary result of the supernatural enablement of the Holy Spirit. No interpreter was needed.

### **The Second Historic Instance of Speaking with Tongues, Acts 10**

*While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. 45 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 Ghost. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? Acts 10:44-47*

The second historic instance of speaking with tongues is found in Acts 10:46 recording the events in the house of the Gentile, Cornelius in Caesarea. There is no record of “tongues” in the 8 years from Pentecost to Caesarea. While Peter spoke Greek, the Holy Spirit fell on all the Gentiles present. The Jewish Christians recognized this and were astonished (vs 45). The tongues were not “new” as the prophecy of Mark 16:17 (new meaning previously unknown to the speaker). Nor were they “other” tongues, meaning other than Hebrew as recorded in Acts 2:4. The tongues here were known understandable human languages of those soldiers from many nations and the family of Cornelius. Peter and his Jewish company understood the language (which was probably Hebrew or Aramaic) and no interpreter was needed.

Note that whenever speaking with tongues is said to be from the direct energy of the Holy Spirit, there seems to be no necessity for, or even mention of, an interpreter. This is true for each of the three historical instances, Pentecost, Caesarea, and Ephesus.

The significance of Peter's first words, in verse 34, was that "God is no respecter of persons". But you may wonder as to why this additional instance of the languages; it was to bridge the gap between the Jews and Gentiles. Acts 11:17-18 and the Jerusalem Counsel in Acts 15 illustrate that these things were God's historical unfolding of His acceptance of the believing Gentile as well as the believing Jew. God was the Gentiles' God also through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit was also given to the Gentiles.

The believing Jews who came with Peter were unbelievers in the truth of the Gentiles receiving the Holy Spirit and so God gave the sign for these Jew's benefit. (cf 1 Cor. 14:22).

At Pentecost, the Jewish believers spoke in languages other than Hebrew or Aramaic.

At Caesarea, the Gentile believers spoke in languages other than Greek or Roman (probably Hebrew or Aramaic).

### **The Third Historic Instance of Speaking with Tongues, Acts 19**

*And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, 2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. 4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. 7 And all the men were about twelve. Acts 19:1-7*

The third historic instance of speaking with tongues is recorded in Acts 19:6 at Ephesus. These 12 men, probably Jews, were baptized into John's baptism. They were not saved, not baptized in Christian Baptism but in John's baptism. (cf Matt. 28:19) They needed further instructions to make the transition from Jewish belief and John's belief to saving belief in Jesus Christ as the Jewish Messiah and the savior of the world.

#### **Note the sequence of events:**

1. Aquilla & Priscilla were Jews personally taught by Paul (cf Acts 18:1-2, 18-19, 24-28).
2. These in Ephesus had been baptized in John's baptism vs 2 (though still unsaved).

3. Paul came and asked the question (vs 2). They had not heard of the Holy Spirit.
4. Paul explained that John was the forerunner of Christ, and that they should go on and believe in Christ for the Holy Spirit.
5. They believed in Christ, and were baptized in the name of Christ.
6. Paul laid his hands on them (and probably prayed).
7. The Holy Spirit came on them.
8. They spoke with tongues (languages-plural) and they prophesied (or proclaimed God's Word).

Note that these were not "new" tongues (Mark 16:17), nor "other" tongues (Acts 2:4), simply human languages; they were clearly heard and spoke in human languages; no babbling or non-understandable utterances. There is no mention of an interpreter - they were clearly understood. This is clearly a direct manifestation of the filling of the Holy Spirit. They had the real thing; (the Corinthians had a false thing).

Paul found it necessary to condemn the other (unknown) "tongue" of the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 14. But these tongues, languages, in Acts 19:6 were used to tell others of the wonderful grace of God. Witnessing is the purpose of speaking in any tongue or language.

In Ephesus idolatry was rampant (the Goddess Diana) as told in Acts 19:27. These believers needed to speak in the native languages used in Ephesus to impress the Gospel on this cosmopolitan city. We have no record (even in Ephesians) that this ability was ever used again. It was temporary and of one time historical function.

In vs 6 they preached in understandable languages the particular message God had for this occasion. God wanted to reach these people. These 12 men wanted to reach these people. The function of tongues was given for that purpose (as Acts 2 and 10).

### **Summary of the Three Historic Instances of Speaking with Tongues**

In summary, in these three instances of speaking with tongues, (of Pentecost, Caesarea & Ephesus), God's power came upon 3 classes of people to initiate them into the experience of the Holy Spirit and to teach us the breadth of the Holy spirit's manifestations.

1. **To the Jews at Pentecost:** The Jewish disciples witnessed to the thousands at the birthday of the Church.
2. **To the Gentiles at Caesarea:** God shows that He is no respecter of persons. The Holy Spirit would be given to Gentiles also upon their acceptance of Christ.
3. **To Everybody In Between at Ephesus:** God bridges the gap from John's belief to belief in Christ. John's worshipers were helped in this special way to make the transition from the Old Testament and the Old Covenant to the New Testament and the New Covenant. Their speaking in languages, other than their own, witnesses their new-found understanding that Christ is all in all.

In all three instances, representative groups of believers were initiated into the power of the Holy Spirit, followed by special ability to speak in languages other than their own for the purpose of witnessing. And note that the Holy Spirit in these instances was never given apart from the instrumentality of the Apostles, again illustrating the temporary nature of this.

## **The Holy Spirit and Speaking With Tongues**

- Q. Can a Christian be filled with the Holy Spirit without an accompanying sign of “speaking with tongues”?
- Q. Is speaking with tongues proof positive that a person is filled with the Holy Spirit?

The three historical instances do show that those who spoke with tongues (human languages) did so as a direct result of the filling of the Holy Spirit. (Jews at Pentecost Acts 2:4, Gentiles at Caesarea Acts 10:45-46, Believers at Ephesus Acts 19:6)

And Christ made no mention of the Holy Spirit in Mark 16:17 where He prophesied that those who had believed should speak with “new languages”. This de-emphasizes the tongues as a possible sign of the Holy Spirit’s presence, much less the filling of the Holy Spirit.<sup>12 13</sup>

### **Additional notes of the Filling of the Holy Spirit**

There are two basic commands for this dispensation: to trust God by believing His Son (Baptism), to be filled with the Spirit (Filling).

In 1 Cor. 14:1-33 Paul discusses speaking with tongues in the Corinthian church; but he makes no reference to the Holy Spirit. However, the source of their speaking in a tongue was from man’s spirit and not the Holy Spirit as given in 1 Cor. 14:2, 12, 14, 15a, 15b, 16, 32. (Explained later.)

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<sup>12</sup> The “filling of the Holy Spirit” lends itself to study by the **Five F Method**. The Five F Method briefly, follows. First, find the **First mention** of the filling of the Holy Spirit for the key that unlocks all other referrals to that subject. Second, search for the **Figurative mention** where the application of the filling of the Holy Spirit will be made in a non literal sense. Third, find the **Full mention** of the filling of the Holy Spirit where the basic truth to be received lies, without which a clear understanding on the filling of the Holy Spirit can not be properly understood. Fourth, collect the **Further mention** texts on the filling of the Holy Spirit to fill in the details. Fifth, locate the **Final mention** where Divine revelation makes its final statement of the subject of the filling of the Holy Spirit.

Such a study yields that the filling of the Holy Spirit indicates that the human spirit of those who were so filled had set aside their own will and were completely yielded to the Divine will. The **Full mention** of this subject is Acts 2:4 where Jesus’ prophetic announcement of Luke 14:49 was fulfilled. (So the filling of the Holy Spirit means the laying aside of one’s own will in deference to God’s will as personally revealed by the Holy Spirit to the individual.)

<sup>13</sup> The filling produces fruit Gal 5:22-26, walking in the Spirit eliminates strife — factions (divisions) — heresies (charismatic divisions and tongues) Gal 5:20, etc.

The tongues spoken by the Corinthians had nothing to do with the Holy Spirit or His work. The manifestations of man's spirit are not necessarily the manifestations of God's Spirit. Scripture gives no specific signs of being baptized with the Holy Spirit, 1 Cor. 12:13, nor of being filled with the Holy Spirit. Nowhere are we commanded to seek the ability to speak with tongues. Scripture encourages us rather to seek other gifts, such as prophesying (14:2-3) or love (14:1). In 1 Cor. 14 Paul condemns speaking in tongues that are gibberish, unknown, and non-human. (The Holy Spirit would never lead Paul to condemn them if these manifestations were from the Holy Spirit).

Note that 1 Cor. 12:10 refers to known human languages not the error practiced at Corinth. There are many instances in Scripture where the coming of the Holy Spirit was promised and imparted without any mention of speaking with tongues.

### **Baptism with the Holy Spirit and Fire**

Some might say Matt 3:11 refers to tongues, but "fire" here refers to judgement, Christ's judgement of unbelievers (John 5) and the power of the tongue as a member in preaching in known languages. As fire destroys evil, so does Spirit empowered preaching.

Acts 2, Pentecost, is the literal fulfillment of Matt 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, John 1:33, Acts 1:5, & 11:16.

The ability to testify in languages which they had not learned, but were supernaturally given for the occasion, as Acts 2, was only a small manifestation of the promise of fire. Whereas the full manifestation is the power of the conviction of preaching in understandable languages. The fire speaks of Christ's Judgement of unbelief through the Word, of which we have a part through preaching.

Scripture does not support the idea that being filled with the Holy Spirit and speaking with tongues, different languages, must always go together. Here are some instances of persons who were said to be filled with the Holy Spirit and yet were never said to have spoken with tongues as a result:

1. Luke 1:15 of John the Baptist
2. Luke 1:67 John's father Zacharias
3. Luke 1:35 Mary, the mother of Jesus
4. Luke 2:25 Simeon, at Jesus' presentation
5. Luke 3:22 Jesus Christ (never spoke with tongues)
6. Acts 10:28 Peter speaking about Jesus to the Gentiles at Cornelius' house
7. John 7:37-39 The Lord's promise concerning the Holy Spirit and His work. He promised the abundant life as the result of the Holy Spirit's coming, not speaking with tongues.
8. John 14:26 The Holy Spirit's coming gives the memory to recall the Lord's teachings, not tongues.
9. John 20:22 Jesus, to the disciples on the night of the resurrection, did not promise tongues.

10. Acts 1:8 In this, Jesus' last commission, He did not promise that they would speak with tongues. They did receive the supernatural gift of the Holy Spirit to speak with tongues unknown to them. And that gift was only given to them only once, at Pentecost. The hearers from 15 different nations heard them in 15 known different languages.
11. Acts 4:31 The persecuted and threatened disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, but no tongues.
12. Acts 8:15-17 Philip's converts received the Holy Spirit with no mention of foreign languages.
13. Acts 9:17 Saul (or Paul) did not speak with foreign languages when he was filled with the Holy Spirit. (In 1 Cor. 14:18 Paul did not mean ecstatic utterances but many foreign languages.)
14. Acts 15:8 Peter at the Jerusalem council, explaining the incident in Acts 10 at Cornelius house, does not mention the speaking in foreign languages.

### **Conclusion**

If speaking with tongues were a primary manifestation of the filling of the Holy Spirit, it would have been mentioned as an outward tangible evidence. And especially in the doctrinal New Testament books. Therefore, speaking with tongues is not a necessary accompanying sign to being filled with the Holy Spirit.

### **The Reverse is Also True**

Speaking with a tongue (ecstatic utterance) such as was in Corinth, or in many churches today, is not a proof of being filled with the Holy Spirit. Rather, it is just the opposite. It is an indication of rebellion against God, either willfully or ignorantly, and of being filled with self or of being under the control of evil spirits.

Note that *glossolalia*, or ecstatic speaking is not confined to Christian groups only; and that the experience is not self - authenticating. Ecstatic Utterances (unknown tongues) had an important place in ancient Greek religion. Plato (before Christ) discusses the phenomenon. Many Asian and African cultures afford examples of the practice. Experiences that seem to do good are not necessarily Biblically right, or God's best. Heb. 11:25 Sin is temporarily pleasurable and counter productive.

Do not interpret God or His Word by feelings or experiences, but by His Word alone; otherwise you will end up making God over into your image. This is the fundamental error in logic of many cults.

### **Speaking With Tongues As Practiced By The Corinthians**

The Corinthian Church was peculiar. They were the only church where tongues were spoken. Of the 66 books in Holy Writ, 65 do not have instances of this kind of tongues. The Corinthian Church was unique because of its social, geographic, religious and moral practices of their day. It was the most unloving church, showing the least love. 1 Cor.13 was written to them because of their obvious lack of love. They

were proud of their tongues and varieties of tongues. This church was the least spiritual 1 Cor.3:3, 1 Cor.14:37. This caused and prompted Paul's letter of 1 Corinthians. He was greatly disturbed over their problems among which was their gross error and misunderstanding of tongues.

The Corinthian error was that they felt that the more one was deprived of reason and consciousness, the more truly he was under the power of the Spirit of God. Also, many today think this way. 1 Cor. 12:1-3 shows the supreme test of the Spirit of God: A high and proper respect for Jesus Christ and a good testimony concerning Him coupled with a love for others.

The second test is peace, order and sanity. This is reason and consciousness. The spirit of man must be subject to: the illuminated mind through the Word, the quickened vision through the Holy Spirit, the active reason of the believer through conscious, honest logic of truth.

The Corinthians were trying to use God's gifts of speaking for personal gratification. But all gifts, including speech, are not an end in themselves, but are to be used to make Christ known.

The tongues at Corinth were a spurious imitation of God's reality. There were no tongues in the spiritual churches at Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Colosse, Thessalonica.

### **What was the Practice as Experienced in Corinth?**

The manifestation was very individualistic. The Bible gives no clear cut statement of what the practices were but the Corinthians knew very well what they were. They were incoherent utterances. They were babbling. They were all different with a variety of sounds. Some probably sounded like singing (cf 14:15), but they were all unknown and unknowable 14:2, 4, 6-20. They led, however, to confusion and disorder which Paul lovingly condemned. 14:19, 23, 26, 33

The Holy Spirit does not manifest His fullness by rendering our spirit void of thought and understanding. The Holy Spirit communicates with our spirit in ways that are able to be clearly articulated (2:14-16). Scripture never speaks of silencing the power of thought. Some of man's distinctions from animals is God's gift of thought and articulate speech.

The source of the tongues in Corinthians was actually man's spirit usurping the place of the Holy Spirit in the life and worship of the believers. Remember, there are three sources of actions, thoughts, and tongues: God's Holy Spirit, Man's human spirit and Satan's deceiving evil spirit. God's Spirit always brings peace and assurance. Man's spirit brings doubt. Satan's spirit brings unrest. <sup>14</sup> James 3:13-16 lists the last two spirits and verses 17-18 lists the first Spirit.

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<sup>14</sup> 1 Peter 5:8 Be sober (inward), be vigilant( outward), because your adversary, the Devil (Satan) is against believers and seeks to bring each one into his erroneous interpretation of God's Word.

