

“Rules and Standards for Public Worship”

1 Corinthians 11:2-14:40

“The Use of Spiritual Gifts”

1 Corinthians 12:1-14:40 [Part 23]

The Basis of the Gifts - 1 Cor 13

IV. Difficulties in the Church—7:1-14:40

C. Difficulties Concerning Corporate Worship—11:2-14:40

3. The Use of Spiritual Gifts—12:1-14:40

a. Confusion Concerning Spiritual Gifts— 12:1-31

b. Correction of the use of Spiritual Gifts—13:1-13

1.) The Dilemma of No Love—v.1-3

2.) The Deportment of True Love— v.4-7

3.) The Dominion of Love—v.8-13

a.) Love is Permanent—v.8a

b.) Gifts are Provisional—v.8a&b

Last time we began answering these basic questions that need to be asked with regard to tongues (*particularly since tongues is such a pervasive part of the Christian movement across the world.*)

1. What does the Biblical word “tongues” mean?
2. What was the purpose for tongues?
3. If tongues ceased, can that be substantiated by history?
4. Is the tongues seen and practiced in the church today the same as that which was practiced in the early church?
5. What was it that caused tongues to cease?

We begin again with question 4.

Question 4

Is the tongues seen and practiced in the church, and other places today, the same as that which was practiced in the early church?

Here are some statements from Charismatic pastor and speaker, Tim Brown, of Texas.

“Speaking in tongues is the most talked about phenomena in Christianity. Pentecostalism and the Charismatic movement has brought speaking in tongues to the forefront, and these branches of Christianity are without doubt the fastest growing segments of Christianity. These movements are impacting the world even more than the reformation did.”

There is no doubt that the tongues movement has made an impact on the world. “What kind of impact?”, is the real question.

Again Mr. Brown says,

"Many people inaccurately define speaking in tongues as "speaking gibberish" or "talking nonsense." The truth is, speaking in tongues is the most intelligent, perfect language in the universe. It is God's language."

This is a huge assumption! We know nothing about language as it relates to heaven. We will have to judge for ourselves what is being said.

Mr. Brown goes on in his article, to espouse that tongues was evidence of the baptism of the HS. He uses his own experience and some eisegetical interpretation to prove his point.

"I was baptized in the Holy Spirit at the First Assembly of God church on Montana. The preacher asked for those wishing to dedicate themselves to the ministry to come forward for prayer. The first to come forward was a tall, slender fellow name Timmy. I thought, "If Timmy can go forward, I can too." :So I followed him down to the front of the podium. Without notice, something invisible hit Timmy, and down he went on the floor. Almost immediately, something hit me too. Down I went, prostrate on the ground. I began to weep uncontrollably. God's presence was all over me. This went on for several minutes. The thought occurred to me, "This must be what my church has been talking about all these years. What is happening to me must be the baptism in the Holy Spirit." No sooner did I think that when I heard this scripture in my mind, "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues." :If I'm filled with the Holy Spirit, then I'll speak in other tongues, I reasoned in my mind. Right then, I began speaking in other tongues--and I haven't stopped yet! Glory to God! You see, the physical proof of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is the same evidence that the disciples had: speaking in tongues. :You may have other evidences as well, but the one evidence you should have is speaking in tongues." (All quotes from tbm.org/tongues.htm)

I am not trying to make fun of, or denigrate Mr. Brown's personal experience. All I'm saying is that he did not produce any credible defense from the Scriptures, and all he really has is his personal experience to substantiate his position.

It was said by one writer that I researched on this topic that the tongues at Pentecost was a **heavenly language** that no one could have understood, and that the real miracle was in the hearing of those present.

The word, "*other*" in Acts 2:4 means, "to speak in a different or foreign language other than one's own; and in v.6, 8 we find the word [*dialektos*] which is where we get the word, "dialect" in reference to human languages. It seems logical, in light of this, that the languages they spoke were the languages of those listening, and that is why they understood them.

The plain facts are that tongues in the NT era was always known and understood languages. It was never a prayer language or an unknown language. This is very different from what is practiced in the charismatic church of today (*and been practiced for the last 100 years since 1906.*)

In fact if one studies the use of modern tongues, they will find that the charismatic

movement (that espouses tongues as its main evidence of HS power) is very closely connected to mysticism. One writer even calls the charismatic movement, "... the zenith of mysticism."

The basic approach in these circles is to teach people to empty or switch off the mind and allow the gift to function. This switching off of the mind is exactly what the mystics do in order to enter altered states of consciousness. This was also one of the primary characteristics of the pagan mystery religions.

Nowhere in the Scriptures are we told to empty our minds or bypass our brain in order to experience the fullness of God. In fact it is just the opposite.

