

## **Gifts of the Spirit: Part 2**

### **Prophecy, Tongues, Interpretation, and Manifestations**

We now move from the gifts where definitions are generally well accepted into the gifts which are more highly disputed. While prophecy is generally well understood, because of its comparison to tongues by Paul in 1 Cor 14 it is included in this section. The issue of tongues, on the other hand, is one which is argued long and loud. Conservative Christians who have grown up in the atmosphere of things done "properly and in good order" object almost automatically to the glossolalia which Charismatics insist is the language of angels. Such a reflexive disdain often follows the Cessationist mold which rejects the other miraculous gifts.

As we have shown, Cessationism is denied by Paul's own statements which declare that the gifts will continue "until the perfect comes." Therefore we must expect that tongues, a gift to which a considerable amount of attention is given by Paul, will continue until the second coming. Our task becomes one of identifying the nature of this gift. But first we must understand the gift to which tongues is compared: prophecy.

1. Describe the functions of a prophet.

a) Ex 18:15-16

b) 2 Sam 12:1-14

c) John 13:19

2. Which of the three prophetic tasks is in view in Paul's discussion? (1 Cor 14:3-4)

3. What is the key element which makes prophecy valuable to the church? (1 Cor 14:6)

4. To whom is prophecy directed? (1 Cor 14:22)

5. Is prophecy exclusively for believers? (1 Cor 14:24-25) Is there an element to prophecy other than simple edification of the church?

6. Paul specifies certain elements of order to be observed in the presentation of prophecy in the church. (1 Cor 14:29-31) Why should it be necessary for judgment (v. 29) to be passed on a prophet? On what basis should prophecy be evaluated? (1 Thess 5:21) Did Paul invite such judgment on himself? (Acts 17:11)

7. What is the import of a revelation to a seated prophet? (v. 30)

8. What is Paul's primary concern with instructions regarding order in prophecy? (1 Cor 14:31-33)

In order to understand properly the word *pneuma* in verse 32, we must consider how it is used in the NT. Its common translation is "spirit." This is how most translators have rendered it in 1 Cor 12-14. However, this is not its only proper use. The root meaning is a movement of air, as in breath. This is the intent in James 2:26 where James points out that "just as a body without breath is dead, so faith without works

is dead." It also can mean "the rational spirit, the power by which the human being feels, thinks, decides..." (Strong's Lexicon)

9. What is the proper translation of *pneuma* in the following texts? (Rom 7:6; 12:2, 1 Cor 2:11, Heb 4:12) (Note that in Heb 4:12 "heart" is *cardia*, implying the center of life, or the mind. Also note the parallel structure of the verse.)

10. *Pneuma* is also used in a more figurative fashion. What is the best meaning of *pneuma* in the following texts. (Rom 8:15, 1 Cor 5:3-5; 6:17, Rev 17:3)

11. What is Paul's intent in 1 Cor 14:32? Did the translators adequately convey this intent?

Tongues are the area where the greatest controversy arises. Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in Azusa, California, an event of considerable importance happened. It is stated that the Holy Spirit fell on a congregation of believers, who immediately began to "speak in tongues". This was a polysyllabic speech which is generally accepted as being something other than a human language. As one Pentecostal commentary states, tongues have no "language content."

Because modern tongues has no identifiable language content, it is stated to be a language of angels (cf. 1 Cor 13:1) and a private prayer language whereby the Holy Spirit prays for us (cf. Rom 8:26). Pentecostals also point to Mark 16:17-18 as evidence that every believer will speak in tongues, at least as an initial sign of the Holy Spirit's new presence in their lives. These claims require that we examine tongues in some detail.

