

Simple Studies Concerning Speaking in Tongues

An Examination of 1 Corinthians 12 and 14



Student's Study Guide

Dr. Stanford E. Murrell

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1 CORINTHIANS 12

A Historical Introduction

Conflict in the Church at Corinth

1. The book of *Acts* is the history of a new relationship of God with His people. Three great moments are recorded in three different places.
 - God revealed Himself in Jerusalem on a day called Pentecost. Thousands of national Jews were converted to Christ (Acts 2:14-41).
 - God revealed Himself in a special way in Caesarea and many Gentiles were brought into the body of Christ (Acts 9:30-31).
 - God revealed Himself at Ephesus where many of the *Old Testament* saints resided who knew nothing but the ministry and baptism of John. After the gospel was preached they found new faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 19:1-20).
2. As the gospel was going ever outward from Jerusalem to the uttermost parts of the world, it found its way to Corinth. Corinth was a city of culture, commerce, religion, and vice. It was a place that needed spiritual salt and light (Matt. 5:13-16). It was from Athens that Paul had come to Corinth with all of its prosperity, sports, politics, and immorality. When he first entered the city, Paul was discouraged with what he saw. So great was his despondency that he was ready to leave. But the Lord spoke to His apostle in a dream confirming that there would be spiritual success (Acts 18:9, 10). Paul was to stay in Corinth and he did.
3. The first contacts the apostle made in Corinth were with a married couple, Aquila and Priscilla, victims of a Jewish expulsion from Rome under Claudius Caesar. Because they were tent makers, Paul stayed with them (Acts 18:1-3). Soon Silas and Timothy, who had been in Macedonia, came to Corinth. This gospel team presented the gospel of Jesus Christ every Sabbath in the local synagogues with good results (Acts 18:4-5).
4. In time, two influential men were converted--Justus, whose house was next door to the Synagogue, and Crispus the chief ruler of the synagogue. A *New Testament* church was established consisting of Jews and Gentiles, male and female, rich and poor, educated and uneducated (Acts 18:7-8). For almost two years Paul lived in Corinth, teaching, preaching, and organizing the church. Then he moved on to other cities including Ephesus, where he stayed for more than two years (Acts 19:8-10).
5. While he was at Ephesus, Paul received some letters from Corinth asking his counsel concerning marriage and the problem of eating meat that had been offered to the idols of the Temple. In addition, Paul also received word about the spiritual decay of the Church. Out of pastoral concern, he wrote a response to the questions and then proceeded to correct the Church that was failing in its Christian experience. Instead of victory, there was tragedy!

Instead of a holy witness, there was shame. Instead of evangelism, there was deserved ridicule.

- *1 Corinthians 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? The church tolerated immorality.*
- *1 Corinthians 5:1 It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. Some members were actually involved with temple prostitution.*
- *1 Corinthians 6:15-18 Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. In addition, the Love Feast was marred by drunkenness.*

6. Overall, there was an attitude of pride.

- *1 Corinthians 5:2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.*

7. Heresy had infiltrated the church. The doctrine of the resurrection was being questioned.

- *1 Corinthians 15:12 Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?*

8. The church had moved from the simplicity in Christ.

- *2 Corinthians 11:3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*

9. It was time for the church members to examine themselves to see whether or not they were in the faith.

- *2 Corinthians 13:5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*

10. Despite the pride, the immorality, and the drunkenness, the church abounded with spiritual gifts.

- *1 Corinthians 1:7 So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:*
11. What the church was lacking in was gospel grace.
 - *1 Corinthians 3:1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.*
 12. But spiritual gifts and spirituality are not synonymous. Despite the abundance of gifts, the church was spiritually out of control. They were immature. But why?
 13. The spiritual immaturity of the church could not be traced to a lack of knowledge because there was no lack of knowledge.
 14. The Corinthians loved knowledge to the point that they were not always careful from what source knowledge came from.
 - *1 Corinthians 3:18,19 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.*
 15. Nor did the church of Corinth lack in quality teachers.
 - *1 Corinthians 2:12,13 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*
 16. What the saints did lack was a spirit that thought of others. A basic root for so many of the problems at Corinth was selfishness. Believers were misusing their Christian gifts and taking liberties with no thought of what such spiritual abuse and misuse of gifts would do to others.
 - *1 Corinthians 8:9, 11-13 But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.*
 17. Out of this spirit of fundamental selfishness came other sins and divisions. There was a Paul Party, an Apollos Party, a Peter Party, and a Christ party (1:12).
 18. These divisions invited personal criticism and here, even Paul was not exempt. Some of the people thought they were now more spiritual than he.

- *1 Corinthians 4:3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. 2 Corinthians 10:10 For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.*
19. As horrendous as all of these things were, the worst yet was that Christians were tolerating evil IN the church. Their sensibilities toward sin had been dulled. What once shocked and sickened and horrified people repelled the saints no longer. They saw nothing wrong with quarreling in the courts. Blatant immorality, self-indulgence in the sins of the flesh, gluttony, and drunkenness was commonly displayed.
20. In Corinth, what gave an air of respectability to all of their corruption was the constant misuse of spiritual gifts, especially the gifts of speaking in tongues. The misuse of the gifts came in part because the church was ignorant about the purpose of the gifts (12:1).
21. Not understanding the gifts they supernaturally possessed (1:7), the saints were going out of control as they behaved in ecstatic, emotional hysteria that involved shaking and falling prostrate on the ground while babbling like a bunch of idolaters!
- *1 Corinthians 12:2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.*
22. The biblical mandate is that all worship should be done decently [i.e., with propriety] and in order (1 Cor. 14:40). The Holy Spirit does not ever produce what idolatrous worship produces, which is chaos and confusion. Moreover, the spirits of the prophets are always to be subject to the prophets (14:32). The reason for this spiritual self-control is simple. It is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to exalt Christ.
- *John 16:7, 13, 14 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.*
23. The Holy Spirit has not come to glorify Himself nor to be glorified in an inordinate manner but to glorify the resurrected Christ and continue the work the Lord has accomplished at Calvary. One of the ways that the Holy Spirit exalts the Lord is by sovereignly bestowing a spiritual gift upon every believer.
- *1 Corinthians 12:11, 19, 28 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. And if they were all one member, where were the body? And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.*

24. This passage is very important to understand because it teaches that God has already given *all* spiritual gifts. Therefore, no Christian has to pray or plead, or fast or weep in order to get a spiritual gift. The gifts of God are already given. Because God the Holy Spirit has already decided who shall do what, it would be silly to seek to be what the Lord never meant to be.

