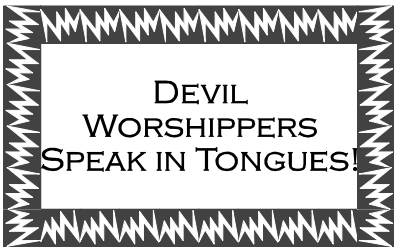


We can clearly see that Paul is rebuking and chastising the believers for allowing a counterfeit tongues-speaking into their midst. He is not teaching that this false tongues is something we should desire. He is not teaching that we should speak without understanding, or that we should speak in a babbling or gibberish language that no one understands. The entire point of speaking is to communicate. Unknown babbling does not accomplish this, and thus is of no value to our listeners (see 1 Cor 14:11). But Paul is trying keep this false type of tongues-speaking from continuing to be a problem in the Corinthian church, and he emphasizes again that the main purpose of tongues was a sign “not to them that believe, but to them that believe not...(to) those that are unlearned, or unbelievers” (1 Cor 14:22-23). In following this counsel, tongues would then become a sign to these unbelievers as to who was proclaiming the real gospel truth.

The incident recorded in Acts chapter 2 is the first time that the true gift of tongues was given. But for many centuries previous to this, non-language utterances of gibberish had been observed and noted. These kind of



unknown tongues had nothing to do with Christianity or the God of heaven, but were found in the various pagan, spiritualistic and occultic religions and groups. There have been recorded and

documented instances of such counterfeit tongue speaking in both ancient and modern times in the following religious circles: Egyptian priests, Greek priests and priestesses, Shamans or medicine men, African tribes, Tibetan monks, Hudson Bay Eskimos, North Borneo pagans, an Islamic saint, even by Brigham Young and other Mormons. Tongues have also been reproduced in psychological studies.

These above occurrences were not the tongues of languages, but were mere babbling and gibberish. In fact, here is an example of tongues-speaking recorded and transcribed from more modern times: “prou pray proddey, pa pallassate pa pau pu pe, teli terattata taw, terrea te te-te-te-te, vole virte vum, elee lete lede luto, singe singe singe, imba, imba, ima.” All such tongue gibberish is nothing more than a clever satanic counterfeit of God's true miracle of speaking real, known and understood languages.

The evidence above demonstrates that what is currently practiced as tongues-speaking is not a supernatural gift from God, but is more closely linked with the pagan, spiritualistic and occultic form of tongues. And even though few Christians would want to associate themselves with these satanic groups, many are involved in the same counterfeit form of tongue gibberish!

Just like in Corinth, many sincere and honest Christians

of today have spoken in this counterfeit type of tongues. Many of these dear people do not know that this is not the true gift as spoken of in the Bible. They truly love the Lord and have thought that this is what God desired. And God, in mercy, winks at the times of our ignorance: He therefore condemns no one for their honest mistakes, but now calls on all to repent (see Acts 17:30). We are judged by the light that we have received and by the use we have made of that light. Mercifully, the Lord allows correction and instruction to come to His people, because He loves them dearly and does not want them to be lost (see Jer 31:3; Rev 3:19; Ez 18:23). Will you allow the Lord to correct and instruct you through His word?

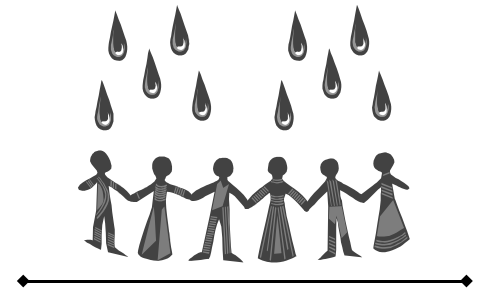
Understanding the nature of true spiritual gifts helps us to appreciate the real reason for these gifts, and also helps us distinguish them from the devil's counterfeits. The Bible gift of tongues involved people speaking existing languages without ever having learned them. The result was a saving message capable of being understood and translated by those who knew the language. But the Bible does not recommend using tongues which cannot be understood or interpreted, or are nothing more than gibberish and nonsense. Neither does the Bible recommend using tongues as a private prayer language. Besides, all non-language tongues-speaking is dangerous. It leads a person to take something that is counterfeit as being the genuine miracle and token of God's approval. Like transcendental meditation, mystical rituals, and other mind-emptying procedures, it opens the door to demonic influences. And worse of all, it promotes a false unity with other tongue-speaking people and groups even though they hold widely diverse beliefs on the essential truths of God's word.

