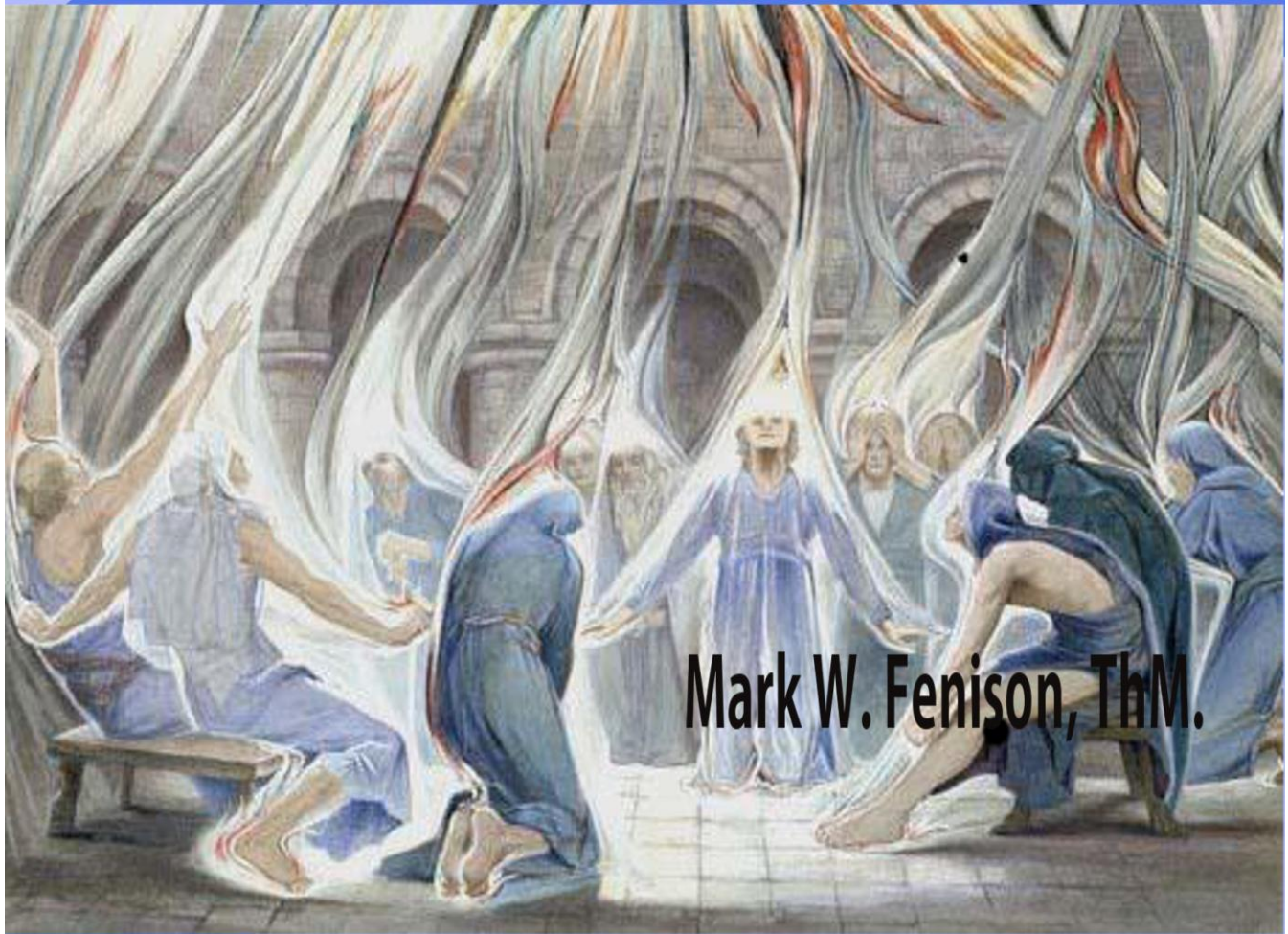


Outline Study

1 CORINTHIANS 12-14

"Tongue Speaking"



Mark W. Fenison, ThM.

Contents

A. Outline – the Biblical Gift of Tongues

B. Exposition of 1 Cor. 12-14

The Biblical Gift of Tongues

Text: Acts 2:1-11

Intro: Since the early 1900's in England and America a new religious movement arose that claimed and still does claim that The Holy Spirit has revived the gift of "tongues" in these last days. This movement became known as the Pentecostal Movement. After spreading over into the Catholic church, Catholic tongue speakers identified themselves as "Charismatics" in order to distinguish them from Protestants. Today the terms are substantially interchangeable.