## **Additional Relationships to the Holy Spirit**

We are told to try the spirits 1 John 4:1-6

Prophets are to “judge” 1 Cor. 14:29 <sup>15</sup>

We are to discern the spirits 1 Cor. 12:10

We are told to “judge” or condemn all actions from the wrong source 1 Cor. 11:31-32

Those who are truly spiritual will discern the true source of all things 1 Cor. 2:15-16

Luke 9:55 Ye know not what spirit ye are of

Mt 7:15-23 Not everyone who says “Lord Lord” shall enter

2 Pet 2:1-2 False prophets & teachers

1 Tim 4:1 Seducing spirits

Titus 1:13; 2:15 Rebuke them sharply

Titus 1:9, 2:1, 7, 10 Speak sound doctrine

The conclusion: Man’s spirit, not the Holy Spirit, is given as the source of tongues in Corinthians

### **The Seven Instances of Man's “Spirit” 14:2, 12, 14, 15a, 15b, 16, 32**

Just as there are 7 instances of the word tongue, in the singular, meaning a strange utterance (2, 4, 13, 14, 19, 26, 27); And just as there are 7 instances of the word tongues, in the plural, meaning human languages ( 5a, 5b, 6, 18, 22, 23, 39); So are there 7 instances of the source of the Corinthians strange sounds. These instances are in verses 2, 12, 14, 15a, 15b, 16, 32. This source was their own personal human spirit zealously, but ignorantly, serving their own erroneous view of God and bringing personal magnificence and glory to themselves.

The tongues that they were speaking in Corinth were not known, spoken, intelligible languages intended to convey ideas to others, but a conglomeration of sounds devoid of thought.

The word “unknown” is not in the Greek, but the translators were right in supplying it (in italics in the KJV Bible. However, these translators were inconsistent in that they missed placing “unknown” before the singular tongue in verse 26. They knew that these tongues were understood to be in contrast with those in Acts 2, 10, and 19 by the Holy Spirit.

NOTE: Tongues in vs 9 refers to the tongue as a member.

Tongues in vs 21 is a different Greek word (*heteroglossois*) with the meaning that other people who do not speak Hebrew will come to the unbelieving Jews to evangelize them, and yet they will not hear.

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<sup>15</sup> Ezek. 13:3 Thus saith the Lord God: Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow “their own spirit”, and have nothing! cf vs2  
Also, the first false prophet was in the Garden of Eden prophesying contrary to God’s Word.

## Did Paul Speak with Unknown Tongues?

No! He had already condemned their ecstatic incoherent unknown tongues. He was an accomplished linguist as verse 18 states.

Paul commended speaking in human languages understood by men, although possibly unknown to a particular group, with the point in mind of prophesying, speaking God's message.

Paul stayed in fellowship with them and at least respected their motives. Tongues is a minor issue, not vital to the faith. Verse 27 is a condescension for love's sake. He warned them to respect the rights of others and their right to understand 13:4-5; 14:6, 13, 20, 23. His point was that if they were to practice this at all, it ought to be in private 14:2-4. This is by concession for love's sake. Paul treats them gently as we would any one who does something which is private, personal, and not necessary for self or others - such as someone who has an annoying idiosyncrasy.

May we share Paul's love as we correct others.

### Charisma

The Greek word, *Charisma*, is used in scripture 17 times in 5 different ways.

1. It is used as God's free bestowments upon sinners. Rom. 5:15-16; 6:23; 11:29.
2. It is used as endowments upon believers by the operation of the Holy Spirit in the churches. Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 1:7; 12:4, 9, 28, 30-31; 1 Tim.4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6; 1 Peter 4:10.
3. It is used of that which is imparted through human instruction. Rom. 1:11.
4. It is used of the natural gift of continence, consequent upon the grace of God as Creator. 1 Cor. 7:7 but every man has his proper gift.
5. It is used of gracious deliverances granted in answer to the prayers of fellow believers. 1 Cor. 1:11 ...that for the gift bestowed upon us .....

### Gifts of Healings (Plural)

1. 1 Cor. 12:9, 28, 30 refer to the very temporary nature of the specific ability to heal.
2. Matthew 10:1 Jesus gave the 12 the powers of exorcism and healing to encourage the disciples that He was really Christ. See also Mark 3:15

3. Mark 16:18 predicts these 2, plus 3 other gifts, for the immediate apostles.
4. James 5:14-15 might indicate the same.

## Were Tongues Languages?

Paul uses SPEAKING with a tongue or tongues with two different meanings:

1. Speaking in intelligible understandable human languages for the purpose of conveying thought either to God or to men. This is to say something meaningful.
2. In seeking to correct the Corinthian practice, he uses “a tongue” to describe their practice of speaking in unintelligible, ecstatic sounds, not knowing what they were saying, the product of emotion rather than thought, whether directed to God or to men. This is meaningless prattle.

There are two Greek words used to express speaking:

1. “*Lego*” means “to say” or “to discourse”. This is offering thought in an orderly manner. *Lego* is the word used in modern Greek today for communicating thought. To the Greeks, *lego* means, when you open your mouth, you should have something to say. *Lego* relates to the content of the communication.
2. “*Laleo*” is the second Greek word and means “to speak”. *Laleo* means articulated words or sounds in contrast to silence or not speaking. *Laleo* means articulation of words as they come to you. *Laleo* has no reference to the thought or content. *Laleo* refers to the ability of the organs of speech to produce sounds.

Illustration: In Mark 7:37 the dumb (*alalos*) man was made to *laleo* or speak.

Same thing in Mark 9:17 and 9:25

*Laleo* is also used in Matt.9:33 & Luke 11:14

The word *laleo* is always used in the expression speaking with “tongues”. Mark 16:17 and Acts 2, 10, 19 and 1 Cor. 14. And the word *lego* is never used in relation to tongues.

In Acts 2:4 the idea is that the Holy Spirit acts upon the believer to speak God’s message, though not necessarily thought out by man. The Holy Spirit gave the words and put them together to convey God’s thoughts. The believer is merely the agent. No believer could by his own thought processes put together words of a language he did not understand and have it make sense to his hearers.

*Laleo* occurs often in the book of Hebrews - speak 14 times - spoken 3 times. Hebrews 1:1-2 stresses the wonder of God speaking as contrasted to being silent.

Paul calls the Corinthian vocalizing “*laleo glossa*” to say that their speech was devoid of thoughts. Their sounds had to be interpreted, if it were possible to do so.

1 Cor. 12 lists 4 references to tongues 10a, 10b, 28, 30. Paul was driving home to these divided, quarreling Corinthians that: There is a diversity of gifts; No one can claim all of them; There is unity in the body of Christ; No one is independent.

1 Cor.12:7-11 lists nine manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Note that these nine items are not listed as gifts or called gifts, but manifestations. <sup>16</sup>

In 1 Cor.12:10a “divers kinds”, or various tongues is *genosglossa*. *Genos* means “classes, kinds, species, or families”. (We get our English word genealogies from *genos*). This usage refers to language families such as Latin, Semitic, etc. This can not refer to an unclassified language of incomprehensible ecstatic utterances. Paul was really saying that some have the ability to learn languages in families, for making God’s counsels known to men.

In 1 Cor. 12:10b, reference is to the ability to interpret or translate, which follows naturally when one knows the language. Not all can be linguists; but some can.

In 1 Cor. 12:28 and 30, the reasonable answer is “no”. God gives some the ability to learn and speak a foreign language easier than others, and that for the proclamation of the Gospel. The word “tongues” in this chapter always means human languages. What Paul was really saying was, that just as all did not have the ability to speak or interpret foreign languages, so no one could claim, all of the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. The Corinthian problem was church order and decor.

### **Charisma Briefly Viewed**

The Greek word *charisma* has as its root, the word *charis*, and the word *charis* has as its root, the word *chara*. The word *chara* is the word for “joy”. The word *charis* is the word for “grace”. And the word *charisma* is the word for “gift”, meaning the spiritual gifts as well as gifts in general. Following this brief etymology one can see the heart of the gracious loving God Who desires His best for those who have believed. God is a God of joy and desires to share that joy with each of the elect. So He is motivated by His own grace to pour out His joy upon his saints by disbursing His grace upon each one through the ministry of the Holy Spirit within each one. The manifestation of His grace is His giving of spiritual gifts to each member of His body, the true church. Now the word *charisma* or gift, flows from God’s *charis* or His grace, in order to give each of His children the *chara* or joy that is His. And so, the free utilization of one’s spiritual gift brings the believer joy, God’s joy.

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<sup>16</sup> Many in today’s world show their erroneous understanding by calling these manifestations, “gifts”; this is a modern day example of the errors of eisegesis.

## Brief Summary Outline of 1 Corinthians 12, 13, 14

### Charismatic Immaturity 1 Corinthians 12, 13, 14

- 12:1            You are ignorant of spirituals
- 12:2-3        You might even be led to curse Jesus
- 12:4-6        The Trinity's harmony: The Holy Spirit gives the gifts; The Son (Lord) activates individuals; The Father energises any and all uses of the gifts
- 12:7-11      The manifestations of the Spirit; The Corinthians were seeking the results of grace rather than grace or the One Who disburses grace
- 12:12-27     Every believer has been baptized into the body of Christ as He has chosen
- 12:28-30     God's order of honor and importance
- 12:31         Paul's admonition: Don't be selfish, there is something better
  
- 13:1-3        Their tongues were not of love nor are they angel's languages
- 13:4-8a      Evidences for self centered immaturity as their base for tongues
- 13:8b-10     Tongues were to cease, like revelation
- 13:11-12     Speaking, understanding and thinking are to be mature
- 13:13         Other-centeredness is better than tongues
- 14:1           Paul's admonition: Seek to prophesy unselfishly
- 14:2-3        Prophecy to build men is better than a tongue
- 14:4           The unloving self-centeredness of a tongue
- 14:5-6        Human languages are to speak revelation, knowledge and to edify others
- 14:7-9        The unreasonableness of a tongue illustrated
- 14:10-11     Language is to unify, not dissemble
- 14:12         Paul's admonition: edify the church
- 14:13         Tell folks what you are saying
- 14:14         Understand what you are praying
- 14:15         Paul's example: understand your prayers and songs
- 14:16-17     Bless; so that folks can understand
- 14:18-19     Paul's testimony: I speak more foreign languages than you all, but I do not make a show of the spectacular in public
- 14:20         Don't be self-centered children without understanding
- 14:21-22     One of the Lord's purposes of languages: to pronounce judgement upon unbelieving Jews
- 14:23-35     Variety of languages confuses, Preaching of the Word convicts
- 14:26         The erroneous Corinthian case: Prophecy had been replaced by an ecstatic tongue
- 14:27-28     Paul's condescension for the sake of the immature who require self-centered showiness
- 14:29-33     Even prophecy will be orderly and, like languages, would be under the speaker's control
- 14:24-36     As the custom was, to show respect for God's authority, Women were to keep silent in church and not to preach, prophesy, or use foreign languages, to make a show
- 14: 37-38    The mature will recognize this but the ignorant will not
- 14:39         Paul's admonition: build up the church

## Tongues in 1 Corinthians 14

The following Scripture is from the KJV (King James Version).

### 1 Cor. 14:1

**Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.**

Verse 14:1 belongs at the end of Chapter 13. Chapter 13 speaks of the love which would respect the other person's rights; especially the right to understand what was being said. We are told to “follow after love; to pursue it, chase after it, hunt for it, run after it”. Love is elusive to the natural man or carnal man. The devil pursues us, but we are to pursue love. Love is putting the other person first. Love is meeting the other's real needs. Love is the desire to be helpful to another with no need of personal gain.

Prophesying (proclaiming God's will and purpose for man) meets the requirements for love while speaking in a “tongue” does not. Note the contrast between a tongue and prophecy.

In Verse 1, “but rather” is a poor translation and should not have the adversative “but”. These words should be “and moreover”. Thus, prophesying is a spiritual gift and should not be placed adversely to love; they are not adversaries.

Verse 1 might be translated, “Having the basic substance of life, which is love, seek in addition other lesser and particular spiritual gifts, the most important of which is prophesying.”

### 1 Cor. 4:2

**For he that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth *him*; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.**

The word “unknown” is not in the Greek. The translators of the KJV text italicized the added words to make it more understandable and at the same time to let the reader know that they had added them. And note that the word “tongue” is singular. Paul recognized their “tongue” but was not approving it. The “tongue” speaker wanted communication with God and thought that he had done so. This is not God's way of communication.

Consider God's teaching on prayer — always conscious communicable content. Prayer is basically an expression of our complete dependence upon God and our personal inadequacy. No “tongue” can do that.

Their “tongue” was an emotional outburst of sound with no content. Paul's logic was: With such a language, you are evidently not trying to speak to men, because no man knows the language nor can he

understand. Therefore, you must be trying to speak with God; even though it never reaches Him. Note that this is not approved by God — even though it might have been meant for Him.

Illustration: Many religious works are meant for God but are not approved by or empowered by Him. Most religious work is a psychological compensation used as an attempt to cover guilt; perhaps the guilt of raising one's own will above God's will.

A “tongue” is an injustice to God's infinite majesty, greatness and intelligence. He desires understandable communication with His creatures, especially the redeemed.

The tongues which are said to have come from God, in Acts 2, 10 and 19, were for communication of God's message to man as a sign, not for prayer or worship or for personal edification.

All of God's gifts are useful and serve God's purposes. Usefulness, need, and purpose represent important criterion for determining God's gifts. Compare: food, clothes or even the tongue in our mouth or languages. The test, then is this: If it is not useful, in love, to serve others, to proclaim God's message to man, its source is not from God but self.

God communicates through His Word and a language which is understandable. Note the contrast between no understanding in verse 2 and understanding in verse 3.

The word “for” preceding “no man” would better be “indeed or in truth or in fact”. Paul was saying that indeed no man understands the “tongue”. The “tongue” was not human — only an omniscient God could understand, and then only the feeling behind the gibberish, since it had no thought substance.

In the fourth clause, “Howbeit” or “however” is the word “*de*” meaning “indeed” or “in fact”. The word spirit does not mean the Holy Spirit. Note also verses 14 and 16. God's Spirit wants to reveal, not conceal God's purposes.

Paul's condemnation of these ecstatic utterances, created by their own human spirits was:

1. Their tongues were not known languages.
2. They were not prophesying.
3. They were directed only to God.
4. They were the product of man's spirit.
5. They were not understood or understandable.
6. They were meaningless.

**1 Cor. 14:3**

**But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men *to* edification, and exhortation, and comfort.**

Our speech must be helpful to others. The first word “but” shows the contrast or opposition with verse 2. Some have thought that the Corinthian “unknown tongues” were angelic languages (cf. 13:1) interpreted by the Holy Spirit. That this is not the case is shown by the following:

1. Paul did not commend this.
2. Angels always speak to men in human languages. (Cf. The O.T. appearances of angels and also the Revelation.)
3. God wants us to heed His message, requiring understanding.
4. Interpretation is a prerequisite to using a language; meaning is important, not just speaking. (See vs 13 & 27)
5. In 1 Corinthians 13:1 Paul uses the hypothesis “if” indicating that it is not a reality but a postulate.

All believers are to prophesy and to speak forth the Word of God to edification, exhortation and comfort of other believers and unbelievers. Note that there is no distinction between clergy and lay people. All believers are priests. (1 Peter 2:5, 9; Revelation 1:6; 20:6)

Understanding is necessary for edification, exhortation and comfort; this is the purpose of speech. If someone does not benefit from our speech, love requires that we keep quiet especially in an assembly of believers, where two or three are together. To edify another, the speaker must be understand his own speech and then to speak unselfishly.

### **Prophecy**

Prophecy is the exact opposite of a tongue.