- *1 Corinthians 12:21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.*

25. The problem with the Corinthian believers is that they were seeking showy gifts that would bring undue attention to them. Speaking in tongues was one example. By the way, it is interesting that no one has started a helps ministry movement or a showing mercy movement. But a tongues and healing movement attracts attention before men.

26. However, what attracts God's attention is living a holy, spiritual life. And the true spiritual life is a life controlled by the fruit of the Spirit and not the gifts of the same. It is so important to understand that there is a difference.

SPIRITUAL FRUIT

Galatians 5:22, 23

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Long-suffering
- Gentleness
- Goodness
- Faith
- Meekness
- Temperance (self control)

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1 Corinthians 12:7-12

- Word of Wisdom
- Word of Knowledge
- Faith
- Healing
- Miracles
- Prophecy
- Discerning of spirits
- Tongues
- Interpretation of tongues

Romans 12: 4-9

- Prophecy
- Ministry
- Teaching
- Exhortation
- Giving
- Ruling
- Mercy

Ephesians 4:11

- Apostles
- Prophets
- Evangelist
- Pastor/Teacher

Love is Defined in 1 Corinthians 13

Prophecy is Defined in 1 Corinthians 14:3

- Edification
- Exhortation
- Comfort (Encouragement)

1 CORINTHIANS 12

1 Now concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

12:1 gifts. Italicized words in Scripture are not there for emphasis. They have been inserted into the translated text in order to smooth out the reading. Sometimes, an inserted word does not clarify but conflicts with the meaning of the text. In context Paul begins a discussion on what constitutes true spirituality.

2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.

12:2 ye were Gentiles. When a person becomes a Christian racial and physical distinctions cease. A new understanding is embraced as the heart looks upon itself as a child of God and a spiritual descendant of Abraham.

- *1 John 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.*
- *Gal 3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

12:2 dumb idols. Paul reminds those in the church of Corinth that in the not too distant past they had worshipped idols because they had been led to do so by trusted guides such as parents, religious instructors and community leaders.

The believers in Corinth were not far removed from the prevalence of a kind of ecstatic speech practiced among the priests and priestesses of the Greek oracles (such as that of Apollo at Delphi,) and the unseemly behavior of those associated with the worship of the goddess Diana. Bringing this cultural heritage into the church contributed to the misplaced high value given to tongues speaking by the Corinthians.

3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and *that* no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

12:3 no man can say. While it is possible for a person to articulate the words that Jesus is the Lord as a creedal statement or theological position, apart from the Holy Spirit regenerating the heart there will be no firm belief it is true.

4 Now there are diversities [variety] of gifts, but the same Spirit.

5 And there are differences of administrations [attendance (as a servant)], but the same Lord.

6 And there are diversities [variety] of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

12:4-6. Spirit...Lord...God. In creation, salvation, sanctification and sustaining the universe and the Christian a divine undertaking involves the triune relationship of Spirit, Lord (Son) and God (Father).

7 But the manifestation [exhibition] of the Spirit is given to every man to profit [to bear together (combine and thus have an advantage)] withal.

12:7 manifestation. The presence of the Holy Spirit in a local assembly is made apparent through the bestowment of the gifts He gives. The purpose for the presence of the Holy Spirit is for the spiritual profit of every individual.

Profiting by the Presence of the Spirit

- When the Spirit is present there is no need to depend upon the flesh to accomplish what only the Spirit can achieve.
- When the Spirit is present there is freedom. Rules and regulations give way to spontaneity of movement.
- When the Spirit is present there is love.
- When the Spirit is present there is humility.
- When the Spirit is present there is purpose, the worship of God, the edification of the body and the blessing of the heart.
- When the Spirit is present worship becomes acceptable to the Father.
- When the Spirit is present there is a sense of delight and joy.
- When the Spirit is present worship is not academic but actual.
- When the Spirit is present there is divine power.
- When the Spirit is present there is the potential that great healings will occur and prayers will be answered.

8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another *divers* kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

12:8-10 is given.

The Gifts God the Holy Spirit Gives

- The word of wisdom
- The word of knowledge
- Faith
- Healing
- The working of miracles
- Prophecy
- Discerning of spirits
- Kinds of tongues
- The interpretation of tongues

11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

12:13 baptized. The word "*baptized*" has a literal meaning and a metaphorical meaning. Literally the word means "*to dip*" or "*to immerse.*" Metaphorically it means "*to identify with.*" This two-fold understanding is better understood by noticing the seven baptisms of Scripture and how some are three real baptisms involving water and four ritual baptisms emphasizing the identification of one object with another.

Seven Scriptural Baptisms Real Water Baptisms

- **Baptism of John.** Matt 3:5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, 6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

- **Baptism of Jesus.** *Matt 3:13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. 14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? 15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.*
- **Baptism of the believer.** *Acts 8:36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? 37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*

Ritual Metaphorical Baptisms

- **Baptism of Fire and the Holy Ghost.** *Matt 3:11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:*
- **Baptism of the Cross.** *Mark 10:38 But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? And be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? 39 And they said unto him, We can."*
- **Baptism of Moses.** *1 Cor 10:1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;*
- **Baptism of the Spirit.** *1 Cor. 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

Of all the baptisms the only one in which all believers have a part is the one that identifies a person with the body of Christ and His redemptive work at Calvary by means of the Holy Spirit.