I. How Can You Know the Truth?

A. The Bible predicts demonic led miracle movement in the last days – Mt. 24:24; 2 Thes. 2:9

1. How do you know that the Pentecostal movement is not a fulfillment of that prediction?
2. Even Charismatics have written books warning of false charismatics and condemning each other as demonic.
3. Other world religions speak in ecstatic utterances (Hindu's; New Ager's)
 - a. Ancient mystery religions spoke in "ecstatic languages"
 - b. Priests and Priestesses in pagan temples spoke in "ecstatic languages"
4. Christian cults speak in "ecstatic utterances" – Mormon Apostles
5. How do you know the modern tongue movement does not really speak in "ecstatic utterances"?

B. Feelings often change and one person's experience differs from another

1. United Pentecostal tongue speaker demands tongues for salvation
2. Many tongue speakers demand it is the sign of baptism in Spirit
3. Others deny it is necessary for all believers

C. The Bible commands us to test all supernatural phenomena by the Word –

Isa.8:19-20; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; I Thes. 5:17

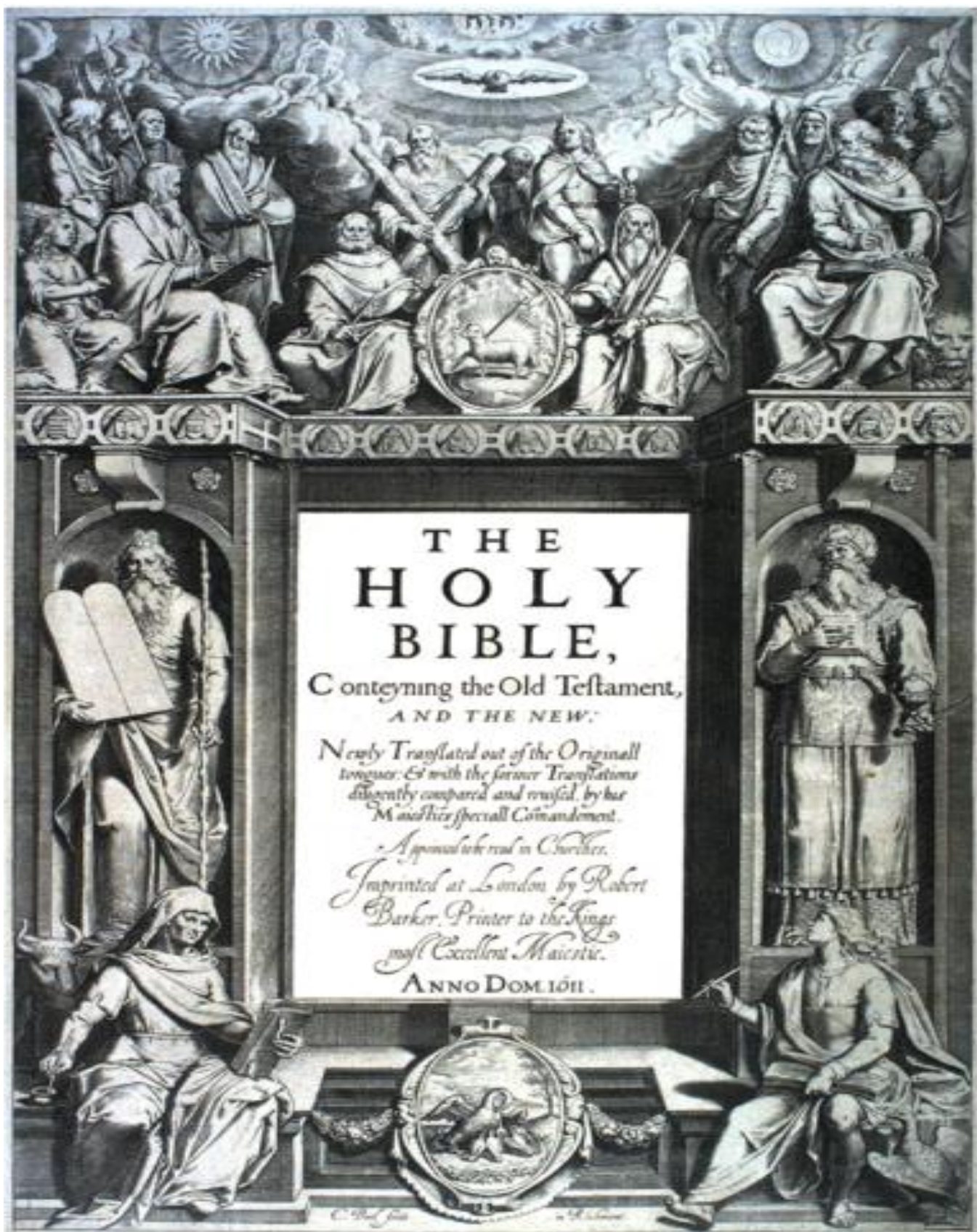
1. Pentecostalism denies this – they assert their experience makes them the only spiritually fit ones to interpret scriptures correctly – Hence, scripture is subjected to their experience rather than their experience is subjected to scriptures as Isaiah 8:19-20 commands.
2. Pentecostals in general have a lower view of scripture as final authority. Why seek God’s will through His written word when you can claim God directly speaks to you???