1. Prophecy is understandable, a tongue is not understandable.
2. Prophecy is helpful to others, a tongue is not helpful.
3. Prophecy is based on love, a tongue is based on self.
4. Prophecy is based on edifying, a tongue is confusing.
5. Prophecy is from God, a tongue is from self.
6. Prophecy is from God's spirit, a tongue is from man's spirit.
7. Prophecy builds others, a tongue tears others down.

### **Edification**

The word edification means to build, such as building an edifice. This has as its object the building up of others spiritually. The builder knows what he is doing, and that systematically. Applied to unbelievers this could mean soul winning and building up the faith numerically. Tongues cannot do this. Applied to believers this means building them up — spiritually, growth in faith. Tongues cannot do this.

Verse three shows the sharp contrast between unselfishness or love and self centeredness and a tongue. Since understanding is the prerequisite to interpreting, a tongue can only be “interpreted” by conjecture. (Cf. vs 13, 26-27) As an experiment: When someone speaks in a tongue, ask three people separately what was said or record it for future interpretation. This will bring utter confusion.

## **Exhortation**

Exhortation means to encourage in spiritual things. The Greek “paraklesis” means a calling near or for, to bring beside. Exhortation for unbelievers is encouragement to come to God for salvation. Exhortation for believers is encouragement to trust God in salvation. The forgiveness of sins is the greatest encouragement in all of life. Tongues cannot do either of these.

## **Comfort**

Comfort has reference to the consolation a Christian needs in view of the hostility of this world. An understandable presentation of God's Word comforts in persecution, affliction and all the experiences of Christian Growth. An “unknown tongue” cannot comfort the speaker or the hearer.

### **1 Cor. 14:4**

**He that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.**

The tongue is singular here and means incoherent utterances. Some emotional experiences do not make one feel closer to God — This is a selfish attempt of self edification or the selfish enjoyment of a religious experience. The spiritually more mature Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians, Thessalonians, etc. did not use or need this emotional crutch. There is no commendation for speaking in a tongue because it does not help others.

But Paul does commend prophesying to the edification of the church. The principle and practice of seeking the welfare of others, altruism, in religious experiences, according to God's Word, is truly commended. Even when we talk to God, we should think of others — the body of Christ.

In the Greek, the word “the” is not before the word “church” indicating that the sense is not that prophesying edifies the entire body of Christ but that it edifies any local assembly who can hear the content of the exhortation. The trouble maker in the local assembly is the one who is critical. He seeks to center God around himself. He seeks to center spiritual blessings around himself. He seeks to center the whole church around himself. *May God deliver us from self-centeredness.*

### **1 Cor. 4:5a**

**I would that ye all spake with tongues but rather that ye prophesied:**

This speaks of the gift of human languages. Here, tongues is plural, meaning known human languages used to tell forth the wonderful works of God. If the “tongues” here was to mean ecstatic lingual utterances, then much of what Paul was saying makes no sense whatever. Paul was saying “I would that you would all witness both in your native language and also to foreigners in their languages too.” Literally, “I wish that each of you Corinthians individually would speak in your language and the languages of foreigners, especially because this would enable you to prophesy in more than your own native language.”

Most groups of foreigners know two languages or more, especially in the city of Corinth. “But rather” should be “and moreover”. 1 Corinthians 10:31 states that we should do all to the glory of God. Paul’s wish refers to the second clause, “and moreover that ye prophesied.” Apparently the Corinthians had stopped witnessing of Christ.

### **1 Cor. 4:5b**

**for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.**

Again, tongues is plural meaning human languages. True greatness is in prophesying. Their selfish ambition was Greatness which led to their false utterances. “For greater is he that prophesieth” literally means “for in fact greater is he that prophesieth”. Linguistic ability acquires value when used for prophesying. Showing off is wrong, whether in high school or in Corinth. Paul stipulates that languages used for witnessing must be understood by the hearer. Speaking to edification is greater than speaking in several languages.

“Except” means “unless” in the Greek. The interpretation in verse five was to be done by the linguist who was proclaiming God’s Word to the local assembly of mixed nationalities. This is true interpretation, while the interpretation in verses 13, 26, and 27 is an impossibility due to the nature of the unknown gibberish being spoken.

1. The Corinthian natives were Greek.
2. The Roman captors spoke Latin.
3. The Jewish traders spoke Hebrew or Aramaic.
4. There were also other dialects.

The verse says, “Don’t show off in languages, but speak and prophesy in the language of the majority of the hearers and interpret for the rest so that all may be edified.” May we pray that what goes out of our mouth might be for the purpose of edifying others to the glory of God.

### **1 Cor. 14:6**

**Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?**

The basic principle is stated: “The purpose of speaking is to communicate our thoughts to others”. “Now” the first word is “And now” in the Greek and shows a change in the arguments (note the change from the third person to the first person).

1. Verse 2-4 have one argument
2. Verse 5 has another argument
3. Verse 6 has still another: He says “Suppose I were to come to you . . . what would you expect?”
4. Verse 7 has yet another argument
5. Verse 8 has an additional argument

“Brethren” indicates that though Paul disagreed with them he did not call them derogatory names. Their error did not break communion or fellowship. This is a beautiful example of love and tenderness.

“Tongues” here is plural and means foreign languages which they could not understand. “Speaking is from “*lego*” with the meaning, to present the things thought out in an orderly manner; to say something with content. Paul lists four ways that in which he could profit them: “by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine.” But notice his exclusion of “tongues”; tongues could not profit.

### **Revelation**

Revelation is divine truth made known directly by God. God reveals things that have been hidden from human understanding until God chooses to let them be known or uncovers them.

### **Knowledge**

Knowledge is always incomplete without revelation. Knowledge includes all that is humanly discoverable and all that is divinely revealed. True knowledge shows that all things that can be known consist in Christ. Such knowledge can only be shared by the medium of speech.

### **Prophecy and Doctrine (Teaching)**

Prophecy and teaching are not possessions as the above two but are activities. Speech converts revelation and knowledge into prophecy and teaching. Prophecy is a telling forth of what we know of God's revelation. Teaching is elaboration and explanation for understanding.

Speech then, has no value in itself, but, as God's gift, exists as an instrument to convey revelation and knowledge by prophecy and teaching from one person to others. Tongues then, as a use of various languages is not a spiritual gift at all, but a means to an end to edify the local body of believers in Christ.

**1 Cor. 14:7**

**And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?**

Sounds must be guided by reason to be intelligible. Would you enjoy or benefit from music when the one who plays knows nothing of music or its construction?

**1 Cor. 14:8**

**For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?**

A trumpet to call soldiers to war would be useless unless there was a mutual understanding between the trumpet player and the hearers.

**1 Cor. 14:9**

**So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.**

Here Paul applies the two preceding illustrations. Literally, "So also ye, unless by means of the tongue ye give speech that is distinct, how shall it be known what is being spoken".

"Tongue" here means the organ of speech, not the ecstatic tongue or gibberish. "Speaking into the air" is like speaking into an empty room. In verse nine, Paul is exposing their error of choosing languages no one understood to try to illustrate their spirituality.

**1 Cor. 14:10**

**There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification.**

Literally, "There are, I dare say, ever so many varieties of voices, and each one has its meaning". The implication is that the unknown variety of the Corinthians was in contrast to this; that is, their variety has no meaning.

**1 Cor. 14:11**

**Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh *shall be* a barbarian unto me.**

Paul says, for the sake of Christ, do not disregard the opinions of others who observe or hear what is being put forth; intelligent people are concerned with understanding. Paul's point is: Know what you are saying; understand it yourself and try to make it easy for the other person to understand you. Don't make yourself look foolish by listening to someone you can't understand.

**1 Cor. 14:12**

**Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual *gifts*, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.**

You are full of zeal. Zeal is a warm passionate desire that has its roots in the human spirit. The Greek says that, "Ye are zealous of spirits (gifts is not in the text). All their zeal was from their own human spirit, even their tongue. He is saying, "Don't just be enthusiastic, be enthusiastic about edifying the church." The verb "seek" means to seek how to do something by thinking. The same word is used in Mark 11:18 and Luke 12:29. Edification requires understanding.

The Corinthians had carried the paganism of Delphi, Greece's most famous center of oracles, into the church. There the priestess would carry an inquirer's questions and position herself on a tripod over the chasm in the Adyton where intoxicating fumes would cause her to utter incoherent sounds representing the response. This paganism was being brought into the Christian assembly with the same destructive results as bringing the world's methods and motives into play within the church today.

**1 Cor. 14:13**

**Wherefore let him that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue pray that he may interpret.**

Paul uses sound psychology here. He makes recommendations here that will persuade them that their speaking "in a tongue" was wrong; this was meant to cause them to quit on their own. Love does not dictatorially insist that they stop. One who speaks in an unknown tongue must also be able to interpret, if that were possible. The implication is, If you can interpret, why should you not speak in an understandable language to begin with? If you cannot interpret, you are deceiving yourself.

**1 Cor. 14:14**

**For if I pray in an *unknown* tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.**

Here we have Paul's explanation as to the advice that he gave in verse thirteen. When you pray for the ability to interpret, pray in an understandable language, as is said in verse thirteen. But verse fourteen states, that communication between God and man is possible without audible speech. But we should be aware of any action of our spirit that ignores the God-given facility of thinking. We must not put aside intelligent thought. Our spirit and mind should be actively coordinated to bear fruit for God in the lives of others. The "spirit" in verse fourteen, and the other six occurrences of the word "spirit" in this context,

refers to man's human spirit. There is no reference to the Holy Spirit in this passage as He is not behind these tongues. Nor does Paul sanction devotions in a “tongue”.

#### **1 Cor. 14:15**

**What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.**

Verse fifteen: Emotionalism without engaging one's mind is not God's highest intent for man. Paul says that he will not leave out his mind when he prays or sings. Observe the order:

1. Spirituality before intelligence.
2. Belief before true knowledge.

Man's spirit is the seat of his faith as well as his emotions, so intellectual comprehension follows faith. “What is it then” means that this is Paul's resolution to use his two God-given faculties; he will use his own spirit and his own mind whether praying, singing or preaching. See verse 19. Some of the Corinthians must have sounded like they were singing while engaging in a tongue.

#### **1 Cor. 14:16**

**Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?**

Notice the shift from the first person “I” to the second person “you”, showing that verse fifteen was good but their practice in verse sixteen was wrong. “Else when” means “for if” or “otherwise”, explaining Paul's gentle rebuke. Paul was not saying one can bless God or man by the spirit (man's spirit), but that it is impossible to bless God or man without using one's mind. The “spirit” here is man's human spirit (the article, the, is omitted in the Greek). “Amen” means full and decided assent or agreement.

#### **1 Cor. 14:17**

**For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.**

“Other” means one of another quality — a different spiritual makeup. Verses 16 and 17 say, Think about the other person. Giving of thanks means praying or trying to pray. See verse sixteen.

#### **1 Cor 14:18**

**I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all:**

Paul is not condoning an unknown tongue. “Tongues”, here in plural, means human languages. But he is saying that he could speak in more languages than any of them or all of them put together but he will not make a show of his ability.

### **1 Cor. 14:19**

**Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that *by my voice* I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an *unknown* tongue.**

When you pick a language in which to speak, be sure that it is understood. Paul states that one should not always do what he could do — such as speaking many languages or other forms of show off. “Tongue” here is singular, gibberish, and is condemned. The word “yet” should be “but”, an adversative showing the contrast. Paul was saying that he could not and did not speak in an unknown tongue.

### **1 Cor. 14:20**

**Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.**

Again, Paul calls them “Brethren” indicating his love for them. “Understanding” is not “nous” as used in the preceding verses but “*phresin*” denoting wits or senses. He says, “Be not children in your mind or senses, but in hurting others through your tongue, you ought to be babies.” Paul is saying, “Grow up; stop acting like children.” We grow by daily Bible study with understanding, and by prayer with understanding, and by application in the daily life. (Ephesians 4:13)

### **1 Cor 14:21**

**In the law it is written, 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.**

Here Paul cites the prophecy in Isaiah 28:11-12 to show that the primary reason God enabled His people to speak in languages other than their own was for a witness to the unbelieving Jews. This is fulfilled in Acts 2. The words “other tongues” are from the Greek “*heteroglossois*” meaning “different but retaining the basic characteristics of language”. “This people” means the Jews — God's special people. Paul was making the definite point that the unknown tongues at Corinth had nothing to do with the prophecy in Isaiah. (Or 2 Kings 18:26-28) He said that the prophecy is sealed and fulfilled — Now there remained judgement upon the unbelievers because they understood. (See Matthew 11:20-24; 13:11-17; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10.) He drew a parallel between the disobedience of Judah, in the south, and the Northern Kingdom of Israel to God in Israel's day and the disobedience of the Jews to God in Paul's day. Most of today's Jewish evangelism is by men of other lips and in other tongues — Yet as a nation, they will not hear and obey. Through the O. T. parallel, Paul says “Your speaking with tongues cannot produce belief either”. They might have the right motive but the wrong method.

It is as if Paul was saying to them, “My brethren, your speaking with tongues is basically different from the historic and genuine witness of the apostles. These were brought about by God Himself. Even so, the Jews, who were primarily his target did not respond. Now you are trying to imitate the work of God. Do you think unbelievers will not recognize this as an unreal, or fake? They are the ones you have in mind, perhaps, but they will think you are out of your mind when you speak to them in a strange language, if it can be called that, that neither you nor they can understand.”

### 1 Cor. 14:22

**Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying *serveth* not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.**

Just as God uses ordinary means He has created, before He resorts to extraordinary manifestations of His power and ability, so should we. That is, planting and reaping before manna, normal birth before virgin birth, etc. Preaching (prophesying) is for believers. This is the method that the Holy spirit utilizes with believers. “Tongues” here, is plural and means different human languages. This is the method that the Holy Spirit utilizes with unbelievers. “Sign” here is the word for miracle and indicates that God uses the un-ordinary to reach the unsaved and is contrasted with the teaching of the Word of God to edify the believers who need understanding and clear thought processes.

### 1 Cor. 14:23

**If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in *those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?***

What impression does the church have on unbelievers who stumble in the door or what impression does the church have on the weak believer? Does it obviously glorify God or does it glorify the leaders or the flesh or worldly methods? Does it proclaim truth or does it feed serpents (or satanic errors) when someone comes and thereby asks for a “fish”? Does it proclaim the wisdom of this world and its religious system when their presence asks for “bread”?

“If” is used as a gentle hypothesis — just suppose. This “if” does not accuse them directly, but is meant to allow them the clarity of judgement to condemn their own wrong. Paul was highly successful here too.

Application: Let us learn to use the hypothetical method of pointing out other's errors. Seek to make the other person recognize his error without pointing it out yourself. Make generous use of the word “suppose” in mentioning a fault.

The church, here, is people — meeting for collective worship — not program, not buildings, not baptisms, not budgets, not a show of the flesh. Paul is saying, “Consider the dire consequences if . . .” The Corinthians were probably all speaking at the same time creating an atmosphere of bedlam. “Tongues” here is plural meaning actual human languages.

Paul's argument is, “If it is so objectionable to unbelievers to hear you speaking real languages that only a few in the church can understand, how much more objectionable must it be for them to hear you holding forth in ecstatic utterances.” The important point is understanding, not what language one speaks in. “Unlearned” in verse 23 and verse 16 is “*idiotai*” meaning one who is ignorant or ill-informed in the faith. “Unbelievers” is “*apistoi*” in verses 22 and 23 meaning a rather confirmed state of unbelief. Paul says that the unlearned and unbelievers will have the wrong impression of you. “You are mad” is

“*mainsthe*” or mania or maniac. The Greek attributed such unreasonable conduct to the activity of demons. (Note John 10:17-20 where the Jews also did.) The impression left on the new believers or unbelievers was that they were possessed by demons who were making their mental powers inactive.

