

Message #49

Various Texts

“The Gift of Tongues”
(Part 3)

As hard as it may seem to believe, ever since the early 1900’s, in this country a group of people have claimed that proper worship of God was only entered into if some people spoke in a language that no one else could understand.

Biblical tongues was the supernatural ability to verbally communicate a message of God in a normal human language, not previously known by the speaker. There are many who would have us think that this means church services should contain a time in which many speakers communicate in a language no one can understand.

GOD DOES NOT WANT US TO BE UNAWARE OF ANY SPIRITUAL GIFT, WHICH INCLUDES THE GIFT OF TONGUES.

Ignorance or unawareness is NEVER the ideal of God and when it comes to the “gift of tongues,” ignorance is completely the norm.

PURPOSE #1 – The gift of tongues was a spiritual gift. I Cor. 12:10, 30-31

Fact #1 - As a spiritual gift, it was sovereignly given by God. I Cor. 12:11, 18, 18

Every major passage that deals with the subject of spiritual gifts clearly establishes that God sovereignly determines who receives a particular gift: Rom. 12:3; I Cor. 12:11, 18, 28; Eph. 4:7; I Pet. 4:11. What this very practically means is that this gift of tongues, like all other gifts, does not come as a result of begging or pleading or praying. It does not come through some other human being. The gift of tongues comes direct from the sovereign will of God and its potential came at the moment of salvation (I Cor. 12:13).

Fact #2 - As a spiritual gift, not everyone would have it. I Cor. 12:4-6, 29-30

Any teaching that suggests every believer should have the gift of tongues is teaching that is heretical. It totally contradicts the Bible, which is God’s inspired Word. John Sherrill, in his book *They Speak With Other Tongues* says this need (tongues speaking) of the Pentecostal is everyone’s need. “The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is always accompanied with tongues” (John L Sherrill, *They Speak With Other Tongues*, p. 79).

The constitution of the Assemblies of God Churches reads: “The Baptism of believers in the Holy Ghost is witnessed by the initial physical sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gives them utterance” (*Ibid.*, p. 79). In other words, if one has not spoken in tongues, one has not been baptized with the Spirit and is not saved.

Fact #3 - As a spiritual gift, it was a speaking gift. I Cor. 12:10; 14:4-5

We would do well to ask the question “What is the purpose of any speaking gift that God gave to His Church?” Whether prophecy, pastor/teacher, evangelist, wisdom, knowledge or tongues, the purpose of a speaking gift was to clearly and accurately communicate the revelation of God. Biblical tongues did, in fact, communicate the truth of God (Acts 2:11).

Fact #4 - As a spiritual gift, it was a temporal gift. I Cor. 13:8

Tongues absolutely CANNOT be classified as an abiding gift, but it MUST be classified as a temporal gift because of the direct revelation of God in I Cor. 13:8.

The verb “they shall cease” is a middle voice verb, meaning God had built into the gift of tongues, in and of itself, the ability for tongues to cease.

Although we will discuss this issue in more detail in I Cor. 13, it is very clear contextually that the ceasing is connected to the “perfect” coming (I Cor. 13:10). When something perfect was completed, we could expect that tongues, in and of themselves, would cease. That is exactly what God’s Word says. Now we will demonstrate what clearly Paul had in his mind, at least in part, was the completion of the perfect Scriptures.

Fact #5 - As a spiritual gift, it was an apostolic gift.

Although this gift cannot be limited to just the apostles, there can be no doubt that it was an Apostolic Age gift. It was definitely connected to the apostles (Acts 1:26-2:14; 10:44-48; 19:1-6; Mark 16:14-20). Furthermore, when the apostles weren’t present, it was a gift that was to be highly regulated (I Cor. 14:18-19, 27).

Fact #6 - As a spiritual gift, it was a revelatory gift. I Cor. 14:26

Passages like Acts 2:11 make it very clear that Biblical tongues revealed messages from God. It is very important to realize this because Rev. 22:18 makes it very clear that after the completion of Scripture, it is wrong to say one receives additional revelation.

Fact #7 - As a spiritual gift, it was a regulated gift. I Cor. 14:27-40

(Regulation #1) - It was to have an interpreter. 14:27-28

Someone was to be able to translate for the people or there was to be no tongues speaking.

(Regulation #2) - It was to have a limit. 14:27b

At the most, three could speak in a service and that is all.

(Regulation #3) - It was to have order. 14:27c

Each person was to take a turn.

(Regulation #4) - It was to have a gender. 14:34-35

No married woman was to be allowed to speak in the service. As one commentator said, if you take the married women out of the tongues movement, you won't have a tongues movement. These four regulations were to be followed and if they weren't or if they aren't, what is being done IS NOT Biblical and it is NOT of God.

Fact #8 - As a spiritual gift, it was not the preeminent gift. 12:28; 14:5

The elevation of the gift of tongues IS NOT a Biblical elevation. Whenever a church elevates the gift of tongues, it is a Corinth-type church, which means it is a church that features a great deal of carnality and ignorance.

PURPOSE #2 – The gift of tongues was an evangelistic gift. Acts 2:11; I Cor. 14:26

Biblical tongues had an evangelistic element to it in that it was designed to communicate God's truth to unsaved people of a different language so they could be saved (Acts 2:11). Paul certainly made a distinction between what is communicated for salvation outside of the church and for edification in the church (I Cor. 14:18-19, 26).

PURPOSE #3 – The gift of tongues was a divine sign. I Cor. 14:22

Signal #1 - It was a signal of Israel's unbelief. I Cor. 1:22; 14:21-22; Acts 2:5

This sign signaled to Israel that the program of God was now branching out to people of other languages, other nationalities.

Signal #2 - It was a signal of the Gentile Age. Acts 10:44-46

This gift signaled to the entire world that a new age had begun and God was now swinging His program to people of various languages and nationalities.

Signal #3 - It was a signal of universal salvation. Acts 19:6; I Cor. 14:22

In the early days of the church, tongues confirmed that anyone who believed on Christ, regardless of nationality, could be saved.

Signal #4 - It was a signal of the last days. Acts 2:15-21

Biblical tongues signaled that we are now entering the last phase of the plan of God before He fulfills all of His promises and program for Israel.

There are many things that God does not want us to be ignorant of. He does not want us ignorant of our destiny or of His program. Do you know for sure where you will spend eternity? Do you know that time is running out? Do you know this age is about to end?