14 For the body is not one member, but many.

15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

17 If the whole body were an eye, *where* were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?

18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

19 And if they were all one member, where were the body?

20 But now are *they* many members, yet but one body.

21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:

23 And those *members* of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant comeliness.

24 For our comely *parts* have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked:

25 That there should be no schism in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another.

12:25 No schism. Emphasizing one spiritual gift or an experience above another will certainly divide the body of Christ and produce nothing but spiritual pride.

26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

12:27 God hath set forth.

The Gifts God the Holy Spirit Gives

- Apostles
- Prophets
- Teachers
- Miracles
- Gifts of healing
- Helps
- Governments
- Diversities of tongues

As God the Holy Spirit assigns to every believer a particular spiritual gift, God the Father establishes the place and importance of those gifts in the body. It is instructive that the gift of tongues is mentioned as the least of the gifts in comparison to the others. This is not to minimize its importance or necessity but it does temper how much emphasis is to be given it.

29 *Are* all apostles? *Are* all prophets? *Are* all teachers? *Are* all workers of miracles?

30 Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?

12:29. Are all. The implication of these six rhetorical questions is the answer: “No”, “No”, “No”, “No”, “No”, “No”, and “No”.

- “No, not all are apostles.”
- “No, not all are prophets.”
- “No, not all are teachers.”
- “No, not all are workers of miracles.”
- “No, not all have the gifts of healing.”
- “No, not all speak with tongues.”
- “No, not all interpret.”

Any teaching that insists God wants all people to speak with tongues directly assaults the prerogative of the Spirit to assign spiritual gifts, the Father’s placement of them in the church and the six-fold negation that everyone could speak in tongues even if everyone wanted to.

31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

12:31 a more excellent way. A false sense of guilt is often placed upon those who try to speak in tongues but fail, as if it is their fault they do not have this spiritual gift. Worse, a sense of spiritual superiority is often displayed by those who believe they have received the gift of tongues when the least of the spiritual gifts according to divine design is catapulted to being the most important one. To challenge this abuse the apostle is determined to present to the church a more excellent way as he turns attention to authentic love.

Questions and Answer on 1 Corinthians 12

1. What do italicized words mean in *Scripture*?

Answer.

2. List ten ways the church can profit by the presence of the Holy Spirit

Answer.

**Profiting by the
Presence of the Spirit**

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3. List the spiritual gifts the Holy Spirit gives.

Answer.

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4. List and categorize the seven baptisms of the Scriptures.

Answer.

Real Baptisms

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Ritual Metaphorical Baptisms

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-
-
-

5. What role does God the Father and God the Spirit have concerning spiritual gifts?

Answer.

Memory Work

1 Cor 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Personal Application

1. If you have spoken in tongues or been to a service where tongues were uttered please share that experience.
2. Have you taught that God wants all people to speak in tongues? If so, "Why?" Defend your position scripturally. If you have taught that God does not want all people to speak in tongues, defend your answer scripturally.
3. What abuses, if any, have you witnessed by those who speak in tongues?
4. Why does the experience of speaking in tongues appeal to so many people worldwide? Are there any dangers associated with the phenomena of separating the rational mind from the emotions in order to worship? What dangers might be present?
5. What is your spiritual gift (s)?

Leader's Supplemental Material

Modern Origin of Tongues

For many, one of the most disturbing facets of the Charismatic movement is that which invites individuals to suspend their reason or understanding and pray in the spirit. Justification for this practice is appealed to on the basis of 1Corinthians 14:14. However, this passage should not be read out of context for in verse 15 Paul says, *"What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding."*

The suspension of the intellect in order to communicate with the deity is a philosophy that is well documented to be of ancient pagan origin. The Osiris cult of Egypt, the Mithra cult of Persia, the Eleusinian cult of Macedonia, and the Ophic cult of Greece invited members to suspend their reason in order to allow their spirit the freedom to engage in ecstatic utterances. The Pythoness of Delphi was described by Chrysostom (ca. 345-407) as being a female who would *"foam at the mouth, and in a frenzy utter the words of her madness."*

Today, people bark like a dog and are slain in the spirit. The question arises: *"Does the Holy Spirit really promote an unholy display of immodesty which is often manifested in meetings which allow people to sprawl out in such a way that altar clothes are needed to cover the ladies"* (cp. 1 Cor. 14:32-32)? To ask the question is to answer it. Any Christian who desires to pray in a manner pleasing to the Lord, and acceptable to God the Father, should simply follow the principles of prayer established by Christ in Matthew 6:5-15.

Of course, not all of the *glossolalia* is demonic or occultist in origin. Sincere Christians should not have ascribed to them the words and works of Satan when they want to honor the Lord. And yet, the attempt of Satan to infiltrate the Church should not be easily dismissed either (note 2 Cor. 11:14-15).

There is an alternative explanation to *glossolalia* beyond demonic activity that is more innocent and simple and may be readily understood. Consider this truth. We are all familiar with common distortions of normal speech. When we are excited, we may stutter, we may forget what we were saying, or we say something other than what we meant to say.

Sometimes when we talk we get confused and twist our tongues so that we articulate a garb of sounds and syllables. Contagious laughter can leave a person too weak to move or talk in a sensible manner. And there you have it. Glossolalia may occur whenever conscious, willful control of speech is interfered with. Much of the Charismatic behavior may be understood by a willful interfering of speech.

Speech is a complex phenomenon involving both conscious, willful elements and unconscious, automatic patterns in psychological and physiological circuits. Those who want to short circuit normal speech in the name of religion for a religious experience may certainly do so. *Glossolalia* behavior is easily learned as those within the movement can honestly testify to.