12. Tongues first appears in Mark 16:17-18. There Jesus promises that certain signs will follow the believers. Do all believers display all of the signs? Was this prophecy fulfilled? (Mark 16:20)

13. The first record of a specific fulfillment of the tongues prophecy is in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost (hence the name "Pentecostals"). What drew the crowd to the apostles on that day? (Acts 2:2, 6)

14. What kept the crowd's attention and led them to understand the divine nature of the event? (Acts 2:7-11) What was the nature of the tongue speaking at this event? Did the tongues cause conversion? (Acts 2:37)

15. Paul states (1 Cor 14:22) that tongues are a sign for unbelievers. Pentecostals point out that (in their view) tongues did not serve that purpose in the other two recorded instances where tongues followed the receipt of the Holy Spirit. Peter's vision (Acts 10:9-16) is followed by an invitation to the house of Cornelius.

a. Does Peter get a direct interpretation of his vision? (Acts 10:19-20)

b. What was the Jewish law about associating with Gentiles such as Cornelius? (Acts 10:28a)

c. When did Peter understand that this law was no longer binding? (Acts 10:28b; 34-35)

d. Did Peter's associates understand the gospel? (Acts 10:45) Did they understand that the gospel was now to go to the Gentiles?

e. What was the sign that the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles? (Acts 10:46)

f. Did this manifestation serve as a sign to unbelievers?

g. A question may legitimately be raised as to why tongues is the proper sign for unbelievers. Is there any obvious reason why tongues are a better sign than miracles and healings? (Acts 8:9-10)

h. Why should tongues be a better sign than prophecy? (Consider each of the three tasks of a prophet.)

16. The third passage describes the visit of Paul to Corinth where a group of disciples who had been baptized in "John's baptism" were unaware of the existence of the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:2).

a. What sign(s) followed their baptism? (Acts 19:6)

b. Did everyone who received the Holy Spirit speak in tongues?

c. To whom did tongues serve as a sign? Were they unbelievers? If so, in what were they unbelievers?

17. Pentecostals insist that tongues definitely were present at other occasions on which people received the Holy Spirit. The first such case is that of Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8:9-25).

a. Was Simon a believer in the gospel? (Acts 8:13a)

b. Was Simon aware of the power of the Spirit? (Acts 8:13b)

c. Was Simon originally aware of the means of bestowing the power of the Spirit? (Acts 8:18)

d. Pentecostals insist that verse 17 shows the Samaritans speaking in tongues. May we legitimately conclude from the text that these new recipients of the Spirit spoke in tongues?

e. Are there any unbelievers in this story for whom tongues would serve as a sign?

18. Paul's receipt of the spirit is again identified as a case of definite, but unstated tongues. Ananias laid hands on Paul so that he would "regain (his) sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit." (Acts 9:17) Paul obviously was filled with the Spirit, but this is only implied in the text. Are there elements in the text that would indicate that he did (not) speak with tongues upon receipt of the Spirit? (Acts 9:18-19)

19. Do all believers speak in tongues? (1 Cor 12:29-30)

We now move to 1 Cor 14, where Pentecostals insist that tongues constitute a private prayer language or a language of angels. Prior to investigating the scriptural issues, we must visit recorded

history. Modern tongues-speaking, as practiced by Pentecostals is given the technical term glossolalia. This specifically refers to a polysyllabic speech in no extant human language. When recorded and examined by linguistics experts, it consistently lacks any grammatical or syntactical elements, and therefore, as one Pentecostal commentary states, lacks linguistic content. In other words, it has nothing in it which is identifiable as language.

This should be contrasted to all ancient records. There were various ecstatic utterances in ancient religions of all types. These utterances were all in the language of the people. There is not one single example parallel to glossolalia. Further, throughout the history of the church, until Azusa there is no example of glossolalia. And finally, throughout the history of the church, there is no record of new converts suddenly lapsing into tongues at the moment of conversion, baptism, or laying on of hands. This is a completely new phenomenon. Because it is so new, we should revisit the Biblical events, then consider the scriptural evidence for the claims made for glossolalia.