#### **1 Cor. 14:24-25**

**But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or *one* unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all:**

**25 And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on *his* face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.**

These two verses begin with a contrast to the preceding verse as indicated by “But”, a word of apposition. “Prophesy” means each one in turn, or several, declaring God's Word. “One that believeth not or one unlearned” refers to the individual (note the singular) who may well believe. Even the power of the spoken word is brought out in the fact that in verse 24 the order of the two is reversed; that is “one that believeth not”, the confirmed unbeliever is convicted of his sins. Note that it is the individual that is being convicted by the testimony of the many, not visa-versa. Therefore each child of God can witness effectively.

Several things happen when a person hears and understands the Gospel:

1. He is convicted. (John 16:8)
2. He is cross examined by all and as a result of their examination makes a self examination and sees himself naked before God. (Heb.4:12-13)
3. His inner secrets are exposed.
4. Then he will worship God and recognize that God is really in you. Note the posture.
5. He will worship God and give testimony. His inner conviction brings on his outer confession. (Rom. 10:9-10)

Paul's argument is that the Holy Spirit's desires for the unbeliever can be accomplished through the preaching of the Word of God. Why then, resort to speaking in non-understandable languages? So he is saying that prophecy creates the response that “God is in you of a truth”. The other side of Paul's argument is that tongues will drive him away from God and create the response that “you are mad”.

#### **1 Cor. 14:26**

**How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.**

The order in the Greek is different than in the KJV text above. The Greek order is Psalm, Doctrine, Revelation, Tongue and Interpretation.

1. Psalm, probably referred to a singing

2. Doctrine, or teaching indicates an explanation
3. Revelation, referring to something from God or assumed to be from God with a thought toward exhortation
4. Tongue, an ecstatic utterance — condemned by the whole context
5. Interpretation, an explanation or expounding

Paul is listing what they did, not the ideal. Note that there is no commendation for this. Note also that prophecy is missing from what they did when they gathered.

### **1 Cor. 14:27-28**

**If any man speak in an *unknown* tongue, *let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret.***

**28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.**

Verse 27 is a concession for love's sake. The singular aspect of the word “tongue” indicates its childish, selfish use which is condemned by the logic of the context and the entire Word of God. There are a few regulations for those ill informed ones who still required tongues:

1. Two or three in any one meeting
2. They must have the floor and only one speaking at a time
3. Let someone interpret (if he can is implied). Verse 2 speaks to interpretation being impossible which again illustrates the futility of a tongue for any benefit whatsoever. Any attempt at interpretation would be only guesswork.
4. The speaker must be in continuous control of his faculties (See verses 32-33)
5. Women are not permitted to speak, in a tongue in the church (See verse 34)

Verse 28 is what Paul has been driving at all along: Any manifestation of an unknown tongue must be private — there is no public place for any of the things which are childish. There are many things that a childish, self centered person might do in private which are of no value, but these would wreak havoc if done publicly in a church meeting.

### **1 Cor. 14:29-30**

**Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.**

**30 If *any thing* be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.**

Prophecy here includes a Psalm, Doctrine and Revelation of verse 26. That is, Singing, Teaching and Exhortation. There was not an absolute limit to 2 or 3 who could Sing, Teach or Exhort in any one assembly. Note the word “If” in verse 27 indicating the hypothetical possibility of the occurrence, contrasted with the absence of the “if” in verse 29 indicating that the ideal meetings should expect prophecy but not tongues. “Judge” in verse 29 means to discern or interpret that truth is evident to the average mind. This is the discerning of spirits as indicated in 1 Cor. 12:10. Discernment is the Holy Spirit

given ability to detect, distinguish and discriminate what lies back of a man's words or works in order to determine whether they truly proceed from the Holy Spirit or are pretenses from the human spirit, of the speaker, or contain the deception of some "spirit of evil". (See 1 John 4:1) Let us pray for the gift of discernment that we can recognize error in the Teaching, Preaching and Works of others as well as ourselves.

All believers are to give and yet some have the gift of giving. All believers are to teach and yet some have the gift of teaching. All believers are to show mercy and yet some have the gift of showing mercy. Just so, there are some who have the special Holy Spirit given gift of determining when a Singing, Teaching, Preaching or Work really comes from the flesh, from the subtle evil one or from God Himself. (There are some in every congregation who see through the motives of the singer, teacher, preacher or worker up front.)

### **1 Cor. 14:30b-31**

**If *any thing* be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.**

**31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.**

One person should not monopolize the floor or be the main presenter. (How often this is violated in modern religious situations.) If any one prophet does not take too much time, you will all have a chance to prophesy in turn, perhaps 2 or 3 in any given meeting. Note there is no liberty for speaking in a tongue here as in the concession of verse 27. Prophesying, proclaiming God's Word today, produces learning, a deepening of belief, edification to a deeper life of obedience and comfort through the application of biblical principles.

### **1 Cor. 14:32-33**

**And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.**

**33 For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.**

Note the contrast of this with verse 23 where they were under an influence other than themselves. To some, the situation in verse 23 would bring the response of "you are mad" or demon motivated. God's people are in control of self in every area. (See verse 30) When one loses self control, he is not under the control and leadership of the Holy Spirit; he is not God controlled. When a prophet speaks, he is to exercise his mind and reason which cannot be said of one who speaks in a tongue. Paul's thesis is that when a believer speaks in a group of believers, there must be understanding, which requires that others keep quiet and wait their turn. (Gal. 5:22-23 give self control as fruit of the Spirit.) Verse 33 gives the reason and motivation for self control.

1. God is self control. Let us be like Him. Use your mind.

2. When confusion and disorder result from your speaking, neither you nor God are in control of your spirit.
3. God does not inspire simultaneous prayer or simultaneous speaking in a group.

Confusion is “*akatastasias*” meaning instability or a state of disturbance or anarchy.

1. James 3:15 states that this is the result of wisdom that is “earthy, sensual, devilish or demonical”.
2. James 3:16 states that “For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.” The words “envying and strife” are “*zeelos* and *eritheia*” which are really “zeal and jealousy” or “eagerness and party strife”.
3. The word “confusion” in James 3:16 was also at Corinth. They had false zeal; they had a party spirit; they were causing confusion by their desire to show off for popular applause.
4. Those possessed by a false earthly wisdom are also possessed with zeal to propagate it. The zeal to propagate falsehood sometimes far exceeds the zeal to propagate truth.

Paul's main concern was the confusion caused by their zeal and enthusiasm over the phenomenon they misunderstood to be a manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Paul opened their eyes to the harm that they were doing and urges them to seek to edify the whole church. Paul states that they were bringing God into disrepute by their misguided zeal and desire for admiration.

1. The wrong motive behind a good act is many times worse than a wrong act; especially if it is attributed to God and brings disgrace upon the God of order.
2. Let us ask ourselves, what is the underlying motive of all that we do or say?
3. Acting from selfish motives may bring exaltation to yourself, but it can only lead to confusion of others who think less of God as the result.
4. Let us purify our motives and conduct ourselves in such a manner that those around us, both believers and unbelievers alike will think of God as the author of peace.
5. The test could be, “Will this speech or deed reflect on God as the author of confusion or of peace?”

#### **1 Cor. 14:34-38**

**34 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience as also saith the law.**

**35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.**

**36 What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?**

**37 If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.**

**38 But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.**

The subject of verses 34-38 may seem to be a digression from the subject of tongues, however, in the larger context of gifts, spiritual gifts, these verses are not a digression but add much to the whole picture. Verses 26-40 cover the rules for the exercise of the gifts, and as such, the discussion would not be complete without the material in these verses being dealt with. However from an even larger perspective, 1 Corinthians 11:2 through 14:40 deals with the Corinthians' difficulties concerning public worship. Here is an outline covering the larger perspective showing how these verses fit into the whole subject of public worship:

### **Discussion Concerning Public Worship**

- A. The Veiling of Women in Worship 11:2-16
- B. Disorders Relating to the Lord's Supper 11:17-34
- C. The Use of Spiritual Gifts 12:1-14:40
  - 1. The Varieties of Gifts 12:1-11
  - 2. The Purpose of Gifts: Unity in Diversity 12:12-31
  - 3. The Supremacy of Love Over Gifts/Tongues 13:1-13
  - 4. The Superiority of Prophecy Over Tongues 14:1-25
  - 5. The Regulations for the Use of the Gifts 14:26-40

#### **1 Cor. 14:34-35**

**Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience as also saith the law.**

**35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.**

The married women were not to exercise the prophetic gift in public, such as a church meeting. This passage does not speak to unmarried women, but to the married. Paul has occasion, in Chapter 11, to correct certain disorders of dress; now he refers to certain improprieties of speech which had appeared in the church. Here he argues from the same ground, namely, the headship of the husband and the dependence of the wife.<sup>17</sup> The authoritative teaching in the church and the public exercise of the gift of prophesy were for husbands, not for wives. The wives should not even interrupt the service by speaking, under the pretense of asking questions. These questions should be asked of their husbands at home. It would be improper for married women to take the place of their husbands or to usurp the husband's God-given place in the prophetic office of the church.

#### **1 Cor.14:36-37**

**What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?**

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<sup>17</sup> The God given natural order is also dealt with in 1 Timothy 2:9-15.

**37 If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.**

Paul concludes by rather severe insistence upon the authority of his instructions. If the Corinthians were not willing to submit to them, was it due to the fact that they felt themselves to be the originators and the sole possessors of Christianity and alone had the right to determine its rightful demands? Furthermore, he adds, the best proof that a man is a prophet or possessed of spiritual gifts will be found in the fact that he recognizes all of Paul's teaching as the commands of Christ. The words of one who does not respect Paul should not be respected.

**1 Cor. 14:38**

**But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.**

If, however, from ignorant vanity and rivalry anyone willfully rejects Paul's instructions, the apostle refuses to argue with him; let him bear the responsibility and consequences of his ignorance.<sup>18</sup>

**1 Cor. 14:39**

**Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order.**

Here, Paul is expressing love to them and kinship with them by the word, "brethren". "Covet" is "*zeeloute*" which means "desire emulously". This word is translated "desire" in verse 1. When we determine that something of virtue is God's will for us, we should seek it with zeal. The tense of the word covet was to urge the Corinthians to continue to put all their zeal into telling forth the grace and revelation of God. Paul did not want to limit the use of foreign languages. "And forbid not to speak with tongues" begins with the connective "and" such that tongues, or languages, are the means of accomplishing the prophesying. Tongues is plural here and means human languages and as such represent one of God's methods of proclaiming the Gospel. Paul is not tolerating a tongue or speaking in an unknown tongue here. He was saying, "Don't forbid a foreigner to speak in your church providing that he would be understood. He was probably afraid that the Corinthians would go to the other extreme and forbid any use of foreign languages.

**1 Cor. 14:40**

**Let all things be done decently and in order.**

This is Paul's final injunction concerning tongues. This might better be, "Only let all things be done decently and in order". This suggests soldiers marching in orderly manner. When God is present, there is

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<sup>18</sup> Willful ignorance, like willful sin or willful unbelief, has no cure and must bear its own fruit of pain and punishment. Compare Revelation 22:11 where the eternal state of the willful unbeliever continues forever.

order. When there is lack of order, God Himself, is absent from the meeting; for it is He who has created an orderly universe and man himself whose body and mind work with such harmony, system and order as to defy imagination. The same order will be in God's new spiritual creation, the true church through Christ.

## **Concluding Remarks**

1 Corinthians 12, 13 and 14 indicate the dangers of spiritual anarchy.

When someone in the church wants to show his gift, he:

1. Disrupts the church
2. Dismays those who want to worship decently and in order
3. Brings confusion
4. Repels unbelievers and the unlearned
5. Illustrates his own immaturity
6. Reflects upon the character of God

Paul is not for and against the same thing.

Do not take any one verse or argument in isolation, but relate them to the whole thrust of Scripture.

Any interpretation of an isolated verse or statement separated from the general thesis is liable through its own weakness to be in error. There is no absolute meaning in an isolated statement.

Do not judge the Word of God from any experience, but judge the reality and genuineness of your experiences from the Word of God. To err here, causes the Bible to cease to be our absolute authority.

## **Keys and Thoughts**

There are three sources of words, thoughts and actions in the world.

1. God through His Spirit
2. Self through man's spirit
3. Satan through an evil spirit

The two tongues in 1 Corinthians are interwoven, and if not identified, make it look like Paul is for and against the same thing. But he is not. So to take any single meaning for the word "tongue" or tongues" leads to confusion and misunderstanding.

Today's tongues are often from self, leaving the spirit unguarded against intrusion by a demon who can take over the voice and speak in a language which he has learned previously. Such wordage usually curses God. (1 Cor. 12:3)

God may cause His people even today, in isolated cases, to speak in a language that they have not learned but it will always be to share the will of God with unbelievers in their own language, and that, only temporarily.

**The seven usages of the singular tongue** The translators of the King James Version of the Bible, the KJV, saw the difference between the ecstatic, un-intelligible utterance or tongue which they correctly saw to be in error in the Corinthian Church, and the deliberate, intelligible use of the variety of human languages for the dissemination of God's Word. So they attempted to make that difference clear to the reader by adding or supplying the italicized word “unknown” before those singular words. There are seven singular usages of the word in the passage but the KJV translators were a bit inconsistent in that they placed an italicized “unknown” before six of the singulars. They were telling us that the singular word “tongue” indicated a fault in the Corinthian's church life. These seven are found in verses, 2, 4, 13, 14, 19, 26, 27 and are all condemned in the context.

**The seven usages of the plural tongues** The translators saw the seven usages of the plural word “tongues” and let them stand as the plural word. In every case, they indicate human languages that are the native language for some nationality. Always, the plural “tongues” is approved and that for the getting out of the Gospel and for the building up of the saints. These are found in verses, 5a, 5b, 6, 18, 22, 23, 39 and are all approved.

**The seven usages of the word spirit** The text and context will show that the word “spirit” is used seven times. In each and every case the meaning is the human spirit of those of whom Paul was talking. The source of the spirit was not from God nor was it from Satan, but from their own zealous drive and competition. And remember there are three spirits to consider: God's spirit, man's spirit and Satan's spirit. These seven usages of the word “spirit” all indicate man's spirit. These are found in verses, 2, 12, 14, 15a, 15b, 16, 32.

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# THE LINE DRAWN

by Miles J. Stanford

A Booklet on the Charismatic/Pentecostal  
Baptism, Tongues, Healing, and Demonism, so-called

## PREFACE

In 1965, we wrote a book, intended primarily for Christian leaders, concerning the errors of the Pentecostal baptism and tongues. Entitled THE RED LETTERS, that book is now out of print. [The partially completed e-version is at the following site: <http://withchrist.org/MJS/rlchapters.htm>]. Since the charismatic movement has advanced to the very door of every Christian home and church (and entered, in many cases), it is time to give a more explicit word of warning.

Hence we are seeking to share, with both leaders and led, the doctrinal and experiential explanations of the onrushing charismatic four horsemen--the baptism, tongues, healing, and demonism, so-called. The stampede is on, and none can remain neutral. Each of us must seriously consider the line drawn by the Word of God.

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (2 Timothy 1:7; Romans 12:2).