It should not be forgotten that the Church of Jesus Christ has been strongly silent on the issue of *glossolalia* for almost 1800 years. This silence is not because the Church of Christ has been spiritually impoverished as the study of Church history reveals. Rather, the silence is due to the scriptural support against aberrant behavior and mindless noise (note Matt. 6:7). The modern day Charismatic movement has a recent origin that can be attributed to a former Methodist minister, Charles F. Parham.

In October of 1900, Parham opened a Bible college in Topeka, Kansas. He believed that sanctification was a second work of grace whereby all inbred sin is destroyed. Just before Christmas in 1900, Parham asked his students to study the Bible and learn what the evidence was for being baptized with the Holy Spirit. He would return in three days. When Parham returned, he was astonished to discover that all forty of his students had come to the same conclusion: speaking with other tongues was the indisputable proof that the blessing of Pentecost had come. (What should have amazed Parham even more is that Augustine, Martin Luther, John Calvin, George Whitefield, Charles Wesley, Charles Spurgeon, and a host of other godly and scholarly men over a nineteen hundred-time period had not noticed that.) The young people began to actively seek a baptism with the Holy Spirit manifested by speaking in tongues.

On January 1, 1901 the group found what it was seeking. Something happened. Miss Agnes Ozman began to speak in tongues, after Parham had laid hands on her. Soon other students began to speak with tongues. Mr. Parham joined them. The modern Pentecostal revival had begun. From this dubious beginning a movement of strange fire has come forth to circle the globe. But is it of God? A careful study of Acts 2, 8, 10, 11, and 19 along with 1 Corinthians 12-14 will find no parallel between the modern tongues movement and the Word of God.

The Changing Doctrine of the Charismatics

Old Pentecostal Teaching As a Distinct Denominational Movement

- Entire sanctification is necessary to receiving the baptism of the Spirit which is accompanied by *glossolalia*. Charles E. Parham at whose Bible school the modern movement first began did believe in this "*second work of grace*."
- *Glossolia* always accompanies the baptism of the Spirit.
- Tongues are an actual human language known to man.

Neo-Pentecostal Teaching Crossing Denominational Lines

- One does not have to be entirely sanctified in order to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
- Tongue speaking is only one evidence of the Spirit's baptism but is not the only evidence.
- Tongues are a heavenly language not understood by man or the devil (Stanley H. Fredsham, *With Signs Following*)

Ten Tests for Genuine Biblical Speaking in Tongues

1. The experience must be a foreign language spoken on Earth. Modern linguists have proven that modern tongues are not a language based on seven items.
 - The high frequency of repetition; similar sounding syllables are repeated over and over.
 - The similarity of tongues speech to the speakers' own language background.
 - The excessive use of one or two vowels.
 - The absence of any language structure.
 - The noticeable greater length of the interpretation as compared with the tongues utterance.
 - The inconsistency of the interpretation of the same phrase or clause.
 - The predominance of sixteenth century King James English.
2. The experience must be used as a judicial sign to unbelieving Jews.
 - *1 Corinthians 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. 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.*
3. The experience must be used publicly and not privately. All of the following passages emphasize that spiritual gifts are given to bless the church as a whole and are not to be used for self centered purposes.
 - *1 Corinthians 12:7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.*
 - *1 Corinthians 14:12 Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.*
 - *1 Corinthians 14:13 Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret.*
 - *1 Corinthians 14:25 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.*

- *Ephesians 4:11-12 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*
4. The practice of tongues must be accompanied with a translation. The translator must be known to be present prior to speaking.
 - *1 Corinthians 14:28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.*
 5. The experience must be limited to three instances of tongues at any one service.
 - *1 Corinthians 14:27 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.*
 6. The experience must be monitored so that only one person speaks at a time.
 - *1 Corinthians 14:27 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.*
 7. The experience must be limited to one interpretation by one interpreter.
 - *1 Corinthians 14:27 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.*
 8. Men only in the church must exercise the expression of tongues.
 - *1 Corinthians 14:34 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.*
 9. The expression of tongues must be in balanced distribution. Pressure must not be put upon others to pretend to receive a gift God has not given.
 - *1 Corinthians 12:17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?*
 - *1 Corinthians 12:19 And if they were all one member, where were the body?*
 10. The experience must be exercised in love and not spiritual pride as per 1 Corinthians 13.
 - Love is patient - a person with a true spiritual gift will wait patiently and not just burst out speaking (1 Cor. 14:27, 28).
 - Love envieth not - believers should not covet nor be encouraged to covet what God has not been pleased to give (1 Cor. 12:7, 11, 18).

- Love is not puffed up - one should not feel superior.
- Love does not behave itself unseemly – physical convulsions and shaking is unseemly (1 Cor.14: 23, 40).
- Love seeketh not her own - stress is often made on the use of tongues for personal edification. That is a by-product, not a goal (1 Cor. 14:4, 12).

Conclusion

It is not unusual to find many if not all of the biblical boundaries and restrictions cast aside in a worship service where tongues are alleged to be present.

- There is often no interpretation.
- At other times there are several interpreters.
- Often, individuals do not speak decently and in order but randomly and collectively.
- The women do not keep silent but are among the first and the loudest to speak.
- The purpose of tongues is not to evangelize or minister to the body as a whole but for personal pleasure and alleged spiritual profit.
- There is often more than two or “*at the most three*” instances of tongues being displayed.
- Pressure is often placed on others to speak in tongues. Some people are willing to show others how to go about speaking in tongues by means of fleshy techniques such as relaxing the body, letting the mind be suspended, repeating words and sounds over and over again softly despites the Lord’s instruction not to do this. In Matt 6:7 Christ instructs His disciples to avoid meaningless repetitions in prayer. The key word is *battalogesette* and means to stammer. The concept behind this word is to speak without thinking. Jesus forbids the repetition of meaningless sounds in prayer.
- Nowhere in Scripture are God’s people told to ask for the Spirit’s baptism of tongues or to seek it. Rather, there is the command of *Gal. 5:25* “*If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*”
- Because the Mormons can speak in tongues, and they do, because the Native American Indians can speak in tongues, and they do, because the Voodoo witchdoctors of Haiti can speak in tongues, and they do, the Christian should be all the more concerned about engaging the mind to make sure worship is based on acceptable grounds. *Isa 1:18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD*

For those who have moved the experience of allegedly speaking in tongues from the public worship service to private worship, care must still be taken and confession should be made for taking part in violation of any divine boundaries broken.