II. What are Biblical Tongues According to Scriptures?

A. The Biblical principle of confirming truth – “in the mouth of two or three witnesses let every word be established”

B. The Pentecostal Witnesses – Acts 2:1-11

1. FIRST WITNESS: “every man heard them speak IN HIS OWN LANGUAGE” (Gr. dialektos) – v. 6
2. SECOND WITNESS: “how hear we every man in OUR OWN TONGUE (Gr. dialektos) wherein we were born” – v. 8
3. THIRD WITNESS: “we hear them speak in OUR TONGUES (Gr. Glossa) the wonderful works of God” – v. 11
 - a. Here are three witnesses concerning the nature of the Pentecostal gift
 - b. Both Greek terms “dialektos” and “glossa” are clearly defined as known human languages
 - c. The KJV term “tongue” meant “language” in 1611 AD – check dictionary (see photocopy 1611 Title page on next page



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- d. Nothing else recorded in the book of Acts contradicts what is clearly laid down three times concerning the Pentecostal gift – known earthly languages or dialects
- e. Today’s “tongues” are nothing but the common variety “ecstatic” utterances found in all world religions and in all ages.

NOTE: For “Tongues of angels” see section on 1 Corinthians 13:1-5 where Paul is speaking in a series of hyperboles with the hypothetical series of “if”. None have “all knowledge” any more than anyone can speak in the tongues of angels.

D. The Problem of Spiritual Gifts at the church of Corinth – I Cor. 12-14

1. Paul is not complementing them but correcting their misuse – 12:1
2. Past pagan practices and demonic influences have entered church – 12:3
3. To say “Jesus is Lord” is not mere verbalization of those words as any drunk can be paid to vocalize such words without the Spirit of Christ. The term “speaketh” here refers to the character of the **whole expression** of a person’s mind, words and actions.
 - a. He is referring to whether the **full expression** of a person characterizes submission to the Lordship of Christ – attitude, words and actions under the control of the Spirit of Christ.
 - b. Likewise, to say “Jesus is accursed” is the **full expression** in rebellion to the Lordship of Christ as produced by demonic spirit – false doctrine and practice (1 Cor. 10:19-22; 1 Tim. 4:1). He does not merely have to literally say “Jesus is accursed” but this is the demeanor of the full expression of this person in mind, words and actions. Such was the full expression of the worship service at Corinth where the “author of confusion” was at work; where selfishness, disorder and indelicate behavior was being exhibited in all aspects of their worship including the perversion of the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 11:17-20). The whole expression of their worship service denied the Lordship of Christ and demonic leadership was being expressed (1 Cor. 11:2) which repudiates the Lordship of Christ and thus makes Christ “accursed” by the full expression in their worship.