Miles J. Stanford

# Chapter 1

## CHARISMATIC QUESTIONS

THE PROBLEM -- Like many Christians today, you may be confronted by the following questions:

~ What about the "baptism in the Holy Ghost" that is being so forcefully propagated?

~ What about the "gift of tongues" that many claim to receive and enjoy?

~ What about the "healings" one hears described?

~ What about the "binding and casting out of demons" that has become so popular?

Or perhaps one of your family or friends has had "the baptism," and it seems to make a drastic difference in their life. You are impressed.

Another may have continued for a time at fever pitch, only to lose the experience. This situation resulted in depression and despondency, with the individual feeling forsaken by God. Hospitalization may have become necessary. You are shocked.

Perhaps you have heard of those both in liberal and even Roman Catholic churches who, though not professing to be born again, suddenly receive "the baptism and the gifts." Immediately they seem to have a more effective testimony than you do, confidently confronting other Christians. This causes you to question whether or not you really have the Spirit.

Perhaps you have been strongly urged to seek "the baptism in the Holy Ghost with the gift of tongues." Although you have a fear of not receiving all that God has promised, and your heart is hungry for His best, you question the scriptural basis of this experience.

You may have been repelled by what you have seen and heard of in Pentecostalism. However, you are drawn by those who are intellectual and claim to enjoy "the baptism and the gifts" in a more quiet and refined way.

You are impressed by the stories and testimonies of many who have had "the baptism"--tremendous healings, signs and wonders, multitudes of souls saved (mostly "recycled"). You are disturbed by the seeming contrast between this and your own life and church.

Perhaps a Christian leader whom you have respected and admired for his exemplary life and service is reported to have had the baptism and to speak in tongues during his private devotions (never in public). You find it difficult to understand how anything of this nature could be wrong.

You may have confided in a friend concerning a personal problem such as discouragement, pride, or envy, only to be confidently informed that this is the work of discouragement, pride, or envy demons. You are told all will be solved when the demons are "bound and cast into the pit of hell." You don't know what to think about such claims.

This brief list is typical, but by no means exhaustive. If you are being confronted with or encountered any of these questions and don't know the answers to them, you can be sure there is a snare on your pathway.

"Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird" (Proverbs 1:17). This book is shared in order to provide clear biblical answers to these errors, so that the carefully laid snare may be seen and avoided. We cannot remain neutral. Error is aggressive. We have a responsibility to others, as well as to ourselves.

**BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM** -- Before moving into the scriptural explanation, we should understand how and why the so-called baptism, so-called tongues and healing, and so-called demonism have welled up in our midst and become a critical issue today. The word charisma means "divine gift." We will therefore refer to those who claim to have these gifts as "charismatics."

1) The years following World War II have brought many changes. One of the most significant has been the emergence of charismatic teaching and experience within many sound churches, Christian schools, and organizations. Through the years, the charismatics have been diligently promoting and establishing their erroneous doctrines and practices in these circles.

2) Coupled with this undercover work has been the trend, especially on the part of sound leaders, to be more brotherly and to fellowship more freely with the Arminian "holiness" people. This has been carried out through ministerial associations and other cooperative ventures, as well as individual fellowship. "A broad path is not a broad heart, but a broad conscience."

3) As a result, charismatics have gained acceptability with and access to sound school faculties, missions, TV and radio broadcasts, and pulpits. Many Christian bookstores have contributed to the infiltration of these errors--either because of ignorance, or profit motive--by carrying and promoting literature that is unorthodox and therefore dangerous.

4) Another reason for the encroachment of holiness teaching is the general carnal condition and spiritual barrenness of the fundamental churches in this country and elsewhere. The emphasis is on evangelism, without an adequate balance of food for spiritual growth: Romans chapters 1 to 4 in abundance, with little or no Romans chapters 5 to 8. Starving believers in these churches are beginning to awaken to their need and to yearn for growth and maturity in the Lord Jesus Christ. If a hungry-hearted believer does not find adequate food in his church, he is likely to forage for it elsewhere and may thus be caught in a snare. He longs for something tangible and effective, and that is what seems to be proffered by the charismatics.

5) Another avenue for the spreading error is through believers who are learning the deeper truths for growth and spiritual maturity. These individuals may become impatient with the process and the time the Holy Spirit requires for true development and fruitfulness. They seek to avoid the Cross by turning aside to the seeming "instant holiness" offered by the baptism.

THE LINE -- The line must be drawn, here and now. For too long the protective barrier between self-centered experience and Christ-centered experience has been down trodden. It is time to draw the line double, uncrossable, and to abide and grow on the scriptural side. On that ground of growth there will be spiritual fulfillment and increasing maturity in the risen Lord Jesus Christ. Consequently, there will be no need whatsoever to so much as look in the direction of self-centered experience.

In the following pages, we are seeking to deal not with Pentecostal-type people, but rather with the errors they hold and so aggressively promote. Our responsibility is to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). The issue is truth versus error.

"For God hath not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.... Hold fast the form of sound words...in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (II Timothy 1:7,13).

## **Chapter 2**

### **THE BAPTISM BY THE SPIRIT**

A POSITIONAL TRUTH -- "A line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem" (Zechariah 1:16). If the line is to be drawn against the present-day charismatic errors, we must begin at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). That is where the true baptism by the Holy Spirit took place, and it is from that event that the charismatic errors regarding the so-called "baptism in the Holy Ghost" have evolved.

The key to understanding the baptism by the Spirit is that it is a positional truth. It is not an experience; it has nothing to do with feelings. The baptism is an instantaneous work comprised of many simultaneous acts of the sovereign God. The following comments deal with but five of these acts which concern us here.

Observing what transpired at Pentecost we see that the first act was regeneration, or new birth, by the Spirit (Titus 3:5; John 3:6).

When the Holy Spirit came, He was to indwell the believers. Hitherto, He had been with them; now He was to abide in them forever, ministering the risen life of the Lord Jesus (John 14:16, 17; Colossians 1:27).

At the same time, He baptized each of them into union with Christ at the right hand of the Father on high (Ephesians 2:6). This was the fulfillment of our Lord's promise, "At that day ye shall know that I am in

my Father, and ye in me, and I in you" (John 14:20). The believer is not baptized in or into the Spirit, as the charismatics teach. The Holy Spirit is the Baptizer, or Agent of baptism, not the element into which one is baptized: "For by one Spirit were we all baptized into one body" (I Corinthians 12:13). The "one body" is the Body of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the Church (Colossians 1:18, 24).

Upon believing, each was sealed with the indwelling Spirit. This has a threefold significance: a finished transaction; a mark of ownership; a guarantee of safe delivery [security]. "In whom, having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest [down payment] of our inheritance, unto the [final] redemption of God's own possession" (Ephesians 1:13, 14, ASV).

Also, each received the anointing of the Spirit, which is closely related to His indwelling. This too, abides and is not a repeated act (I John 2:20, 27). "Now he who...hath anointed us, is God, who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (II Corinthians 1:21, 22).

Hence each believer from Pentecost to this day has been, by the Holy Spirit, regenerated, indwelt, baptized into Christ, sealed and anointed--all apart from feelings. These are separate acts, but simultaneously wrought--and non-experiential. Faith in these scriptural facts is absolutely necessary if the believer is to be invulnerable to the siren call of the charismatic claims.

The baptism by the Spirit involves more than being "immersed" into the Body of Christ. It means to be brought into organic union with that which is capable of bringing about a change. This baptism is the sovereign act by which the believer's position is changed from death in the first Adam to life in the Last Adam. The Christian becomes a completely new creation in Christ Jesus (II Corinthians 5:17). "Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with Him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3, 4, ASV).

CHARISMATIC ERRORS -- None of these facets of the Spirit's work were true of anyone prior to the day of Pentecost. No, not one! Charismatic teaching is that the Spirit had been previously given, and that Acts 2:4 records a "second blessing." "Any error may be founded on part of Scripture; the truth alone is based on the whole." Let us examine some of the verses on which their claim is made.

JOHN 20:22 -- "He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit." By this symbolic act the Lord Jesus was preparing the disciples for the soon-coming day of Pentecost with its baptism by the Spirit.

At that time they did not receive the Spirit in the full New Testament sense. "For the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:39). Some time after breathing upon them, the Lord Jesus told the disciples, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (Acts 1:5). The baptism by the Spirit was still future. It was to be the first, not a second, blessing.

The Word gives no command to be baptized by the Spirit. He was given as a Gift of God, sovereignly and right on schedule--fifty days after the resurrection. It was not the disciples who asked or prayed for the Spirit, but the Lord Jesus. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter" (John 14:16).

When was that prayer of our Lord answered? On the day of Pentecost, at which time Peter said, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear" (Acts 2:32, 33).

LUKE 11:13 -- "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" In the first place, there is no record in the Word that anyone ever did ask Him. If any had, they would have received the Spirit on the basis of the Old Testament economy. That is to say, He would have come upon them or temporarily indwelt them for a specific purpose, just as He did in a sovereign way with Bezaleel (Exodus 31:1-3).

ACTS 5:32 -- "And we are his witness of these things; and so is also the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey him." Peter was addressing the unbelieving Sanhedrin, telling them that if they obeyed God in trusting the Messiah, they would be saved and receive the Holy Spirit. In the next chapter (6:7), it is recorded that a great number of priests obeyed and were saved--they were "obedient to the faith." In Hebrews 5:9 there is the same principle: "He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." The obedience of faith brings salvation; salvation includes the gift of the Holy Spirit.

THE LINE -- The Word is very clear concerning the baptism by the Spirit. It is a once-for-all act of God, never to be repeated, asked or prayed for, nor to be subjectively experienced. The scriptural line has been drawn; there is to be no crossing over to any experience such as a subsequent "reception of the Holy Ghost", a baptism "into" Him, speaking in tongues, a "second work of grace", or "entire sanctification."

Any and all of these erroneous extras nullify the completed first work of grace by which the believer is recreated in the risen Lord Jesus Christ, fully accepted by God in all the glorious fullness of His beloved Son, and thereby made safe and secure for time and eternity.

It is on this all-important doctrine of the baptism by the Holy Spirit that the charismatics seriously err. This error is the basis for the other excesses that characterize the movement, including its stand against eternal security. Such a doctrinal lack forces them beyond the truth into the false realm of "second blessing" experience. What they lack in objective position (faith), they seek to gain by subjective condition (feelings).

By contrast, the position-oriented believer does not lack experience; his is the life-long progress of growth "in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:18).

## Chapter 3

## **THE FILLING WITH THE SPIRIT**

VITAL DISTINCTION -- "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:4). The line has been drawn at Pentecost. Nowhere must this line be more fully maintained than between the baptism by the Spirit, and the filling with the Spirit. Failure at this point has compounded the charismatic errors that are devastating so many lives today.

First of all, it is important to note that the disciples were simultaneously baptized by, and filled with, the Spirit at Pentecost. Nevertheless, these are two distinct aspects of the Spirit's work in the believer.

THE BAPTISM BY THE SPIRIT -- The baptism is non-experiential, instantaneous, and concerns our position. The only condition for receiving the baptism is to believe and repent. Each believer is placed by the Spirit into living union with the risen Lord, as a branch in the True Vine. "For by one Spirit were we all baptized into one body." "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (I Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27).

Having been baptized into Christ, one can never be out of Him, since this eternal position is the result of Christ's finished work on the Cross and His risen life--not our human merit or condition. Grace!

THE FILLING WITH THE SPIRIT -- On the other hand, the filling with the Holy Spirit has to do with the believer's condition--his walk. It is repeatable, and is the basis of spiritual growth and service. For example, the disciples were initially filled with the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:4), but Peter was filled anew when he subsequently addressed the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:8). Still later, he and John were again filled with the Spirit (Acts 4:31).

While we find no command to be baptized by the Spirit, the Word very definitely does command us to "be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). The present tense of the verb denotes a continuous filling--a walk in, or by (in dependence upon), the Spirit.

To be filled with the Spirit is to be controlled by the Spirit. This control consists of His dealing with our old nature, and developing our new nature. The result of this growth is power in service, and the progressive manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit--the very characteristics of Christ who is our life (Galatians 5:22, 23; Colossians 3:4).

CONDITION FOR FILLING -- For the filling with the Spirit, there is a condition. The condition is to walk in dependence upon the Spirit, rather than in dependence upon the flesh. "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16).

Faith's Response -- What is faith's response to this exhortation? As we learn that the old nature has been condemned at the Cross, we are able to count ourselves as having died unto that old life, and as being new creations in Christ. Our reckoning upon the finished work of the Cross gives the Spirit freedom to

progressively hold the old man inoperative, in the place of that death. At the same time we are also able to count ourselves as alive unto God in the risen Lord Jesus, thereby giving the Spirit freedom to develop fruit, the life of the True Vine, in our lives (Romans 6:11; John 15:5).

This dual reckoning is the faith aspect of our walk in the Spirit: (a) He deals with the old life by means of the already accomplished death of the Cross (Romans 6:6); (b) He develops the new life, the divine nature, from the source of our already completed life in Christ (Ephesians 2:10).

**FELLOWSHIP FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH** -- The very heartbeat and foundation of our spiritual growth is increasingly to know the Lord Jesus, who is seated at the right hand of the Father. Fellowship with Him fosters the healthy process of growth: death to the old, step by step; life in the new, from glory to glory. "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death" (Philippians 3:10).

**Inworking** -- The inward development of this "not I, but Christ" life is also based on the principle of fellowship with Him. We go to the written Word, our source. We depend on the indwelling Spirit to reveal Christ, the Living Word, and we feed on Him. This vital fellowship is the means of conforming us to His likeness. "But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (II Corinthians 3:18).

**Outworking** -- The outworking of these principles of growth also flows from our fellowship with the Lord Jesus. The process of development is slow, thorough, and life-long--even eternal--with no room for evasions or short-cuts. The Holy Spirit is ministering the very life of the Lord Jesus within, therefore it could not be otherwise. "For we who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you [others]" (II Corinthians 4:11, 12).

**CHARISMATIC ERRORS REGARDING GROWTH** -- The above scriptural principles are absent from the present-day charismatic movement. One does not find there, the willingness to grow at the Spirit's thorough pace, nor to be taken into His process of life out of death. The focus is on a spectacular experience, and it must be received right now! When one experience "totals", another must be worked up. To the altar! On and on it goes, spinning, spinning, but ever failing to produce growth "in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:18).

Charismatics are thrilled about a "Jesus" who is not necessarily the risen Lord Jesus Christ at all. These dear people aren't even sure they're saved! This amounts to "another gospel, which is not another" (Galatians 1:6, 7), not really the Gospel which positions one in the risen Lord Jesus Christ at the Father's right hand, eternally safe and secure.

By contrast, their excitement is centered in a "Jesus" who is other than the sovereign Savior. "But [now] I am fearful lest that even as the serpent beguiled Eve by his cunning [Genesis 3:4], so your minds may be corrupted and seduced from wholehearted and sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For [you seem readily

to endure it] if a man comes and preaches another Jesus than the One we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the [Spirit] you [once] received, or a different gospel from the one you [then] received and welcomed" (II Corinthians 11:3, 4, Amp.).

THE LINE -- Many Christians who are choosing to walk in the Spirit and to accept the path of the Cross are mystified at seeing those with little or no interest in the things of the Lord, suddenly fill the scene with their enthusiasm over this new-found experience. They wonder at their claims of such supernatural gifts as the "baptism in the Holy Ghost", tongues, interpretation, prophecy, healing, casting out demons.

