

What is Biblical Tongues?

I Cor 14:1-5

As we have seen from our study of I Corinthians 12-14 Paul desires the proper use both in manner and motive of spiritual gifts. There are a variety of gifts but all for the edification of the body not the exaltation of the member. Spiritual Gifts can be organized around three types. Speaking, Support, Sign Gifts. It appears that some of the gifts and the gifted men of the church were meant to be temporary to establish the church. (Eph 2:20) Hence, when the church was mature through the completion of the canon and the provision of the revelation from the Lord some of the gifts that provided revelation would drop off in use. (I Cor.13:8-10). This morning we need to progress in our understanding of the nature of the gift of tongues and the reason some of the sign gifts might be temporary and terminate, or dissipate if not totally disappear from the Church. We begin with a review of a definition of Tongues.

- A. Definition of Tongues $\gamma\lambda\omega\sigma\sigma\alpha$ (Acts 2:4, 1 Cor. 14)
 - 1. It is . . .
 - A) Known language, Acts 2:6 – dialect (Acts 2,10,19)
 - B) Spiritual gift, 1 Cor. 12:9 (Paul spoke in tongues 14:18; Don't forbid it 14:39; but not given to all 12:29-30)
 - C) Used in the Plural in Acts: Different languages
 - D) Needs an interpreter, 1 Cor. 14:13, 28
 - E) Various kinds – $\gamma\epsilon\nu\omicron\varsigma$ – 1 Cor. 12:10
 - F) Used in Greek translation of Hebrew Bible as “known language”
 - 2. It is not . . .
 - A) Unknown language, KJV, 1 Cor. 14:2; “unknown” is not in text
 - B) Not gibberish. Matt. 6:7 battalageoo. Bata bata bata
- B. Nature of Tongues:
Supernatural revelation from God, about God's works, Acts 2:11, 10:46
- C. How Many Tongues?
 - 1. Same term in Acts 2 and 1 Cor. 12, 14
 - 2. Paul doesn't change meaning of the term
- D. Can biblical Tongues be used as a devotional language?
“Just between Thee and Me”
 - 1. Not the purpose of Biblical tongues (1 Cor. 14:20-22).
 - 2. Jesus taught us how to pray: Not Babble (Matt. 6:7, 6:9-13).
 - 3. Jesus didn't use tongues as devotional language as far as we know. Also not seen in the garden of Gethsemane. Or upper room John 17
 - 4. Nowhere else in Bible do we see this as a private prayer language.
 - 5. God understands English.

Summary: The Biblical gift of tongues is the ability to speak in a language that is unknown to the speaker, but a known language. It is a spiritual gift for the edification of others not for self-use nor does it demonstrate spirituality.

Continuationist or Cessationist Is the Gift of Tongues Still in the Church?

This is based on the teaching we had a few weeks ago concerning the issue of the ceasing of tongues when the mature or complete comes I Cor. 13:10. The question is, Does it make sense that some miraculous gifts might cease while others continue? (Eph 2:20 etc) (See “Speaking in Tongues” by Jody Dillow, “Speaking in Tongues” by John MacArthur, “Satisfied by the Promise of the Spirit” by Thomas Edgar)

- I. The Pattern of bible Miracles suggests that God's working in this way was only temporary.
 - A. Moses and Joshua (1441 - 1370 B.C.)
Ex. 4:1-5 - for a sign, then miracles ceased for 500 years
 - B. Elijah and Elisha (870 -785 B.B.)
I Kings 18:20-40 - for a sign, then miracles ceased for 800 years
 - C. Christ and the Apostles (28 A.D. - 70 A.D.)
John 20:30-31; 2 Cor. 12:12; I Cor. 14:22 - for a sign then miracles ceased until the Kingdom reign

- II. The Finality of Jesus Christ- The revelation of God (John 1:14,18 Heb 1:1-4)
 - A. The Argument
 1. Major Premise: All direct revelations from God ceased with the completion of the Bible.
 2. Minor Premise: Tongues is a direct revelation from God.
 3. Conclusion: Tongues ceased with the closing of the Bible.
 - B. The Evidence of the Major Premise
All direct revelations from God ceased with the completion of the Bible in 70-90 A.D.
 1. Heb. 1:1, 2 – “God has spoken... In these last days spoken through son”
 2. Jude 3 - the once and for all delivered faith
 3. Rev. 22:18 - no words added (If this is last book then end of Revelation is the end of Revelation)
 4. John 14:26; 16:12, 13 – Revelation of truth to come through the Apostles or their associates