20. What was the nature of the tongues spoken at Pentecost? (Acts 2:7-11)

21. What was the nature of the tongues spoken at the house of Cornelius in Caesarea? (Acts 10:47)

22. What was the nature of the tongues spoken in Corinth? (Acts 19:6)

23. Paul states that tongues are to be a sign for unbelievers. How is this possible? (Acts 2:7-11) Can glossolalia serve this function? (1 Cor 14:6)

24. Based on the nature of tongues we have seen so far, what is the best understanding of 1 Cor 13:1?

25. 1 Cor 12-14 is a unified discussion. What is Paul's point in the discussion of the body of Christ? (1 Cor 12:12-27 esp. v. 20, 26)

26. 1 Cor 14:2 states that "one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men, but to God; for no one understands." Pentecostals insist that this means that tongues are not human languages, but languages of angels (1 Cor 13:1). In the context of these three chapters, is this a valid interpretation? (1 Cor 14:4-6, 19)

27. Paul describes musical instruments (1 Cor 14:7-8) and points out that their value is in distinct sounds which are understood. This becomes a segue into a discussion of foreign languages. What is Paul's point in discussing foreign languages? (1 Cor 14:9-11)

28. What is the importance of "so," "therefore," and "for" (NASB) ("even", "wherefore", and "for" in KJV) in verses 12-14?

29. Is the singing and praying in verse 15 referring to private devotions in any way, as Pentecostals insist?

30. We have already found that *pneuma* can mean "mind" rather than "spirit." *Nous*, commonly translated "mind" can also mean "meaning." Again, the word chosen by translators will depend on their understanding of the text. Since "spirit" is the more common use of *pneuma* and "mind" is the more common use of *nous*, we get the rendering seen in modern translations. If we use "mind" and "meaning" for *pneuma* and *nous* in verse 15, do we get a text which is consistent with Paul's discussion?

31. Do verses 16 and 17 fit with the Pentecostal belief that Paul is speaking of private devotions?

32. 1 Cor 14:2 is used to support the idea of tongues being private speech to God. To whom does Paul say that tongues are directed? (1 Cor 14:20-22)

33. What is Paul's conclusion regarding the proper use of tongues? (1 Cor 14:22-28, 40)

34. What is the nature of interpreted tongues? (1 Cor 14:2-5)

35. What is the content of tongues? (1 Cor 14:2, 4, Mark 4:11, Rom 16:25, 1 Cor 2:7, Eph 1:9, Col 2:2, 2 Thess 2:7)

Our final step in this journey is to consider ecstatic charismatic manifestations. Most of us have seen televangelists in healing services where the sick person is healed and falls on the floor, or where masses of people fall down under the force of "the Spirit." This particular manifestation is called "being slain in the Spirit." Other less common manifestations are "holy laughter" and "holy dancing." In these, persons are seemingly unable to stop laughing or dancing. Again this is claimed to be the action of the Holy Spirit. Our problem is to identify the true actions of the Holy Spirit, so we will not reject the Spirit we need so desperately. The converse task is to reject those which are false.

36. Is there any scriptural reason to suggest that the Holy Spirit might cause an individual to laugh? (Job 8:20-21, Psa 126:1-2)

37. Is there any scriptural reason to suggest that the Holy Spirit might cause an individual to dance? (Ex 15:20, 2 Sam 6:12-14, Psa 149:3, 150:4)

38. Is there any scriptural reason to suggest that the Holy Spirit might cause an individual to fall down? (Deut 9:18, Dan 10:9, Rev 5:8, 19:4)

39. How can we tell if a given manifestation is from God? (Matt 7:16-20, John 16:7-11, Gal 5:22-23)

40. Are we safe in standing back from the gifts of the Spirit? (1 Cor 14:25, 1 Thess 5:19-21, Heb 2:1-4)

41. The SDA church considers itself to be the remnant church in large measure because of a single prophet, Ellen White. Does the ministry of E. G. White fulfill the prophecy of Rev. 19:10?