

THE GIFT OF TONGUES – ITS USE AND MISUSE

I Corinthians 12:4, 10; 14:1-6, 13-16, 19, 26-38, 39; Act 2:4, 6

The Holy Spirit gives gifts. He gives gifts to His people; He gives gifted people to His Church.

There are diversities of gifts. (I Corinthians 12:4; Ephesians 4:11)

There is one Giver (same Spirit). (I Corinthians 12:4)

These gifts are all for the good of all, not for the exaltation of the receiver. (I Corinthians 12:7;

Ephesians 4:12, 13)

These gifts all operate differently. (I Corinthians 12:6-7)

One of the many gifts of the Spirit is the gift of tongues. (I Corinthians 12:10)

Not everyone receives any one gift, for example, tongues. (I Corinthians 12:30)

1. There seem to be two forms of gift of tongues.

(1) Tongues as languages at Pentecost. (Acts 2:4)

No interpreter was needed at Pentecost (Acts 2:6)

(2) Tongues as ecstatic utterances, in the case of the Corinthians (I Corinthians 12 and 14)

An interpreter is required if other people are present.

2. What the gift of tongues, as ecstatic utterances, is:

*** The gift of tongues is the Spirit's gift of joyous praise, loving adoration of God.**

*** It is the liberation of the spirit of the believer for praise, adoration of God,**

Fellowship with Him, communion with Him, intimate worship of Him.

(I Corinthians 14:2, 14, 15)

*** It is the gift of communicating spiritual truths, the mysteries of God.**

(I Corinthians 14:2)

- * It may be the gift of joining with the Holy Spirit in intercession with groaning which cannot be uttered. (Romans 8:26)

3. When the gift of tongues becomes a problem.

- a. They interpret tongues to be the hallmark of having the Spirit, the baptism of the Spirit.
- b. They interpret tongues as essential to evidence of, or equal to, the fullness of the Spirit.
- c. They create an exclusive or cliquish fellowship around the gift and its use.
- d. They crusade to enlist others into the receiving of the gift in a crisis experience.
- e. They become proud and self-righteous and consider second class or at least not anointed those without the gift.
- f. They use the gift indiscriminately in public worship.
- g. They refuse New Testament controls as clearly presented in I Corinthians 14.

4) The Spirit is the Spirit; the gift of tongues is the Spirit's gift of tongues

- * The gift of tongues was not given to all Christians in Paul's day. (I Corinthians 12:30)
- * The questions of verse 30, I Corinthians 12, are so raised as to carry an implied negative answer.
- * All Christians have the Spirit, according to Romans 8:9, but not all have the gift of tongues.

For example, I know God has given me His Holy spirit, but He has not Given me the gift of tongues.

- * Paul says, "If ye have not the Spirit ye are none of Christ's. (Romans 8:9)

He never says, “If ye have not tongues ye have not the Spirit or the fullness of the Spirit”

5) God gives no ridiculous gifts!

Great gifts used ridiculously make the gift appear ridiculous.

Refuse to determine the worth of a gift by the quality of use any one or any group makes of it.

6) The gift of tongues is a lesser gift.

1) Because it is not directly a service gift.

“He who speaks in tongues edified himself.” (I Corinthians 14:4)

Only if there is an interpreter does the use of tongues edify others.

2) Because Paul spoke of “the best gifts”. (I Corinthians 12:31; 14:1) And he Named other gifts, especially prophecy or preaching. He wished all spoke in tongues, but he clearly preferred that all had the gift of preaching or witnessing.

(I Corinthians 14:5)

7) The gift of tongues is to be controlled in the following ways:

1) It is to be always under the speaker’s control. (I Corinthians 14:32) “The spirit of the true preaching is under the preacher’s control.” (I Corinthians 14:32)

2) One is to use the gift in deference to, or courtesy to, others present.

“The one speaking will give way to another who is inspired to speak.”

(I Corinthians 14:30-32)

3) It is to be used in public only when there is an interpreter present in order that others present may say, “Amen”, or voice agreement, or participate, or be

informed. Otherwise be silent. (I Corinthians 14:28)

- 4) It is not to be used when unbelievers are present. (See Phillips' translation and footnote. I Corinthians 14:23)**
- 5) Not more than two or three are to speak in tongues at any one gathering. (I Corinthians 14:27)**
- 6) Only one at a time is to speak. "Two or three, should speak, one at a time." (I Corinthians 14:27)**
- 7) Women (in Corinth at least) were never to speak in tongues. "Let your women Keep silent in the churches." (I Corinthians 14:34)**
- 8) The gift of tongues, and all other spiritual gifts, is to be used always for the common good. (I Corinthians 12:7; 14:2-3, 26)**
- 9) We must all give the Holy Spirit liberty to distribute (gifts) to every man as He determines." (I Corinthians 12:11) None of us should fear any gift given by the Holy Spirit.**