Ever remember the line drawn, fellow believer! Do not be tempted to cross over into the downgrade realm of experience-centered error. The positional baptism by the Spirit into our risen Lord Jesus makes Him the source of spiritual maturity and fruitful service. On the eternal foundation of that once-for-all baptism, we learn to walk in the Spirit for the experiential filling with, and manifestation of, the victorious life of our risen Lord. "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him; fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way" (Psalms 37:7).

## Chapter 4

### TRUE TONGUES

"And [they] began to speak with other tongues [languages]" (Acts 2:4). It is extremely important to draw the scriptural line very carefully at this point. The tongues spoken at Pentecost were: (a) known languages; (b) spoken to God, not man; (c) a sign to the Jews.

TONGUES WERE KNOWN LANGUAGES -- "The multitude came together, and were confounded, because every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marveled, asking one to another, 'Behold, are not all these who speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?'" (Acts 2:6-8). Here was God's miraculous sign, given through the unlearned disciples in the dialect of each of the sixteen countries and provinces represented at Jerusalem.

A concise definition of New Testament tongues would be: the miraculous ability to speak in an unlearned language. Notice the two elements: (a) the word tongues means actual known languages; (b) these languages were unknown to the speakers.

TONGUES WERE SPOKEN TO GOD -- The Jews from other countries said, "We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God" (Acts 2:11). The disciples, having been baptized into the Lord Jesus and filled with the Spirit, were praising and thanking God for all that He was to them and had done for them in Christ. In their own dialects, the multitude heard of the wonderful works of God.

The drawn line must ever be maintained. Tongues were spoken to God, though a sign to unbelieving men. "For he that speaketh in an unknown [foreign] tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God" (I Corinthians 14:2). The fact of the foreign tongues was the sign, not what was expressed by that means. What was said was not a message to men, but to God--praise and thanksgiving. Paul said that the content of speaking in a foreign tongue was the giving of thanks (I Corinthians 14:16, 17).

TONGUES WERE A SIGN TO THE JEWS -- When the Holy Spirit came from the glorified Lord Jesus and filled the disciples on the day of Pentecost, a multitude of devout Jews gathered about them (Acts 2:5). Although Israel stubbornly rejected the Lord Jesus as their Messiah, God in mercy--with judgment pending--gave them a tangible sign, as prophesied in Isaiah 28:11, "For with...another tongue will he speak to this people."

In reference to this same prophecy Paul wrote, "In the law it is written, With men of other languages 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" (I Corinthians 14:21-22). This is a significant statement, as it is the only mention in Scripture of the purpose of the gift of tongues.

As a nation, the Jews believed not at Pentecost, although many individuals responded to the sign. With patience and love God gave His people every opportunity to turn to their Messiah. "For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; for with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people" (Isaiah 28:10, 11).

THE TRUE BAPTISM EFFECTS POSITIONAL ONENESS -- In His mercy God extended the sign beyond Jerusalem for a time after Pentecost to include the Samaritans, the Gentiles, and some disciples of John the Baptist, thus gathering representatives of all to be baptized into the Body of Christ. "And ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

As has been cited, our Lord's prayer for the baptism by the Spirit on behalf of the disciples was answered at Pentecost. Another prayer for His own has also been answered. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee...and I in them" (John 17:20, 21, 26).

At Pentecost the Father sent the Holy Spirit to baptize, to unite the Jewish believers to the risen Lord Jesus, as well as to each other as members of the one Body. Then He did the same for the half-Jewish, half-Gentile Samaritans; then also for the Gentiles in Cornelius' house; and later for the group of disciples of John the Baptist. Throughout this dispensation of grace each believer is vitally and eternally incorporated into the Lord Jesus and His Body. "For by one Spirit were we all baptized into one body." "There is one body...one baptism." "now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (I Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:4, 5; I Corinthians 12:12).

Praise God, we are "all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). This positional oneness was accomplished by the Holy Spirit when He baptized us into the Lord Jesus upon believing. As to the aspect of our condition, or walk, there is all too little oneness amongst believers in general. Practical unity can only be realized as we are controlled by the Spirit who makes real our oneness in Christ, the Head of the Body.

**THE TRUE BAPTISM EFFECTS UNITY OF THE FAITH** -- It is God's purpose that each of His children progress in spiritual maturity. Only thus will the Holy Spirit have adequate instruments for the building up of the Body of Christ. "And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting [maturing] of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-13, ASV).

**THE CHARISMATIC BAPTISM EFFECTS DIVISION** -- To err concerning the baptism sets one on the path of deprecated doctrine and glorified experience, at the expense of responsible spiritual growth. "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, by which they lie in wait to deceive; but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, who is the head, even Christ" (Ephesians 4:14, 15).

When fellowship is based upon experience it can include anyone--Buddhists, Hindus, Spiritists, New Age, as well as Roman Catholics who testify that their baptism in the Holy Ghost has caused them to more fully love and appreciate their Church, its Mass, and the Mother Mary. Such oneness may be ecumenical, but it is not pneumatological (of the Holy Spirit). "I am profaned among them" (Ezekiel 22:26).

**THE LINE** -- Never cross the scriptural line. Charismatic fellowship is centered in an experience of error, not in the risen Lord Jesus Christ. Such fellowship excludes all who refuse that experience--it is divisive. "Is Christ divided?" (I Corinthians 1:13).

## **Chapter 5**

### **JOEL'S PROPHECY**

**FROM SIGN TO MESSAGE** -- The tongues at Pentecost were addressed to God, the words were foreign to those who spoke them, and understood by the mixed multitude of Jews. They heard the works of God extolled in praise and thanksgiving, but they were gripped by the sign itself. "And they were all amazed, and were perplexed, saying one to another, What meaneth this?" (Acts 2:12).

The sign having accomplished its purpose in arresting the attention of the unbelieving Jews, the focus changed from the sign and the wonderful works of God to the Apostle Peter and the saving words of God. The line is drawn here. The prophet speaks to man, from God. "He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort...that all may learn, and all may be comforted" (I Corinthians

14:3, 31). At that time--the apostolic age--God's communications were given by direct revelation, until the Word was finalized in writing.

ACTS 2--CHURCH; JOEL 2--KINGDOM -- Then Peter prophesied to the assembled Jews regarding the significance of Pentecost. "Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem...this is that which was spoken through the prophet, Joel" (Acts 2:14, 15). He did not say that this was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. Rather, he claimed it to be an illustration of the outpouring of the Spirit which is to be experienced at the time of Israel's exaltation in the Kingdom. We should not fail to note that Joel made no mention of tongues.

Joel prophesied concerning the "last days" of the nation Israel, at which time the Spirit will be poured out upon "all flesh" (Joel 2:28). This will be the universal reception of the gift of the Spirit in all His fullness, not baptism into the Body of Christ. The prophet could not have intended the baptism of the Spirit and the formation of the Church, as these truths were not revealed in the Old Testament (Ephesians 3:1-9). Joel spoke of the "last days" of Israel, Peter spoke of the first day of the Church.

Further, Joel wrote of the "latter rain" and the "last days" in relation to Israel's history, not the "last days" of the Church in which we are now living (II Timothy 3:1). The cosmic wonders of Joel 2:19 and 20 have not occurred, nor can they occur prior to the return of Israel's Messiah in power and great glory (Matthew 24:29,30). (See footnote on Acts 2:17 regarding "days," New Scofield Reference Bible).

Consider this aspect of Joel's prophecy as quoted by Peter: "And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath: blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come" (Acts 2:19, 20).

Let's turn to Matthew's Gospel for his identification of this climactic event. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give its light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:29, 30).

THE GOSPEL OF THE CIRCUMCISION -- It is necessary to draw the line concerning Peter's preaching on this occasion. At Pentecost he was speaking to Israel only. This was before the Gentiles were brought into the Church, as recorded in Acts 10:34-38. As we read in Acts 2:14-40, Peter witnessed to them of the risen Lord Jesus Christ whom they had crucified, and the Holy Spirit brought them under conviction of sin. Then he instructed them, "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 Spirit." There was no waiting or agonizing, praying or fasting, or tongues-speaking.

The conditions upon which the Jews received the gift of the Spirit at that time were: belief in Christ, repentance for sin, and water baptism. This was the Gospel of the circumcision, and involved water baptism before receiving the gift of the Spirit. They were to repent of having (representatively) slain their

Messiah, and in a figurative way to wash their hands of the crime by being baptized (water). Then the Spirit would indwell them. Paul was saved on the basis of this Gospel of the circumcision (Acts 9:18; 22:16).

**THE GOSPEL OF THE UNCIRCUMCISION** -- When we come to Cornelius and the Gentiles being brought into the Church through receiving the gift of the Spirit, we shall see the Gospel of the uncircumcision in action--the very Gospel by which we were born again and baptized into the Body of Christ. "But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me [Paul], as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter" (Galatians 2:7). In the Gospel of the uncircumcision the order is: belief in Christ, repentance for sin, reception of the Spirit, and then water baptism--the public confession of identification with Christ in His death and resurrection.

**THE BAPTISM OF FIRE** -- In this connection it may be helpful to note a prophecy made by John the Baptist. The Jews asked him whether he was the Christ, or not. "John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to loose; he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Luke 3:16).

Later, when the Lord Jesus spoke to the disciples regarding Pentecost, He referred to John's words, "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (Acts 1:5). He made no mention of fire.

The baptism of fire is related to Christ's second coming, and had nothing to do with the disciples, who were soon to be baptized by the Holy Spirit. The Church Age was introduced by the baptism of the Spirit (grace), but the Kingdom Age will be heralded by the baptism of fire (judgment).

**THE LINE** -- The line drawn at Pentecost emphasizes the fact that although the Church was formed then, it was wholly Jewish for approximately the first five years--"to the Jew first" (Romans 2:10). But as a nation they steadfastly rejected the Lord Jesus until, in Acts 28:28, they were rejected. At that climactic juncture Paul finally had to say, "Be it known, therefore, unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it."

Henceforth, while the Jewish nation is temporarily set aside by God, believing Gentiles and Jews are being brought into the Body of Christ. Joel's prophecy concerning the end-time Jews will not be fulfilled until the Church has been raptured; then the Lord Jesus will return to the earth to reign over His people Israel and the Holy Spirit will be poured out upon "all flesh." Not another Pentecost-like baptism into the Body, but a glorious outpouring as the Millennial Kingdom is introduced (Joel 2:28-32).

There is no possibility of a repetition of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit came on that day, never to depart, but to abide. His coming introduced the Church Age. The fulfillment of Joel's prophecy will usher in the Kingdom Age, the millennial reign of Christ on earth.

## **Chapter 6**

## NO "SECOND BLESSING"

"Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them" (Acts 8:5).

SAMARITANS -- The Samaritans, being half Jewish and half Gentile, were logically the next group to be included in the Body of Christ. The witness was to be given first in Jerusalem, then in all Judaea, then in Samaria (Acts 1:8).

It is evident that Philip preached the Gospel of the circumcision to the Samaritans, in that after they believed they were baptized in water before the Spirit was given to them. Here, there was a lapse of time between their water baptism and their being given the gift of the Spirit.

In this unique situation we see a definite reason for the time gap. There had been age-long and bitter enmity between the Jews and the Samaritans, including rival religions. Peter, as custodian of the "keys of the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 16:19), had preached the Gospel to the Jewish nation at Pentecost, and the Church was born.

In order to maintain the unity of the Church, Peter was sent to Samaria to lay his hands on the new believers as a demonstration of their oneness with the Jerusalem Christians. They then received the gift of the Spirit and were baptized into the Body of Christ.

Such a space of time between believing and receiving the gift of the Spirit is not again found in the Word. This particular situation gives no ground whatever upon which to claim that the Samaritans received a "second work of grace." It was their first and only baptism into the Body.

GENTILES -- "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34). It was a big step for Peter to acknowledge the half-caste Samaritans as members of the Body; in fact, it was the stepping stone to his encounter with the outcast Gentiles. Even so, he had to be further prepared of God by the vision of the great sheet containing all manner of creatures, at Joppa (Acts 10:20).

Using the keys of the kingdom of heaven, Peter preached the Gospel of the uncircumcision to the spiritually prepared Gentile, Cornelius, and his household. Upon believing, the Holy Spirit fell on all of them and they spoke with tongues and magnified God, just as had been done at Pentecost by the disciples.

In this instance the sign of tongues was for the benefit of Peter and his companions, to indicate that the Gentile believers were fully one with them in Christ Jesus--all members of the one Body, the Church--"where there is neither Greek [Gentile] nor Jew" (Colossians 3:11).

Notice that it was after they had received the gift of the Spirit that Peter instructed the Gentile converts to be baptized in water. "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the

Holy Spirit as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:47,48).

Some maintain that Cornelius and his household were already saved, and that Peter came to administer the "baptism in the Holy Ghost." The Word again draws the line to cordon off another charismatic misconception. None of the Gentiles were born again until Peter shared the Gospel of the uncircumcision with them. The angel had said to Cornelius, "Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter, who shall tell thee words, by which thou and all thy house shall be saved" (Acts 11:13,14).

Not only did Peter need special preparation and proof concerning the inclusion of Gentiles in the Body, but also those Jews who comprised the Church at Jerusalem. "And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them" (Acts 11:2,3).

In explaining himself, Peter revealed some very pertinent facts. "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 he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Forasmuch, then, as God gave them the same gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I, that I could withstand God? 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 11:15-18). This constituted their salvation, not a "second word of grace."

DISCIPLES OF JOHN THE BAPTIST -- Paul encountered twelve Jews in Ephesus who were disciples of John the Baptist. Apollos, who knew only the Old Testament Scriptures and John's preparatory message, had led them as far as the baptism of repentance (Acts 18:24,25).

Paul carefully explained that John the Baptist did not preach salvation, and he proceeded to share the Gospel of the circumcision with them. When they believed the saving message, Paul followed the correct pattern by baptizing them in water in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then he laid his hands upon them, and they received the gift of the Spirit. They all spoke with tongues and prophesied, thus evidencing that they were baptized into the Body of Christ and filled with the Spirit just as the others had been at Pentecost (Acts 19:1-7).

In dealing with these men, Paul had asked them, "Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?" (Acts 19:2, ASV). Having believed only John the Baptist's message through Apollos, they had not known about the baptizing work of the Spirit.

They had already believed unto repentance, it is true, but the object of their faith was inadequate. There is a line drawn. Saving faith must have a saving object! Apollos preached John's repentance; Paul ministered the Lord Jesus' life.

CHARISMATIC ERROR -- Charismatic teaching insists that these disciples of John the Baptist were saved through Apollos' message, and that through Paul they received the "second blessing." This particular error has been fostered by the following rendering of Acts 19:2 in the King James Version: "Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed?" The American Standard Version (1901) gives the accurate translation, which makes all the difference: "Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?"

A similar problem arises in Acts 1:8 of the King James Version: "But ye shall receive power, after the Holy Spirit is come upon you." This is clarified in the American Standard Version which states: "But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you."

THE LINE -- Thank God for the drawn line! Our Father would guard us from seeking a doctrinally faulty object, resulting in a dark and crippling experience. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). In dependence upon the Spirit of Truth, we are to be very careful to "distinguish the things that differ," to ever maintain a vital distinction between truth and error.

"And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment; so that ye may distinguish the things that differ" (Philippians 1:9,10, marg., ASV).