Finally, if it is true that a person who has not yet been baptized by the Spirit manifested in tongues does not have full consecration or full power for service then what is to be said about Elizabeth Elliot, Fanny Crosby, Billy Graham, C.H. Spurgeon, George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Augustine and countless other men and women of spiritual faith and courage?

1 CORINTHIANS 14

1 Follow [pursue] after charity [love], and desire spiritual *gifts*, but rather that ye may prophesy.

14:1 follow after. The emphasis on tongues had brought division to the body of Christ. Love was sought for and was found weeping. It is not wrong to pursue love and desire spiritual gifts. But the one gift all Christians are exhorted to seek is that of prophesy with a view of being able to say something that will bless everyone in the assembly and not just self or a select few.

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.

14:2 he that speaketh. Paul had to deal with many sins among the saints in Corinth.

- Factionalism
- Personal attacks
- Toleration of gross immorality
- Conducting of lawsuits
- Idolatry
- Abuse at the Lord's Supper
- Denial of the resurrection
- Abuse of spiritual gifts.

Spiritual gifts were not lacking in Corinth (1 Cor. 1:7) but they were being misused. One gift in particular that was being abused was speaking in tongues. Paul must address this abuse and does by reminding individuals that to speak in a language that no one in the assembly can understand is to speak mysteries. God can understand what is being said but those in the congregation hear only something that is mysterious.

14:2 unknown. The word "*unknown*" is in italics, which means the translators of the KJV inserted it. It was a mistake to insert this word because there is no such thing as an unknown tongue in the *Bible*. All the tongues spoken were known languages, comprehended and understood by those who heard. *Acts 2:8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?*

In 1 Corinthians Paul's instruction to the church was that the tongues or languages spoken were to be interpreted or there was to be silence.

The modern experiences of ecstatic utterances found in churches or in private practice do not measure up to the biblical pattern of speaking known tongues or languages. What is happening today does find a parallel in pagan rituals and cultic practices not to mention occultic phenomena.

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

4 He that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue edifieth [builds up] himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth [builds up] the church.

14:4 edifieth himself. The word for “*edifieth*” is **oikodomeo** (*oy-kod-om-eh'-o*) and means to *be a house-builder*, i.e. *construct* or (figurative) *confirm*. It is translated in the KJV to, edify, embolden.

14:4 the church. Having to choose between edifying or building up one’s self or edifying and building up the church, Paul says, “*Let the church be built up. Speak in a way people can comprehend and understand what is being said because they have been exhorted and comforted.*”

5 I would that ye all spake 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.

14:5 I would. While Paul might wish for something that is theoretically possible were God to change His mind in the distribution of gifts, he is really contending for something that is preferable. It would be like a seminary professor saying to his students, “*I would like to have you all play the piano, but I would rather have you preach the Word with power and persuasiveness.*” While the first is theoretically possible the latter is preferable.

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?

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?

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

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.

14:9 into the air. Paul says sharply that anyone who speaks in tongues is wasting his breath; he is speaking into the air (1 Cor. 14:9). Why? Because no one is edified if there is no understanding of what is spoken!

A Personal Testimony Stanford E. Murrell

I have preached the gospel in several churches in Romania on two occasions using an interpreter. To those who gathered each time I spoke I came to them speaking in tongues or a foreign language. Apart from my words being interpreted, any gathering for worship would have been meaningless if I were leading the service. I would have been like one speaking into the air.

The Conclusion

- Let the words spoken in worship be distinct (14:7)
- Let the words spoken in worship be words easy to understand in the Church (14:9)
- Let every Christian stop being selfish but seek to edify the Church (14:12).
- Let all communication in the church have an understanding and an interpretation or let there be silence (14:13)

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

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.

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

13 Wherefore let him that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue pray that he may interpret [explain thoroughly, to translate].

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

14:14 my spirit prayeth. 1 Cor. 14:14 has often been used to justify *glossolalia* for personal edification. However, in the context of 1 Cor. 12:4-5, edifying oneself is far inferior to edifying the church: therefore, one should seek the higher gift.

In like manner, 1 Cor. 14:14-15 has been used for justifying the use of *glossolalia* for devotional purposes. However, in context, Paul is discussing the use of tongues in a public worship service rather than the devotional use of tongues.

Question.

“Of what value is there to pray, even in private, if there is no one to interpret?”

Answer.

“There is limited value.”

People are not to think they are closer to God for their many words (Matt. 6:7). It is not the content of the communication which God looks [and listens] to but the character of the heart. Man still looks [and listens] to outward things but God still looks and listens to the heart.

In the model prayer, Jesus did not teach His disciples to speak in tongues (Matt. 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4). The Bible tells us to be specific in what we pray:

- food Matt. 6:11
- forgiveness of sin Matt. 6:12
- wisdom James 1:5
- strength Eph. 3:16

14:14 unfruitful. The reason is here given why the speaker with tongues is to pray for the gift of interpretation. It is because the understanding would be unprofitable. The *Scriptures* recognize no unintelligent worship of God divorced from known and established truth., “*Paul had, from the beginning, been urging his readers to have regard to the edification of the Church, and he here says that if he prayed in an [unknown] tongue, though he acted under the guidance of the Spirit, his prayer could not profit others. This interpretation is confirmed by verses 16-17 (Charles Hodge).*

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.

14:15 with understanding. Paul teaches that it is a serious error, to pray without one understanding, and he will not do it.

It is instructive to note that in Acts 2, the word "*tongues*" clearly means languages already in use by some people. The word tongue in Acts 2:4 is *glossa*. It is used in the *New Testament* fifty times.