The only way that we can be safe in these last days, when every deception and falsehood is so prevalent, is to diligently study the Bible for ourselves, striving to live by every word, and to test all spiritual manifestations by this truth (see Isaiah 8:20; 1 John 4:1; 1 Tim 4:1), because the devil and his agents can transform themselves into apparent workers for God speaking what appears to be light (see 2 Corin 11:13-15; 2 Thess 2:8-10; Rev 13:13, 16:14). The real quandary comes when we see that God's word conflicts with what we may have previously believed. Do we then follow the Bible, or are we going to continue in the wrong way that we are going? I pray that you make the right decision!

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The Promised Gift of Tongues



No spiritual gift today enjoys more popularity, or harbors such inherent possibilities of deception, as speaking in tongues. So for those who have chosen to follow God, it is important that we understand exactly what His word states about the gift of tongues in order to avoid being deceived or fooled by any counterfeit.

The first Biblical occurrence of speaking in tongues was at the tower of Babel (see Genesis 11:1-9). Instead of all human beings speaking just one common language, God miraculously intervened and now there were hundreds of different languages which eventually became scattered throughout the different nationalities of the world!

When Jesus trained His disciples during His three-and-half year ministry, He limited their training towards reaching out to the Jews. However, after Christ ascended into heaven, He desired His disciples to take the gospel truth, not just to the Jews, but now to every nation. Jesus had already foretold that His disciples would speak with "new tongues" in Mark 16:17-18, and now it was time for the promised sign to arrive. But what kind of tongues did they speak?

In the book of Acts is recorded three instances of tongues-speaking: first in Jerusalem, second in Caesarea, and third in Ephesus. Let us examine each of these instances.

Tongues in Jerusalem (Acts 2:1-13). In the spring of the year, just 50 days after Christ's resurrection, our Lord's followers first spoke in tongues. A group of about 120 believers were gathered together in obedience to Jesus who had "commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father" (Acts 1:4). It was the feast of weeks, and the city of Jerusalem was crowded with pilgrims "out of every nation under heaven" (Acts 2:5). It was at this time that God chose to pour out His Spirit in a marked way. These believers had been together for 10 days, during which time they had worked out all their differences and were now perfectly united in the

bonds of peace and love. The day of Pentecost had arrived, when suddenly they heard a sound like a strong wind and saw a fire-like form flicker above every head. The Holy Spirit came upon every believer, and they "began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4).

When the sound of this occurrence was heard, the curious crowd came flocking together to see what was happening. With thousands of people gathering around to hear, the disciples began to speak. But this was no normal speech—it was the gift of tongues. The crowd was in great amazement. Never before had men been able to speak a language that they had never learned, and there were fifteen different languages that were spoken!

This speaking in "other tongues" did not come by man's own efforts, but it was a gift of the Holy Spirit. It was not given to edify the believers, or to grant them a special feeling.

They were not babbling, speaking gibberish, or speaking in languages that no one could understand, but they were given the ability to speak the language of those to whom they were trying to witness to. "Jews, devout men...heard them speak in his own language...And they were all amazed and marveled..." (Acts 2:5-7).

The result of Christ's followers receiving the gift to speak in different languages was the conversion of "about three thousand souls" to Christ in just one day (see Acts 2:41). So not only was this gift of tongues given to be the promised sign, but it was also given for the proclamation of the gospel. With such a large number of Jews from all over the world accepting this gospel truth, the message could then spread with lightning speed as they would each take it back to their homes and communities. But what about the next time the Holy Spirit was poured out and tongues were spoken?

Tongues in Caesarea (Acts 10:44-48, 11:15-18). About 7 years later, in 38AD, occurred the second recorded instance of tongues. Peter was led by the Holy Spirit to visit the home of a Gentile named Cornelius, who was a Roman Centurion in Caesarea. As Peter was preaching the gospel truth unto Cornelius and his family and friends, they all believed and accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. Then the Holy Spirit fell upon all of these Gentile believers and they began to speak in tongues. The hearers of these Gentiles were Jewish Christians who had accompanied Peter, and they heard these "speak with tongues and magnify God" (Acts 10:46).

When Peter was later explaining to the other apostles and brethren about what happened in Caesarea, he says that "the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning" (Acts 2:15). So these Gentile converts spoke known discernable languages which were understood by their listeners just like with the disciples at the beginning. By speaking in languages they had never learned, these Gentile believers showed their

Jewish Christian audience that the Spirit of God was also including them in "the family of God" as His "chosen people" (see Galatians 3:26-29; Romans 10:12). It also showed that the gospel was to be preached "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Rev 14:6), and not just to the Jews alone. And to more effectively accomplish this, God gave His people the ability to speak in different languages. But what about the third time tongues were spoken?