## Chapter 7

### TONGUES IN THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH

1 CORINTHIANS 14 -- During the period in which Paul was establishing the Ephesian believers, he wrote a letter of instruction to the new church in Corinth. In chapters 12 to 14 in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, he discussed the subject of spiritual gifts. In chapter 14 he dealt with the most important gift, that of prophecy, and the least important of all gifts, that of tongues. Together let us go through the most vital verses of that chapter.

Follow after love, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy (v. 1).

The New Testament gift of prophecy involved ministering to the Church that which had been given by direct revelation from God. This was the most needed gift of the apostolic age, in that the Scriptures were not yet completed. Although the believers were on New Testament ground, they had little written revelation beyond the Old Testament.

For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God (v. 2).

It was good to praise and thank God in exercising the tongues-sign to the Jews, but the young church needed to be built up in the faith through the gift of prophecy.

But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort (v. 3).

The prophetic gift was for the purpose of conveying the message of God directly to all present, as Peter did at Pentecost after the sign of tongues had been given.

He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself, but he that prophesieth edifieth the church (v. 4).

When a man was given a tongue in praise to God as a sign to the Jews, he himself was being edified in his exercise of the gift. But the church gained nothing in that they could not understand what was being said. Paul stressed the importance of all the congregation being edified by means of the gift of prophecy.

I would that ye all spoke with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied; for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying" (v. 5).

Tongues were a help to the church only when the praise to God was interpreted, that all might share in the blessing of what was said to Him. Interpretation itself was one of the sign gifts.

Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by prophesying, or by doctrine? (v. 6).

Tongues, when interpreted, were edifying to the church. However, when it came to believers being doctrinally instructed, they were to be ministered to by the prophetic gift. This was direct revelation from God, conveying knowledge and doctrine. Tongues were from man to God, and had to do mainly with praise.

Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church (v. 12).

To excel would be to profit and edify the church by means of the best gift [prophecy], rather than by the least gift [tongues].

I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all (v. 18).

In Paul's extensive missionary travels he encountered many Jews, to whom the sign of tongues was duly given.

Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue (v. 19).

In its benefit to the church, the gift of prophecy was 2,000 times more valuable than the gift of tongues.

Wherefore, tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not; but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them who believe. If therefore, the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? (vv. 22, 23).

It was necessary to exercise the right gift for the right people. Even at Pentecost there were those who, "mocking, said, These men are full of new wine" (Acts 2:13).

But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convicted of all, he is judged of all. And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth (vv. 24, 25).

What could be a greater contrast than the reactions to these two gifts? Untranslated tongues reminded the unlearned and unbeliever of drunkenness and madness, while Spirit-directed prophecy brought conviction of sin and worship of God.

Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues (v. 39).

Many unsaved Jews attended these early church meetings for one reason or another, and God in mercy was still giving them the sign of tongues. But there was soon to be a change.

ISRAEL SUSPENDED -- We see in the Old Testament that Israel rejected God the Father, we see in the Gospels that they rejected God the Son, and we see in Acts that they rejected the witness of God the Spirit. The closing of Israel's national opportunity began when they rejected the Messiah at Pentecost and culminated at the end of Acts, thus spanning the years 30 to approximately 62 A.D.

Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles...

Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon you own hands; I am clean. From now on I will go unto the Gentiles...

And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after Paul had spoken one word, "Well spake the Holy Spirit by Isaiah, the prophet, unto your fathers, Saying, 'Go unto this people, and say, hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive...' Be it known, therefore, unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it." And when he had said these words, the Jews departed and had great disputing among themselves (Acts 13:46; 18:5, 6; 28:25-29).

With Israel set aside, she now has neither priority nor privilege. She is in the same position as any other nation in relation to the promises and claims of the Gospel, until God resumes His dealings (Kingdom) with her after the Rapture of the Church. Until then, it is "whosoever will."

## Chapter 8

### SIGNS RETIRED

1 CORINTHIANS 13 -- Against the backdrop of Israel's triple rejection of God and His consequent turning to the Gentiles, we now look into 1 Corinthians 13. This portion of the Word will explain one of the results of this rejection: the termination or cessation of the sign gifts.

Love never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away (v. 8).

When Paul stated that love never fails, his implication was that the gifts were to fail. As the nation's rejection progressed, the phasing out of the sign gifts progressed. At Pentecost, all the disciples spoke in tongues; in the Corinthian church, not all (1 Corinthian 12:30), at the close of Acts (A.D. 61-62), none spoke in tongues. With Israel set aside, the sign of tongues was brought to an end.

SIGN GIFTS SUPERSEDED BY THE WRITTEN WORD -- By the time the Church was in possession of the complete canon of Scripture (A.D. 100), there was no longer any need for direct revelation through the gift of prophecy, nor for authentication through sign gifts. The Word of God speaks for itself!

Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthian church about A.D. 55-56, and in that setting we find the last recorded occurrence of the gift of tongues. In the later epistles which include lists of spiritual gifts, such as the vital Romans and Ephesians letters, there is neither mention of tongues nor of any other sign gifts.

For we know in part, and we prophesy in part (v. 9).

The gifts of knowledge and prophecy gave only partial help, and the gifts listed in chapter 12 of Corinthians were only temporary--to be totally superseded by the all-sufficient Word of God. "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple" (Psalms 119:130).

But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away (v. 10.).

It must first be understood that the phrase, "that which is perfect," is in the neuter gender in the Greek, hence it could not refer to a person, e.g. the Lord Jesus. The word perfect means mature or complete. It was the completed Word which rendered the gifts of revelation and knowledge obsolete.

For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then, face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known (v. 12).

Twice Paul referred to the Scriptures as a mirror. With but a partially completed Word and a few temporary gifts, the reflection of Christ, the Living Word, was dark and indistinct.

Thank God, the line is drawn. Now, with the Word of God in toto, we are enabled by the Holy Spirit to see the Lord therein. "But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Then, it was the darkened mirror of the gifts; now, it is the brightened mirror of the Lord Jesus Christ in the perfected Word, "to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:6). What gift could do that?

And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love (v. 13).

By A.D. 70, when Jerusalem was destroyed and the Jews were dispersed, the sign of tongues had been discontinued. By A.D. 100 when the New Testament was completed, the sign gifts--such as miracles, healings, prophecy, knowledge--were inoperative.

Faith and hope will continue until the Rapture, when they too will no longer be necessary. Love, the greatest of all, will abide throughout eternity.

LOVE IS PREEMINENT -- We must remember that the chapter we are considering at present is Paul's ode to love, and that it is the very heart of his instruction concerning the sign gifts. In urging his readers to "covet earnestly the best gifts," he emphatically said, "Yet show I unto you a more excellent way [path]" (1 Corinthians 12:31).

Paul's point in chapter 13 was not primarily that the gifts were to be ministered in love, although that was essential, but rather that the gifts were temporary and love is eternal. Even faith and hope would endure for a time after the gifts were gone, but love would remain, preeminent and permanent. Then, in returning to the subject of gifts, he again mentioned the more excellent way by saying, "Follow after love [the path]" (1 Corinthians 14:1).

THE LINE -- The line has been drawn. No longer are there temporary sign gifts, but now gifted men are given as gifts to the Church to minister the truth in love for the perfecting [maturing] of the saints.

And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ; till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-13, ASV).

The apostles and prophets mentioned above are no longer with us; their work consisted in the foundation and extension of the Church and the completion of the Scriptures. In that sense they remain with us. "Ye...are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone" (Ephesians 2:19, 20).

Today the Church does not need the sign gifts. The motivation for growth, worship, and service for each of the members of the Body, is the indwelling life and love of the Lord Jesus Christ. The truth, spoken and expressed in love, is far more lasting and effective than any gift. Gift-centered love today may be as false as the gift; Christ-centered love is as true as the Christ.

## **Chapter 9**

### **BAPTISM IN ERROR**

"QUIET, PLEASE" -- The sign gifts have ended, but the error lingers on. It is conservatively estimated the 75 percent of those who claim to have the baptism, tongues and other sign gifts today, are women. Such a situation calls for the drawn line of the Word.

"Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak" (1 Corinthians 14:34). The context and content of this verse primarily concern the gifts of prophecy and tongues. In the midst of detailed instructions, which Paul stated were "the commandments of the Lord" (v. 37), we find this admonition concerning women.

Later, with regard to church procedure, Paul wrote, "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (1 Timothy 2:11, 12). It is certainly permissible and intended that women teach under proper circumstances, but not to exercise authority over men.

MEN ONLY -- The Holy Spirit is not giving sign gifts to anyone today--male or female! It is evident that the gifts mentioned in the Corinthian church were given only to men. There is no record in the Word that a women ever received the gift of tongues.

Some insist that the ban was against tongues-speaking within a church building, but there were none of these at that time. Actually, the church is represented by any two or three who are gathered together in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, whether within or without a church building.

Since the true baptism by the Holy Spirit is non-experiential, and the sign gifts are no longer operative, as has been shown in the Word, just what are the charismatic experiences that are being promoted today?

THE PHYSIOLOGICAL BASIS OF THE CHARISMATIC BAPTISM -- The "baptism in the Holy Ghost" is a fleshly experience brought about by a combination of super-emotionalism, hypnotism, and

religious hysteria, mainly induced by the sheer force of psychological suggestion. Depending upon the emotional makeup of the individual, the experience may be low key, or very high key. Thorough the years this fleshly baptism has left a heart-breaking trail of wreckage in lives, marriages, homes, and churches.

In this "hypnotic crisis" the subject accepts whatever is suggested or commanded. He (she) is made to believe that they are experiencing the "baptism of the Holy Ghost" and that they have the gift of tongues. This erroneous concept enters the subconscious, resulting in permanent damage. The mind is subconsciously set in these errors, which become virtually impossible to correct by means of scriptural truth or reasoning--as anyone who has attempted to do so will affirm.

There are a number of means utilized to produce this neurological breakdown, such as beat music, repetitive hand-clapping and singing, thrilling testimonies, exhortation, and manipulation of the body. Through such previous conditioning, or even the individual's desperate seeking, "the baptism" is sometimes experienced when alone--suddenly, and seemingly without cause.

Whatever the means, when the climactic physical condition is attained, the cerebral nervous system is overpowered by the highly stimulated ganglionis--or automatic nervous system, which is centered in the solar plexus. This charismatic 'baptism' is often described in such words as these, "A ball of fire seemed to form in my stomach." This is the source of the baptism of experience--the mind shut down, the automation system out of control, with the subconscious coming to the surface.

**THE PHYSIOLOGICAL BASIS OF CHARISMATIC TONGUES** -- When an individual is brought into this abnormal state of the baptism, his vocal mechanism is stimulated by the out-of-control nervous action, resulting in an irrational babbling. This gibberish is never a language, although parts of syllables are sometimes heard due to the ecstatic stimulation of the uncontrolled vocal chords. Once the nerve pattern has been established, this chattering may be exercised at will.

Some claim to have recognized foreign languages brought forth by tongues speakers, but this has never been proven. In isolated instances there may have been foreign words or syllables uttered. These slip out of the released subconscious, words picked up consciously or subconsciously in the past, a la Bridey Murphy. Sometimes there is a deliberate falsification concerning such language "verification."

**THE PHYSIOLOGICAL BASIS OF CHARISMATIC HEALING** -- These same psychotic conditions are the necessary stock-in-trade of the "healers," in order to effect their hypnotic and neuro-manipulations. Once the "patient" is conditioned and hands are laid upon him (her), often forcefully, they usually experiences a feeling of shock and heat surging up through the body, followed by a release of tension.

This is the same reaction of the lower ganglionic nerves that produces the charismatic baptism, and tongues. But this "electric" charge never comes from the hands of the healer! It is the ecstatic climax of the over-wrought (often easily wrought) plexus centers which are located along the spinal column and in

the solar plexus of the victim. It is the resulting climax of the psychoneurotic hysteria built up by the healer, the song leader (exhorter), the music, the crowd, and the individual's need and expectation.

This psychic contagion is often manipulated apart from the use of physical contact by the healer. A pointed finger accompanied by a commanding voice are enough to trigger this short-circuiting of the overloaded nervous system. Many testify to being healed in this way, but they are simply experiencing a temporary psychic catharsis of a neurotic symptom. Others prevaricate (fake it), in an effort to gain the spotlight or to help the cause.

No one today has the gift of healing; that was included among the sign gifts retired at the close of the apostolic age. God heals supernaturally today when it suits His purpose for the individual. He also heals in response to prayer when it is according to His will in the matter. But for the most part He heals through His own natural laws and by remedial means practiced by the medical profession. God does not heal through professional healers, nor those amateurs who claim to have the gift of healing.

THE LINE -- The line must be drawn with regard to the baptism of experience, or any sign gift. If it involves a woman, the line must be doubled! Neither men nor women charismatics are spiritually qualified to guide anyone. They are unsure of their first step, not having progressed to assurance of eternal salvation--the basic building block for all spiritual growth. This void results in slavery to the altar of re-salvation and re-sanctification. Unless a life is anchored upon the eternally secure foundation of the Lord Jesus' finished work at Calvary, the only alternative is to build upon the shifting sand of sensuous experiences.

CHARISMATIC ERROR REGARDING SECURITY -- There are some in the charismatic movement who claim to teach the security of the believer. It is always conditional; it is not the scriptural, unconditional, eternal security that is solely based upon the saving work and risen life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Other charismatics who claim to possess eternal security have brought this truth with them from solid ground outside; they did not receive it from the movement's teachings. And, if they remain in the anti-security realm, most of what was previously held will be lost. Error is a degenerating influence.

LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITY -- Pastor, if any souls of charismatic persuasion surface in your congregation, such should be immediately dealt with in love concerning their beliefs and practices. Given time to turn from their errors, if they then refuse to do so it will be necessary to take them before the elders of the church. If they still remain adamant, the course must shift from that of seeking to save the "wolves," to that of saving the flock.

If this is not carried out, as Scripture directs, they will leave of their own accord in time. But when they do, they will take some of the best of the congregation with them.

For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch... Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (Acts 20:29-31; 2 Timothy 2:15).

## **Chapter 10**

### **THE SEED BED OF PSEUDO DEMONISM**

Error is always destructive, and the charismatic baptism of experience is no exception. It takes its victims through tongues and the gifts down the fantasy trail--ending in pseudo demonism. A foundational error produces structural catastrophe.

**THE EVENT** -- A bit of historical background will give us light as to the source of much of the hysteria we are witnessing today. The Welsh Revival occurred during the fall of 1904 and the spring of 1905. The national church of Wales had become cold and dead, and there is no question but that many were helped and even saved during that awakening. However, there was very little doctrinal preaching. The revival was almost entirely based upon crowd singing (amongst a people of highly emotional nature) and an emphasis on the "baptism of the Holy Ghost".

**THE LEADERSHIP AND MESSAGE** -- Evan Roberts, a young coal miner and sometime Bible school student, emerged as the leader. Mrs. Jessie Penn-Lewis, who was involved in the revival's tragic aftermath, wrote, "Mr. Evan Roberts' message at the commencement of the Welsh Revival was essentially to believers, urging upon them the need of the baptism of the Holy Ghost." (1)

Both Mr. Roberts and Mrs. Penn-Lewis taught that the baptism was for "power for service and warfare against Satan and the powers of darkness." Neither of them promoted the gift of tongues. They went past that, right into the teaching of demonism. Nevertheless, the charismatic baptism did its work in the revival excitement, with tongues and other fleshly excesses immediately breaking out and bringing to an end any semblance of true awakening.