- 16 times the word refers to a literal human organ.
- 1 time it is used of cloven tongues like as of fire.
- 33 times it is used of languages (note Rev. 5:9).

Not one time in the *Bible* does the word "*tongue*" mean there is a language unknown to someone, either the speaker himself or a group of people who is listening. The only way a person can be edified by himself or by others is to comprehend the message that is being uttered.

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?

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

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

14:18 I thank my God. This verse is often quoted to show the value of tongues—but that misses the point. There is value in any spiritual gift being exercised but very limited when misused. Paul is reluctant to speak in tongues, not eager to. The apostle devalues tongues all the more (14:19) because of his great ability to speak Greek and Hebrew, Aramaic and Latin, and perhaps other dialects and languages as well.

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.

20 Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.

14:20 be not children. The exaltation of tongues is a sign of spiritual immaturity. Rather than tongues speakers being spiritual and a sign of mature, full-grown Christianity, Paul reveals the opposite. The Corinthian Church is the only church in the NT known to contain many tongue speakers and Paul addresses them as "*babes in Christ*" and as being "*yet carnal*" (1 Cor. 3:1, 3). The tongues speakers were charged with lack of love, causing confusion, and lacking mutual edification. They were childish and selfish.

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.

14:21 it is written. *Isaiah 28:11 For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. 12 To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.*

14:21 other tongues. When a people are disobedient to God, He will send them teachers from a foreign land as a sign of judicial judgment. Many American missionaries now go to European countries such as England, Germany, and France even though historically these nations were the lands of the Reformation.

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.

14: 22 for a sign. It is a logical summary to note that some teachers are sent by God to be a sign of judicial judgment though they provide no real understanding to the unbelieving community. When a Jew heard the gospel preached by a person foreign born, it should have alerted that individual a divine judgment had fallen on Israel.

14:22 which believe. For those who do believe the gospel by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit the message is received along with the divinely appointed messenger though he speak with a foreign tongue, not unknown, just with a foreign accent.

Note. Excessive emotionalism did not succeed in bringing anyone to repentance in the *Old Testament* (14:21) nor in the *New Testament* (14:23). The exercise of prophecy will lead an unbeliever to repent more than glossolalia (14:24-25).

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?

14:23 Paul anticipates the outcome of speaking in an unintelligible tongue [language].

- There will be confusion and disorder.
- There will be disgust among observers.
- There will be the conviction that people are deranged and mad.

24 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.

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.

27 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.

14:29 speak to himself. Based upon this passage it is taught by Charismatics that Paul recognizes private conversations between a person and God whereby tongues can be used.

An Alternative Understanding

Even if Paul is allowing for a private devotional use of tongues, it would be by way of permission and not by way of recommendation. However, it is not likely that Paul would approve of a practice he has taught to be without purpose or profit. In addition, there are a number of reasons not to use tongues for personal devotional practices.

- Jesus forbids the use of respecting syllables without thinking or engaging the mind (Matt. 6:7 cf. 1 Cor. 14:13-15). It is interesting to note that many who have spoken in tongues believe that they worship and are closer to God than when they speak in their own native tongue. This concept should be reconsidered in light of Matthew 6:7 "...for they think they will be heard because of their many words."

- It was the pagan idea that the gods heard when prayer was made without the mind engaged. The pagans believed that the "spirit" had direct access to deity through a passive mind and could pray for another person. Jesus warned against this practice. Jesus wants people to pray on the basis of the Cross. It is in the name of Jesus, not *battalogesette* that spiritual victories are won.

When Jesus taught His disciples to pray, He did not teach them to speak in tongues (Matt. 6:9-13). When Jesus taught on prayer, He taught His disciples to be very specific. The Christian is to pray for

- food Matt. 6:11
- forgiveness Matt. 6:12
- wisdom James 1:5
- and strength Eph. 3:16

29 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.

14:26-30

A Divinely Regulated Worship Service

The main purpose of any spiritual gift is not the enhancement of the prestige of the worshipper, or even his own edification, but the edification of the Church. Therefore, "*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*" (1 Cor. 14:26).

- When tongues are present no more than two or at the most three may speak in a worship service and only then by turn (14:26).
- Every utterance is to be followed by an interpretation (14:27).
- If no interpreter is present, no one is to speak (14:28). This in turn pre-supposes that it will be known if an interpreter is present ahead of time!
- Prophets too are only to speak 2 or 3 in a service (14:29).

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

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

14:32 subject to the prophets. The idea that when the Holy Spirit comes individuals cannot but help speaking in tongues is nonsense and encourages open disobedience. The spirits of the prophet are under control. Reason prevails in the presence of biblical tongues.

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

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.

14:34 women keep silence. It is a simple and plain commandment. In the worship service the women are not to speak in tongues.

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?

14:36 came the word. Two rhetorical questions are asked demanding two negative responses.

“No, the Word of God did not come out from the Church of Corinth.”

“No the Word of God did not come exclusively to the Corinthians.”

Paul is an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Word of God has certainly come to Him by way of visions, personal meditation, formal education, and intimate association with the Twelve. Because the Word has come to Paul it can come out of him to be imparted to others in an authoritative manner. Paul is weary of individuals who dismiss his authority, which the Corinthians were prone to do. He demands to be heard and to be acknowledged that what he said, the regulations he imposed had the same force of authority as any commandment of Christ.

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 [not to know (through lack of information)], let him be ignorant.

14:38 but if any man. The word *“but”* is a conjunction of contrast. Paul has spoken plainly. Those who have been given the spiritual gift of prophecy, those who believe they are spiritually mature will acknowledge his apostolic counsel. In contrast those who continue to abuse tongues claiming not to know what to do or how to regulate this gift through lack of information are to be left in their well-deserved and deliberate ignorance, even if it is feigned. Paul recognizes that when experience comes into conflict with sound doctrine and biblical boundaries, emotional experiences overrule reason.

