

PNEUMATOLOGY (118)

9. The healings were successful no matter what the sickness or disease. Today's so-called "faith healers" often blame a sick individual's lack of faith for not being healed. Such a thing never happened in Scripture. In fact, there was only one time in Scripture when the apostles could not heal a demon-possessed person, and it was their own lack of faith which was the problem, not the demon-possessed person (Matt. 17:19-20).

Dr. Charles Ryrie made the following observations in his discussion concerning the gift of healing:

1. God can and does heal apart from the exercise of the gift of healing. He does answer prayer, and He answers it in regard to physical problems; but such answer to prayer is not the exercise of the gift of healing.
2. It is obviously not the will of God to heal everybody. For example, it was not God's will to heal Paul of his thorn in the flesh (II Cor. 12:8-9).
3. Healing must not be equated with supernatural in general. It is a favorite pressure approach of faith healers to say that if you believe in the supernatural power of God, then you must believe in His power to heal in the case at hand. God does not have to use His supernatural power to prove that He possesses it. (i.e. God does not have to create a new mountain for us to believe he has the power to create a mountain.)
4. To disregard human means in the matter of healing and simply pray for a miraculous cure is like praying for a harvest and then sitting in a rocking chair without planting or cultivating. God, more often than not, uses human means in the accomplishing of His purposes. This is true in matters of health, too.
5. Those who claim the gift of healing is exercised today have to admit the gift is limited in its effectiveness, for they do not claim to heal decayed teeth or suddenly mend broken bones.
6. Reports of miraculous healings may be true but this is not necessarily related to the gift, the healing may be a cure of something that was psychosomatic or it may be a cure of nothing (Charles C. Ryrie, *The Holy Spirit*, pp. 87-88).

One other matter may be addressed here since it is related to this subject, and that is the matter which faith healers seem to totally neglect; why do people in this age get sick? Today's faith healers seem to not have a clue that God actually has a purpose for sickness and sometimes it is not to have the person get better. This teacher has determined there are at least seven biblical reasons why we get sick:

- 1) Sometimes we get sick because we have a limited, imperfect body that simply breaks down. Philippians 2:25-30
- 2) Sometimes we get sick because we live in an imperfect world. I Tim. 5:23
- 3) Sometimes we get sick so we will totally rely on God's grace. II Cor. 12:7-10
- 4) Sometimes we get sick due to an attack of Satan. Job 2:3-10
- 5) Sometimes we get sick so God can demonstrate His glory through healing. John 11:1-4
- 6) Sometimes we get sick because it is time for us to die. Hebrews 9:27
- 7) Sometimes we get sick because God is judging us for sin. I Cor. 11:30; James 5:13-18; II Chron. 21:18-19-Jehoram; II Chron. 26:16-23-Uzziah

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God has His purposes for sickness, but the need for the gift of healing is no longer operative.

Gift #8 - The gift of tongues.

Of all the gifts of the Spirit, perhaps none are more misunderstood or misinterpreted as this gift of tongues. Therefore, we will invest much time in carefully studying this gift. We will analyze this in question and answer form.

(Question #1) - How is the word “tongues” used in the New Testament?

The sad reality about a view of tongues is that most have never carefully studied the Bible to form their concept or position. Many of the books in my library which are written to defend a position do not even ask this question. It is a sad commentary on scholarship.

The word “tongues” is the Greek word “glossa” (γλῶσσα). This word is used, according to Moulton and Geden, some 50 times in the N.T. Of these 50 uses, 24 times this word is used by the Apostle Paul. In fact, in the context of I Corinthians 12-14, the word “tongues” is used 21 times: 12:10 (twice), 28, 30; 13:1, 8; 14:2, 4, 5 (twice), 6, 9, 13, 14, 18, 19, 22, 23, 26, 29, 39. Paul’s other uses include twice in Romans (3:13; 14:11), and once in Philippians (2:11).

The other 26 N.T. uses are: 1) Three times in Mark (7:33, 35; 16:17); 2) Two times in Luke (1:64; 16:24); 3) Six times in Acts (2:3, 4, 11, 26; 10:46; 19:6); 4) Five times in James (1:26; 3:5, 6 (twice), 8; 5) One time in I Peter (3:10); 6) Eight times in Revelation (5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 16:10; 17:15) (W. F. Moulton & A. S. Geden, *A Concordance to the Greek Testament*, pp. 172-173).

If we analyze all of these passages, we will accurately and honestly conclude that the word “tongues” is used in at least four different ways:

- 1) It is used to refer to the physical organ, the tongue, which is located in the mouth.
Mark 7:33, 35; Luke 16:24; Rev. 16:10
- 2) It is used to refer to a tongue- shaped object. Acts 2:3
- 3) It is used to refer to the content of one’s speech. Rom. 3:13; 14:11; I Cor. 14:9; Phil. 2:11; James 1:26; 3:5, 6, 8; I Pet. 3:10; I John 3:18
- 4) It is used to refer to the nationality of one’s language. Acts 2:11; Rev. 5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:15

Now the particular use of the word that is pertinent to this study of the gift of tongues is tongues as a language. It is obvious that the gift of tongues was a gift to be able to speak in some other language.

There is no evidence or indication that there is any difference between the tongues of Acts 2 and the tongues of I Corinthians 12-14. In fact, those who claim to have “the gift of tongues” today often refer to it as the “Pentecostal Experience.”