Tongues in Ephesus (Acts 19:1-7). In 51AD, about 13 years after the Holy Spirit was poured out in the home of Cornelius, Paul was preaching to 12 people. They had been baptized with "John's baptism," but were not yet aware that the Holy Spirit had come to indwell believers in Christ. So Paul instructed them, re-baptized them in water, laid his hands on them, and instantly "the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied" (Acts 19:6). The Greek word for "tongues" used here is "glossa" which translates "a language". So these 12 men spoke in other languages not before learned by them, but were understood by the people who heard them.

Having looked at every occurrence of the true gift of tongues in the Bible, the only conclusion to which we can come to is that tongue-speaking is the miraculous gift of being able to speak another known language to people with whom we would otherwise be unable to communicate. The manifestation of the Spirit in all three instances was not vain babbling or gibberish that could be confused for a drunken man's speech; it was not a language that no one could understand, or that had to be deciphered by the hearers; but it was the perfectly understood use of foreign languages spoken under the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the true gift.

The very fact that there is something true, is usually an indicator that the devil has counterfeited it in order to deceive. This is true in the case of tongues. Not only can God give the miraculous gift of speaking in other languages before unlearned, but the devil can also speak through people (see Mark 1:23-26, 5:7-12). So then there can be a false gift of tongues. And in 1 Corinthians we find that some kind of tongues-speaking was being practiced in a church of God among the believers in this city. Was this the true kind of tongues, or the counterfeit?

Tongues in Corinth (1 Corinthians, chapters 12-14). In 53AD, about two years after the 12 disciples spoke in tongues, Paul heard that the church in Corinth was having a variety of problems. Now it is thought that the Corinthian church is a model for what other tongue-speaking churches should be. But it would be well to look and see what Paul wrote to them.

Paul stated that the Corinthian church members were carnal, and that there was strife, envying and divisions among them (see 1 Cor 3:1-3). There was such a severe case of fornication among them, that it was even shocking to the Gentiles (see 1 Cor 5:3). Brothers were going to the law and suing one another (see 1 Cor 6:5-7). They were doing wrong

and defrauding their brethren (see 1 Cor 6:8). There were heresies among them (see 1 Cor 11:19). There was confusion and disorder in the church (see 1 Cor 14:33-40). And there were also false apostles and unrighteous ministers among them (see 2 Cor 11:13-15).

These strong statements from Paul were far from being complimentary regarding the Corinthian church. Certainly they were not a church to model after, but one that was in need of conversion back to God. In fact, they were in danger of receiving another gospel and another Jesus, or even receiving another spirit (see 2 Cor 11:3-4). Thus they were far from being an example of a church filled with God's Spirit, but they were actually a church that was in grave danger of being deceived by a counterfeit, false spirit.

Among the issues that Paul was forced to deal with these believers in Corinth was a big problem with the gift of tongues. The church services were being disrupted by people making sounds that neither they, nor anyone present, could understand or interpret. These tongues being spoken were not of a known language, and thus could not have been a true gift from God. So we can be sure that a counterfeit kind of tongues-speaking was taking place in this church, or there would have been no problem. Because it was causing confusion in the church, and believers were in danger of being deceived, Paul had to set them straight by giving the following guidelines:

- Tongues-speaking was not the universal evidence of the baptism of the Spirit, because while every true believer is baptized by the Spirit, not all believers would speak in tongues (1 Corinthians 12:8-11, 13, 30).
- Tongues-speaking was of lesser importance than prophecy and of far less importance than love (1 Cor 12:31, 13:1-13), because prophecy edified the church (1 Cor 14:1-4). In fact, sometimes tongues was not even listed as one of the spiritual gifts to be received (see Ephesians 4:1-16).
- Unregulated speaking in tongues led to confusion (1 Corinthians 14:7-12).
- Unregulated tongues was a hindrance in the salvation of others (1 Corinthians 14:23).
- Public speaking in uninterpreted tongues had no value (1 Corinthians 14:13-19).
- Since tongues could be counterfeited, public tongues-speaking had to be strictly regulated (1 Cor 14:26-40).
- Only two or three were allowed to speak in tongues in a service, and then they were to speak in turn (1 Cor 14:27, 30).
- Those speaking uninterpreted or unknown tongues were to stop speaking and be quiet (1 Corinthians 14:28).
- A proper and orderly atmosphere in church services was to be maintained (1 Cor 14:40).

**Counterfeit
Tongues?**

**Tongues
were NOT
Gibberish!**