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

14: 39 forbid not. By way of caution, let charitable Christians today concede that emotions have always played a vital role in religion. Emotional forms such as the Shakers and the Charismatics tend to offend many people as irrational, exhibitionism, and unnecessary. The counsel comes.

- Be careful not to ascribe to Satan the work of God. Paul calls the people of Corinth "*saints*" and brethren.
- Do not forbid speaking in tongues.
- Regulate the expression of tongues.
- Seek after better gifts, the gift of prophecy and the gift of love.

No authentic spiritual gift is to be ridiculed or rejected. However, no authentic spiritual gift is to be allowed to be abused either.

Let God's people say what the Spirit gives them utterance to say but let whatever is said be tempered in a biblical manner by honoring the divine boundaries established.

40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

Questions and Answers for 1 Corinthians 14

1. Discuss the significance of the italicized word “*unknown*”.

Answer.

2. In 1 Corinthians 14:21 Paul quotes Isaiah 28:11. Why is that significant?

Answer.

3. What regulatory principles were to guide the expression of tongues?

Answer.

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4. Should those who speak in tongues be in control of their emotions and the moment of ecstasy (1 Cor. 14:32)?

Answer.

5. Based on 1 Corinthians 14:39 what caution should be taken by those who believe the emotionalism found in the church today does not parallel the biblical teaching on tongues?

Answer.

Memory Work

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.

Personal Application

1. Have you spoken in tongues? If so how did that come about? Was it an experience you sought or did the Spirit come upon you? In an unexpected manner?
6. What should be said to those who believe that a Christian has not received the fullness of the Spirit apart from speaking in tongues?
7. What other religious experience has brought as much division to the body of Christ as this emphasis on tongues?
8. Those who do not speak in tongues are often charged with
 - not wanting to be Spirit filled;
 - not wanting all the blessings of God;
 - not willing to suffer reproach for God;
 - being against the fullness of the Holy Spirit;
 - and not knowing by personal experience enough to speak a heavenly language.

How would you respond to these accusations?

9. Have you ever known, or even heard of an assembly meeting all of the biblical boundaries placed on the expression of tongues in the service?

Leader's Supplemental Material

14:10 many kinds of voices. In 1 Cor. 14:14-19, Paul comforts those who thought that one could somehow get closer to God and penetrate more deeply into the supernatural world by leaving the understanding suspended-which happened when speaking in tongues. This was a pagan philosophy and practice well documented in non-Christian societies.

- The *Report of Wenamon* (1100 BC) from Byblos on the coast of Syro-Palestine records ecstatic speech in a frenzied speech.
- The *Dialogue of Plato* (429-347 BC) records an acquaintance with religious ecstatic speech.
- Virgil (70-19 BC) describes the Sibylline priestess on the isle of Delos who conferred great benefits upon certain individuals when out of their senses.
- Pythoness of Delphi described by Chrysostom as a female who could foam at the mouth, and in a frenzy to utter the words of her madness.
- The Mystery Religions of the Graeco-Roman world.

- ❖ Osiris cult of Egypt
- ❖ Mithra cult of Persia
- ❖ Eleusinian cult of Thrace
- ❖ Dionysian cult of Macedonia
- ❖ Orphic cult of Greece

The Contrast between Prophecy and Tongues in 1 Corinthians 14

1. The person who speaks in tongues will speak not unto men but unto God. *1 Corinthians 14:2 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 person of prophecies will speak unto men. *1 Corinthians 14:3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.*

2. The person who receives tongues may not be understood by others. *1 Corinthians 14:4 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself;*

The person who receives the gift of prophecy speaks clearly for the purpose of edification exhortation, and comfort. *1 Corinthians 14:4 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.*

3. The person who speaks in tongues will edify himself, although how is not clear. But he will certainly build himself up in his own estimation of importance and spiritually.

The person who will prophecy will edify the church and build up the body of Christ, which is far better. *1 Corinthians 14:4 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.*

4. The person who speaks in a tongue is not better or more spiritual than others. In fact, greater is the person who prophecies than the one who speaks in ecstatic utterances.

Paul wishes all would prophecy. *1 Corinthians 14:5 I would that ye all spake 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.*

5. To speak in tongues or languages without some form of explanation is to speak in the air. It is meaningless.

To prophesy with a distinct message is of greater value to the corporate life of the church. *1 Corinthians 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?*

6. To speak in tongues or languages without interpretation is to appear as a barbarian.

To prophesy is to appear as an intelligent person. There is harm in a mindless utterance in the name of being Spirit led. There is no shame in proper preparation to minister to God's people. *1 Corinthians 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.*

7. Those who speak in tongues must have an interpreter. Those who speak in tongues must be held accountable for what they are saying. *1 Corinthians 14:13 Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret.*

Those who prophesy need no interpreter. People know what they are saying and can give thanks for their message. *1 Corinthians 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?*

8. While tongues or languages might be an exciting and emotional experience it cannot edify the church apart from an interpreter. Paul knows for he is no stranger to ecstatic experiences of this kind. *1 Corinthians 14:18 I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all:*

Prophecy is the main method to convey the message that Paul wished to use to minister to the church. *1 Corinthians 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.*

9. Tongues are not a sign to believers in the church. Tongues are for a sign to the unbelieving community. *1 Corinthians 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.* The church at Corinth was in danger of despising a clear revelation (prophecy) in favor of an unintelligible utterance (tongues).

Prophecy will edify the congregation and it will also serve to convert outsiders. *1 Corinthians 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.*

10. According to Isaiah 28:7ff the drunken Israelites were mocking in their cups the teaching of God through his prophet, as though it were only fit for an infant school; in anger God threatened to give His lessons through the lips of foreign conquerors (Isa. 28:11), in whose speech the plain teaching of his servants (14:12) would painfully spell out their ruin. And so it happened. God spoke to Israel through the strange Assyrian tongue in retribution, not to confirm their faith but to consummate their unbelief. The *glossolia* may serve a similar melancholy purpose in the church.
11. The clear meaning of the whole passage is that Paul desires to quench rather than stimulate the Corinthian ardor for tongues. Paul does not want visitors to the church to hear the babble, the ecstatic experience, and to decide that Christianity is for madmen (14:33). There must be intelligent communication of the gospel message and sharing of the faith.