Prior to this debacle, most of the Christian workers in England and Wales were being brought along in the growth truths by the conference ministry of Mrs. Penn-Lewis and others, as well as the early Keswick Conventions. But it is sad to relate, that for the majority their growth was cut short when they were drawn into the revival's "baptism of the Holy Ghost for power and warfare".

**THE PROBLEM** -- The impetus for the present-day surge of so-called demonism was generated right there! Roberts and Penn-Lewis attributed to demons the devastating results of the experiential "baptism of power for service and warfare." They were unable to face the possibility that the charismatic baptism may have been the cause of the trouble. What was due to accelerated flesh, they put down to demons.

THE RESULTS -- The true influence of the Welsh revival upon believers in that day (and ours) has not been generally realized down through the years. However, Mrs. Penn-Lewis admitted that wildfire erupted "from the very outset." The physical, mental, and spiritual wreckage resulting from the baptism was appalling in its effect upon the revival's leaders and workers, to say nothing of the new converts. She said that "thousand," and, "nearly all," were "wrecked."

Evan Roberts himself suffered a severe mental breakdown at the end of the revival, from which he never recovered. As a result, his public ministry was finished. The same thing happened to heart-breaking numbers of those who experienced the baptism, and continues to occur amongst the charismatics today. DEMONS INDICTED FOR ALL -- Five years after the awakening died, Roberts wrote:

The hindrance to revival at the present time lies, not only in its opposition of the powers of darkness, but in the present condition of the most spiritual section of the Church, through whom alone God can work in revival. These are believers who know the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and were liberated in spirit in the revival, but are now driven back into themselves by the pressure of the enemy in the atmosphere. In past revivals people have sometimes been driven into asylums. There ought to come a revival which will bring souls out of them!

To put it in the bluntest language, the revival hour is the occasion for demons to obtain possession of spiritual believers, and revival ceases because of such possession. The aftermath of the revival in Wales revealed numbers of "honest souls" swept off their feet by evil supernatural powers. Vast numbers of spiritual believers need deliverance from the powers of darkness. (2)

The frightful evidence all about them caused these two leaders to have serious doubts about "the baptism of power." However, in placing the blame upon demons for all the spiritual devastation, they completely missed the point. Mrs. Penn-Lewis knew the truths concerning the self-life, but she followed Roberts beyond the pale of scriptural sanity.

It is the same today amongst the charismatics and many others. Demons are blamed for everything, whereas the true cause of the trouble lies with the baptism of experience and the activity of the old nature. How often it is said, "The devil made me do it!"

By 1912 (seven years after the revival) the state of believers in Britain and Wales was so critical that in desperation Mrs. Penn-Lewis, with Roberts' assistance, wrote the controversial book, War on the Saints. Its purpose was to show that the post-revival condition of believers was due to demon activity; it was also an effort to lead them back to spiritual sanity. The book failed to accomplish this purpose, and its abridgment continues to contribute to the present-day problem.

STRANGE RESULTS OF THE BAPTISM -- The following quotation from the unabridged volume reveals that these leaders faltered concerning the baptism; they were forced to question it, but never arrived at the answer. No line drawn!

As we glance back over the history of the Church, and watch the rise of various "heresies" or delusions, we can trace the period of deception as beginning with some great spiritual crisis, such as that which, in later years, we have termed "the baptism of the Holy Ghost."

The question whether this surrender to "obey the Spirit" is one that is in accord with Scripture, should be examined in view of the many ways in which so many whole-hearted believers have been misled, for it is strange that an attitude which is scriptural should so grievously be the cause of danger, and often complete wreckage, to so many devoted children of God.

We have seen that the period in the believer's life wherein he received the baptism of the Holy Ghost is the special time of danger from the evil supernatural world. Few go through this crisis without deception by the enemy in more or less degree, and only those who cling to the use of their reasoning faculties at this time, can hope to be saved from the catastrophe of becoming a victim to the subtle workings of the evil supernatural powers. (3)

SCRIPTURE IS THE ONLY STANDARD -- In blindly missing the answer to the cause of the trouble--hyperactivity of the old nature--Roberts and Penn-Lewis went all the deeper into their demon fantasy. When queried on the subject, they had not a shred of Scripture to offer; true to form, all was hung upon experience and imagination. "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20).

Question -- Where does it say in the Bible that evil spirits can enter a believer?

Roberts -- There is no specific instance plainly given in Scripture that the Christian can be possessed by demons, but the principle is there, and you understand the principle by experience. Christians do become deceived and possessed by evil spirits, as they enter and fasten on the muscles and nerves of the body. (4)

Question -- Do you know it possible for a Christian to be possessed by demons?

Mrs. Penn-Lewis -- Without hesitation, Yes. For if you have proved it in your own experience, you have no other answer to give. You have passed beyond the region of debate and theory, and you know. The fact of the possible possession of the believer is scripturally reasonable. I can tell you of the wreckage of those who have known the baptism of the Spirit, and been deceived through the deceptions of the wicked spirits.

Demons bury themselves in the very structure of the human frame. They especially locate themselves in the spinal column, nervous system, and deepest nerve centers, through which they control the whole being; from the ganglionic nerve center located in the bowels [sic], to the cerebral nerve center in the head; the eyes, ears, neck, jaws, tongue, muscles of the face, and the delicate nerve tissues of the brain. (5)

LACK OF LINE -- Mrs. Penn-Lewis bordered on the answer, but saw only demons! What these leaders, and charismatics in general, regard as demon-caused is simply a out-of-control nervous reaction generated by the baptism of experience.

Without a line drawn, Roberts went even to this extreme in Scripture-less theorizings:

There are murderous spirits at work everywhere. A man may have opened himself to murderous spirits in the form of "death working"; so murderous spirits should be refused, fought, and cast out everywhere. Take, for instance, the missionary, who is in a district where there is malarial fever. He goes into the midst of it, but in faith that it cannot touch him, he becomes immune by recognizing that he must not be a victim to the enemy--death. (6)

Beware, friend, of the baptism of experience! If it brought these renowned leaders to such extremes, think of what it is doing in charismatic circles today.

1. The Overcomer magazine (1910), p. 152.
2. Ibid.
3. Jessie Penn-Lewis, War on the Saints (Leister, England: Excelsior Press, 1939, 6th Edition, unabridged), pp. 50-55.
4. The Overcomer magazine (1912), p. 98.
5. War on the Saints, p. 69.
6. The Overcomer magazine (1914), p. 10.

## **Chapter 11**

### **GOD SOVEREIGN -- SATAN SERVANT**

We are observing today the results of what we have just noted in the early years of the present century. The error of the Welsh Revival leaders is running rampant in our midst--that of attributing the works of the flesh to demons. Hence it is essential that we take a sane look at the contemporary demon craze.

QUESTIONABLE STORIES OF DEMON ACTIVITY -- Charismatics are responsible for most, if not all, of the oft-repeated and much embellished reports concerning demons, raising of the dead, walking on water, etc., whether they be of local or foreign origin. Of late more and more non-charismatics who fall for these stories are contributing to, and becoming a part of, the problem. The fact remains that there is neither scriptural nor evidential proof to support such tales. But to escape being taken in by these apocryphal accounts, one's discernment must at least exceed the credulity of the TV wrestling fan!

THE DEMONIC TOBOGGAN -- Many today, from charismatic neophytes to old line "deeper life" teachers, purport to cast out evil spirits and to hold conversations with depression demons, sickness demons, pouting demons, crying demons, and laughing demons.

Remember, it is usually those who insist that you do not have the Spirit and that you do not have eternal security, who will very likely inform you that you do have a demon. As soon as one begins to take these myths at face value, he is on a demonic toboggan. In stepping down from scriptural ground, one slides helplessly to the very bottom of the slope of absurdity.

Nowadays there are respected conservative leaders who have slipped to the place of insisting that believers can be possessed by demons. Their slide has caused them to affirm that sins in the life of the believer--such as jealousy, spite, hate, temper, pride--are demons, and that to cast out these evil spirits is to solve the problem. It is even taught that modern tongues are the work of a ventriloquist demon!

HYPNOTIC CRISIS -- Believer, never forget the neurological effects of the baptism of experience, or of frantic heathen rites, or of common everyday psychotic illness. In any one of these unnatural states, the control of the rational cerebral mind is relinquished and the automatic, ganglionic "mind" takes over--often to the extent of allowing freedom of expression to the subconscious.

In such a condition, to one degree or another, the unsaved or saved "possessed" one is confronted by the would-be demon deposer. Hypnotic-like suggestion forcefully applied often causes the escaped subconscious to slip by the guard of the semi-conscious rational mind, resulting in a verbal response to the shouted promptings and strident commands of the one in "authority." A woman's subconscious may even respond in male voice--something that surely would have intrigued Sigmund Freud!

THE LINE -- The final line must be drawn. The one safe and sane ground on any subject of this nature is to remain within the bounds of unquestionably clear Scripture. We are not to seek even the apostles' experiences (nor anyone else's), but we are to rightly divide the Word of Truth and obey the apostolic teaching for this Church Age.

Believers Only! -- The Church Age has primarily to do with the Body of the Lord Jesus Christ, in which each believer is an eternal member. A Christian does not require sign gifts to authenticate the Word of God, because he is a believer. Believer, your Father is the God of the universe!

Satan Serves -- Satan has never made a move that has not been under the full control of our sovereign God, nor has any power of his ever annulled the will of our Father! The experience of Job is one proof of that fact for all to see in detail, and that took place long before the enemy's total defeat at Calvary. What is true of the conquered Serpent is likewise true of every single one of his doomed followers, commonly known as demons.

The Creator and Sustainer of the universe is our very life, the risen Lord Jesus Christ.

And ye are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and powers....And, having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it [the Cross]. -- What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom ye have of God?

The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. -- Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy [incapacitate] him that had the power of death, that is, the devil (Colossians 2:10, 15; 1 Corinthians 6:19; 3:17; Hebrews 2:14).

Quiet Resistance -- As believers, we are permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit and the victorious life of the risen Lord. We have no need of leaning upon broken reeds such as the baptism of experience and tongues, nor are we subject to defeated demons, including Satan.

Safely "hidden with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3), we learn to effortlessly and silently "resist the devil" on the basis of his defeat in the Cross, and our victory in Christ. There is nothing left for him and his minions to do but flee (James 4:7).

Deliverance and Growth -- In the matter of deliverance from the power of sin, the burden of the Word does not center upon demons, but upon the Cross in its dealing with sin and the sin nature (Romans 6:6, 11). When it comes to growth, the burden of the Word concerning the believer is not warfare with Satan, but rather his living relationship to the risen Lord Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 5:17, Colossians 3:1-3).

CHARISMATIC ERROR -- We do not have, as do the charismatics, a God who is at the mercy of Satan, nor a "Jesus" who is unable to save completely and guarantee eternal security, nor a "Holy Ghost" who is helpless in the face of supposed demon possession of the believer!

Charismatic errors leave nothing but a defeated Spirit and a victorious enemy, as expressed so tragically by Mrs. Penn-Lewis:

The spirit foe may wrap around the spirit, and hold it as if in a vise, so that none of the power of the Holy Spirit can reach the mind and body. Then you will lose concentration, and your mind is locked up by the demons.

THE SPIRIT'S PREPARATION AND PROVISION -- The indwelling Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ; He is God! He ministers within us on the basis of the finished work of the Cross, and from the source of our victorious Lord Jesus Christ at the right hand of the Father. When the Holy Spirit has nurtured, developed, and trained us sufficiently in our spiritual growth and service, He instructs us via the Word: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:10, 11).

Abide Above -- We are in the Lord Jesus, where He is:

Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come; and [God] hath put all things under his feet (Ephesians 1:22).

Stand -- We stand in His victory; ours is the wrestling of rest.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against [defeated] principalities, against [broken] powers, against [deposed] rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore, take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore...praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.--In quietness and confidence shall be your strength (Ephesians 6:12-14, 18; Isaiah 30:15).

Resist -- The Holy Spirit establishes us in our position in the Lord Jesus far above all, teaching us to resist by "withstanding" and "standing"--maintaining by faith the position in which we have been placed. Our resistance is grounded in the finished work of the Cross, from which Satan and each of his fallen spirit followers must ever flee. "Submit yourselves, therefore, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

Satan's power is not inherent but permitted (Romans 13:1); it is not unlimited, but controlled (Job 1:12, 2:6); it is not invincible, but broken (Luke 11:12; 2:6); it is not assured of success, but is surely doomed (Revelation 20:2, 3).

**HOLD THAT LINE!** -- Believer, don't be afraid to discriminate.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves....Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father, who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out demons? 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 (Matthew 7:15, 21-23).

It may be foolish to underestimate the enemy, but it is fatal to overestimate him. We are neither to be fooled nor "fataled." Our responsibility is to abide steadfastly in both the written and the Living Word, having nothing to do with the charismatic errors. Such a firm and uncompromising position is necessary as a rebuke to those who hold and promote these errors, as an example to those who need protection from such teaching, and as a testimony to the all-sufficiency of Christ and the faithfulness of the blessed Holy Spirit.

Our privilege is to stand upon the ground of growth, abiding above in our Lord Jesus Christ, safe and secure on the scriptural side of the line.

Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord (I Corinthians 15:57, 58).

## APPENDIX

The following letter is typical of many that are being received as the result of tragic experiences with charismatic error.

Dear Mr. Stanford:

I have a spiritual problem in my life that has been causing me a great deal of anguish, and I hope that you will write me concerning it.

A year ago, I was assigned to a seven-month cruise on an aircraft carrier that became a nightmare to me. I attended a Bible study on the ship and at its conclusion I was asked to lead the group in prayer. When I began to pray, everyone else there started praying aloud also. Then someone fell on his knees and the rest laid their hands on him and shook him, crying for Jesus to remove the demons from him. All the confusion frightened me and I got out of there as fast as I could.

This experience kept preying on my mind during the next couple of weeks and I had no peace, feeling that I might be running from the Holy Spirit. So I started going back to the meetings, still questioning in my mind because the actions and remarks of the group just didn't seem "right" to me.

As I continued attending, a conviction started coming over me that I wasn't truly saved. Finally, I was so gripped by fear that I fell on my knees and the group put their hands on me and told me to say "Praise Jesus" over and over again as fast as I could. While doing this I felt a tingling in my feet, as though they were "going to sleep." I thought I was being "washed" by the Holy Spirit, and after that I began to live for these experiences.

After that, I had some terrible ups and downs, but the group kept saying, "You have to 'stay in the Holy Ghost' or else Jesus will come at a moment you aren't ready, and the door will be closed." Things go worse and worse even though I still didn't go along with all they were saying and doing. After about four months, I went down into a depression so deep that I was willing to do almost anything to get out of it. The group told me to try to imitate one of their members who was speaking in "tongues." Even though I was afraid of this, a few meetings later I found myself doing "it."

Then I read a booklet that said modern tongues are the work of a "ventriloquist demon," and that nearly scared me to death. I never went back to the group meetings, and I was afraid I was demon-possessed. Twitches and vibrations developed all over my body, and I picked up a stutter. All sorts of fears came over me, such as believing that I had blasphemed the Holy Spirit.

I still get very depressed at times, and now and then doubt my salvation. It is hard for me to believe all I went through on that ship. I would truly appreciate receiving your explanation of what happened to me, and any help the Lord may enable you to give me.

Sincerely, (signed) MJ Stanford