- III. Other Sign Miracles Ceased During the First Century.
 - A. Healing began to pass away

1. 35 A.D. - "Everyone" healed (Acts 5:14-16)
 2. 56 A.D. - Paul can't heal himself (2 Cor. 12:7-10)
 3. 60 A.D. - Paul unable to heal Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25-28)
 4. 67 A.D. - Paul Unable to heal Trophimus (2 Tim. 4:20)
- B. The gift of Apostleship ceased
1. Its nature - it involved having seen Christ in the flesh (1 Cor. 9:1)
 2. Its duration - for the foundation period (Eph. 2:20)
- C. Sudden judgments ceased
1. 32 A.D. - Ananias and Sapphira immediately judged (Acts 5:1-11)
 2. 44 A.D. - Immediate judgment on Herod (Acts 12:20-25)
 3. 56 A.D. - Paul speaks of delivering a believer over to Satan for Physical death because of incest (I Cor. 5:1-5)
 4. 64 A.D. - Alexander was turned over to Satan by Paul but three years later, 67 A.D. (2 Tim. 4:14, 15), he has still not been judged.
- D. Miraculous prison escape
1. Before 60 A.D.
 - a) Peter - Acts 5:19; 12:6-10
 - b) Paul - Acts 16:25
 2. After 60 A.D. - God's servants died in Prison or were martyred.

Summary

This does not mean that God can't do nor that He no longer does miracles. Let God be God. It is to say that it seems possible and probable that some of the sign and revelatory gifts have ceased.

The Purpose of Spiritual "Sign" Gifts: The Edification of the Church

GIFTS ARE FOR THE SAINTS NOT THE SELF

I Cor 14:1-5

Introduction

All communication comes in a context. The Corinthian had confused Christian practice with cultural paganism: Immorality, idolatry, lawsuits, divorce, drunkenness at Lords supper. Selfishness and selfism was rampant in the Church. Spiritual gifts had also been perverted in their purpose and practice. Paul is dealing with this issue.

I. The Edification of the Body Through Prophecy Unconditional 14:1-5

A. Synopsis of the Command: The Principle :1

Hinge of LOVE Ch 13 and Prophecy and Tongues Ch 14

"Pursue" Love. (Impv)

"Earnestly Desire Spirituals" (Impv)

"Especially Prophecy". (Subjunctive) that you might

B. Specific Counsel: The Prescription :2-4

NB order- Negative: Tongues – Positive: Prophecy

Two Options

*Paul is speaking Positively about private prayer language between the Christian and God.

(We do not see this in other instructions by Paul or other writers of the NT. We do see how this did and does destroy the unity of the church.)

*Paul is speaking Negatively or sarcastically about the Corinthian practice of ecstatic speech to a god as they did when they were pagans.

1. Problem with Tongues

Tongues was a known language. Act 2, 10, 19

a. Speak to God since no one knows what he is saying- not even the person
This is not prayer language for personal use

b. In “his” spirit- No “his” No HS. “he speaks in spirit mysteries”

c. “Speak (in spirit) Mysteries”

In Paul’s other letters: Revelation from God about the Church Eph 3:4, Rom 11:25, 16:25 Col 1:26

In Corinth- mysteries from Pagan Worship. (See Ch 8, 10 Demons)

2. Priority of Prophecy

:3 Speaks to men for edification exhortation and consolation

:4 edifies Church

Tongues edifies self? That is not the goal or purpose of Spiritual gifts

1. Love does not seek it own 13:5

2. Even good things can be used selfishly I Cor 8:1

3. Gifts are to help others- common good I Cor 12:7, 14:12- 10:23-24

C. Summary Concept :5

1 Hyperbolic lang- (13:1) All speak in tongues.... But not all do- 12:28-31

2. Goal is for the church to be edified :5 -see 14:12

The Cultural context of the Corinthian church and its self-centeredness is again dealt with by Paul.

We are to operate in unity of Spirit with diversity of gift.

Today there is still much confusion over the use of tongues.

The objective exposition of scripture must guide us not subjective personal experience.