Possible Explanations for Modern Day Speaking in Tongues

- **Ecstasy.** Tongues are the result of a highly emotional state which lifts a person out of his ordinary frame of mind and causes him to pour out impassioned utterances.
- **Hypnosis * AutoHypnosis.** In the former a person directs his undivided attention toward some particular object usually bright in nature. He then lets his mind become blank and yields to the hypnotist's suggestions. If the hypnosis is effective the subject falls into a kind of sleep in which he is in a state of complete rapport with the hypnotist and performs the acts suggested by the latter.

In the case of AutoHypnosis, associated with tongues being spoken in private, it is possible that a person so fixes his attention on an experience such as glossolalia that he himself provides the strong power of suggestion otherwise provided by the hypnotist. The *glossolalic* yields himself completely to what he conceives the tongues experience to be. In his mind he is yielding to the Holy Spirit so that the Spirit can speak through him. Because he knows what present-day tongues speech is like, he breaks forth in the same kind of utterance. The experience may only come after days and nights of prayer and seeking which magnify the original suggestion until it produces a kind of self-hypnosis resulting in *glossolia*.

- **Exalted Memory.** In these cases a person retains in his memory utterances in a foreign language, which cannot be recalled under normal circumstances. However, when the necessary psychological conditions have been met, the foreign expressions are released and the person speaks fluently in the language previously heard. Since much of what a person hears is recorded more or less permanently in his mind, this explanation is very conceivable.

People Filled with the Spirit apart from Tongues

There are many biblical examples of people filled with the Holy Spirit who never spoke in tongues at the moment they were filled.

- John the Baptist Luke 1:15,16
- Jesus Christ Luke 4:1;
4:14; 4:21
- The Converts in Samaria Acts 8:14-17
- Paul Acts 9:17
- Elizabeth Luke 1:41
- Zacharius Luke 1:67
- Disciples Acts 4:31
- Stephen Acts 6:5

A Biblical Catechism for Charismatics

1. Define tongues.

Biblical Answer.

Tongues may be defined as “A *spontaneous utterance of sounds in a language the speaker has never learned and does not understand.*” – Anthony Hokema

- *Acts 2:6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.*

2. What was the Biblical purpose of tongues?

Biblical Answer.

The gift of tongues was not a sign gift to the early church of a special blessing. Rather the presence of tongues in the church was a sign of judicial judgment upon national Israel.

- *1 Cor. 14:21-22 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. 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.*

That God would judge Israel by bringing people into their midst of a different language was foretold by the prophets from Moses to Isaiah to Jeremiah.

- *Deut 28:49 The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand;*
- *Isa. 28:11 For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.*
- *Isa. 33:19 Thou shalt not see a fierce people, a people of a deeper speech than thou canst perceive; of a stammering tongue, that thou canst not understand.*
- *Jer 5:11,15 For the house of Israel and the house of Judah have dealt very treacherously against me, saith the LORD. 15 Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the LORD: it is a mighty nation, it is an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understandest what they say.*

3. Why would a Christian want to speak in tongues?

Biblical Answer.

A Christian should not seek to speak in tongues but be pleased with the gift which the Holy Spirit has assigned for every gift is needed in the body of Christ.

- *1 Cor 12:14-18 For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? 18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.*

4. Is the gift of tongues for all believers to seek after?**Biblical Answer.**

No, if the secret motive is to show off.

- *1 Cor. 12:7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.*

Yes, if the inner desire is to communicate the gospel in whatever language is needed in order to spread the message of redeeming grace.

- *1 Cor 14:5 I would that ye all spake 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.*

5. Define the baptism of the Holy Spirit.**Biblical Answer.**

The baptism of the Spirit takes place at the moment of salvation whereby the new convert is placed into the body of Christ where he is secure and able to enjoy all the benefits of the death of Christ.

- *1 Cor. 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

7. What are the boundaries for speaking in tongues?**Biblical Answer.**

- Only one, two, or at the most three should speak in any given meeting and then one at a time with an interpreter. *1 Cor 14:27 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.*
- Only a known language is to be spoken, not infantile gibberish. *1 Cor 14:9 "...utter by the tongue words easy to be understood..."*

- An interpreter must be known to be present prior to speaking in tongues. *1 Cor 14:13 Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret.*
- If there is no understanding there is to be silence in the assembly. *1 Cor 14:28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.*
- Plain speech is to be preferred to speaking in tongues. This gift is not given pre-eminence by the apostle. *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. 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.*

8. Are women allowed to speak in tongues in the local assembly?

Biblical Answer.

The simple answer is no. Women can pray or prophesy as they communicate the gospel message and the goodness of God but they are expressively told not to speak in tongues.

- *1 Cor 11:5 But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.*
- *1 Cor. 14:34 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.*

9. Should a person be in control of his faculties prior to, during, and after tongues speaking?

Biblical Answer.

At all times a person is to be in control of their mental faculties while worshipping God. In this way a true worshipper is distinguished from an idolater. *1 Cor. 14:32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.*

10. Should the mind always be engaged in worship?

Biblical Answer.

The mind is central to worshipping the Lord.

- *Isaiah 1:18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*
- *John 4:23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.*

- *1 Cor. 14:14-15 For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. 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.*

It is a dangerous doctrine to believe that the mind can be separated from the body in order to have access to God.

- *Matt. 6:7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.*

11. Does God leave a sign gift after the need has passed for such a gift?

Biblical Answer.

Once a spiritual gift has been properly utilized it is withdrawn.

- *1 Cor. 13:8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.*