Romans 15:13-14 (ESV)

13 May the God of hope **fill** you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. **14** I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are **full** of goodness, **filled** with all knowledge and able to instruct one another.

Colossians 1:9 (ESV)

9 And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be **filled** with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

Ephesians 5:18 (ESV)

18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be **filled** with the Spirit,

Colossians 2:10 (ESV)

10 and you have been **filled** in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.

Ephesians 3:19 (ESV)

19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be **filled** with all the **fullness** of God.

Quote One former Pentecostal tongues-speaker writes;

"The enemy of the soul is ever ready to take advantage of an "out of control" situation and thousands of Christians can testify with regret to the end results.

Ecstatic experience, like drug-addiction, requires larger and larger doses to satisfy. ... Sometimes the bizarre happens as is true of the so-called "Toronto Blessing". Eventually a crisis is reached and the tongue-speaker will sit on the back seats as a spectator in the hope that everything will be eventually as it was. The most tragic decision is to quit and in the quitting abandon all things spiritual as fraudulent -- I have met many such disillusioned souls. The spectators are frustrated, the fakers suffer guilt, the hoping are pitiful and the quitters are a tragedy. "

In brief, the tongues in Acts and the Epistles (*with the exception of the wrong use of them in Corinth*) are not the same thing we see happening in the church over the last 100 years.

The gift of tongues (*rightly used*) in the NT was always a controlled use of a known human language. Anything unintelligible or ecstatic gibberish is not the gift of tongues.

Question 5

What was it that caused tongues to cease?

c.) Gifts are Partial—v.9-10

Some say that since tongues ceasing is in the middle voice, nothing causes it to cease, but it ceased by itself. It didn't need any help. This may be true. It appears that tongues ceased shortly after Paul wrote this letter. Prophecy (*of the Revelational type dealing with the impartation of divine truth*) passed away along with special knowledge, some years later. These last two gifts were not as temporary as was tongues, but served the early church in its formative years.

The question of them passing away is not the real issue, but rather **why** did they pass away? (Assuming one believes they did pass away.)

Let's look at some words in these verses that may help us to understand the answers to these questions. (Please understand that no one can be completely dogmatic as to the meaning of what '*the perfect*' is. So one opinion is just as good as the next as long as there is consistent interpretation.)

First, notice that prophecy and knowledge is said to be "*imperfect*"—v.9. That word used here means, "in part" as contrasted with something whole. In that sense and because it is preceded by the preposition (*ek*) it means, "*imperfect*."

So one could say that prophecy and knowledge were incomplete, or only in part, or imperfect as compared to "*the perfect*." They only had partial prophecy and knowledge, it wasn't complete.

Next, look at the words, "*the perfect*." The word "*perfect*" is used throughout the NT in various ways.

It is used to speak of:

- That which pertains to being mature, or full-grown; an adult. It is used this way in;

Ephesians 4:13 (ESV)

13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

1 Corinthians 14:20 (ESV)

20 Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature.

- That which pertains to being **initiated**; as into a pagan cult with all of its mystery rites, so that one belongs. Paul uses this same word to indicate this in Phil 3:15-16. In speaking of the resurrection of the dead Paul states that he had not arrived there yet, nor was he already perfect, but the mature believer must rest on what they have been brought into and what they have been given.

Philippians 3:15-16 (ESV)

15 Let those of us who are **mature** think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. 16 Only let us hold true to what we have **attained** [*the state at which we have arrived*].

Colossians 1:28 (ESV)

28 Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone **mature** in Christ.

- That which pertains to being **fully developed** or **complete** in a moral sense. In this sense Christians are seen as becoming perfect (*not in a sinless sense, but in a moral sense.*)

The word speaks of God being perfect in this way.

Matthew 5:48 (ESV)

48 You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is **perfect**.

James 3:2 (ESV)

2 For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a **perfect** man, able also to bridle his whole body.

Matthew 19:21 (ESV)

21 Jesus said to him, "If you would be **perfect**, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."

- That which pertains to meeting the highest standard. That which is perfect! It can be used this way with respect to people or to things. It is not used this way in the NT with respect to people, because no one is perfect. But it is used of things that are perfect, or complete, not lacking anything; whole.

James 1:17 (ESV)

17 Every good gift and every **perfect** gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

1 John 4:18 (ESV)

18 There is no fear in love, but **perfect** love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been **perfected** in love.

Hebrews 9:11 (ESV)

11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more **perfect** tent [*or body*] (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation)

Romans 12:2 (ESV)

2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and **perfect**.

That brings us to “*the perfect*” in v.10. There are many ways that this has been interpreted. We will begin with this next time.