E. The First Correction – ch. 12 – God is in charge of spiritual gifts and placement in His churches

1. The Triune God works in UNITY in dispersing and operating spiritual gifts (12:4-6).

Their use of gifts characterized “confusion” – thus not under God’s leadership

2. Gifts are not a matter of human preference or choice but Sovereign distribution – 12:7-11
3. Gifted members are placed in each congregational body according to how God sees fit – 12:12-18
4. God gifts each church body for mutual edification rather than self-edification – 12:19-27
5. God determines priorities of gifted persons and gifts – 12:28
6. The Spirit does not give all gifts to all saints – vv. 29-30
 - a. The literally Greek text contains the word “no” (Gr. me) in each question
 - b. The Gift of tongues is not for all saints
 - hence it is not necessary for salvation as salvation is for all saints
 - hence it is not necessary for spiritual growth as that is for all saints
 - hence it is not for praying in the Spirit as that is commanded of all saints (Rom. 8:26-27; Eph. 5:18)
 - hence, the Pentecostal interpretation of the baptism in the Spirit is wrong because fuller sanctification is for all saints and Pentecostalism demands tongues as the sign of that baptism.

F. The Second Correction – ch. 12:31-13:13 – The Better Way of Love

1. A translation problem with the KJV in I Cor. 12:31
 - a. the words translated “covet earnestly the best gifts” can be translated one of two ways
 - As an Imperative “covet earnestly the best gifts” - KJV
 - As an Indicative “you are coveting earnestly the best gifts BUT I will show unto you a MORE excellent way” – the way of love
 - b. The Indicative better suits the previous argument of Paul
 - Spiritual gifts are given according to “His will” not ours – v. 11
 - Each member is to seek the welfare of others first rather than self– vv. 12-27
 - Not all gifts are for all saints – vv. 28-30
 - Hence, the more mature way for seeking and using gifts is according to the principle of love
 - Seek gifts in the way of love – self-denial – 14:1

2. Why pursuing the way of Love is better - it is the spiritual Mature Principle (way) to Pursue the use of Gifts – Love

a. Without love everything else is NOTHING - immature – 13:1-3

b. Love is the Mature way as it is not self-centered – vv. 3-7

c. Love is the Mature way because it never fails or needs replacement or completion – vv. 8-9

(1) In contrast Revelatory gifts are Temporal and thus incomplete (immature)

- Love never fails but tongues will “cease of itself” (middle voice) prior to the cessation of other revelatory gifts (knowledge and prophecy)
- Love never fails but Revelatory gifts (knowledge and prophecy) will be completed (Matured) by something else (passive voice “shall vanish away”).

(2) Revelatory gifts are incomplete/immature and will be replaced by a more Mature/complete revelation – vv. 9-10

(**Note:** Revelatory gifts in general were IMMATURE (incomplete) because such gifts were not given to all saints equally, and so revelation to others was indirect. Thus other saints were dependent upon others for revelation from God. When the completed and confirmed finished word of God came, all had access to direct revelation from God – “face to face” without an intermediate agent of revelation – brass mirror that stood between)

(3) Two propositional truths stated to prove the same point – vv. 10-11

The “in part” will cease when it becomes complete (“perfect” Gr. telios or complete) – v.10 The childish ceases when manhood arrives –v. 11

- “that which is perfect (Mature)” replaces that which is incomplete (immature)
- “that which is perfect” – Neuter in gender – not a person – not the second Coming
- Tongues has already ceased prior to knowledge and prophecy being replaced by that which is a more mature revelation – note “tongues” has been dropped in verses 9-10

(4) Two Metaphors depicting the replacement of immature revelation with Mature revelation – vv. 11-12

(a) **The Metaphor of Growing up from infant to man:** Tongues were speaking like an infant.

- Childish things (immature revelatory gifts) are put away (done away with) by more Mature revelation (the completion of the Biblical canon – New Testament revelation) – v. 11

(b) **The Brass Mirror (immature indirect revelatory gifts) to “face to face” (completed direct revelation)** Removal of intermediate agents (gifted men) to direct access “face to face” with the revealed will of God – the completed scriptures – 2 Tim. 3:16-17.

3. The present principles for determining the MATURE use of immature revelatory gifts is Love

(a) “now” is the apostolic age when revelatory gifts are necessary for (a) present guidance in lieu of the absence of a more mature (completed) revelation for N.T. church faith and practice; (b) Such present revelatory gifts are “now” necessary to convey and confirm completed written revelation (Heb. 2:4; Isa. 8:16-20; Rev.1:3; 22:17-18; 2 Pet. 3:15-17; etc.);

(b) “then” is post-New Testament revelation age when completed scriptures provide the completed standard for New Testament faith and practice (Isa. 8:16 with Isa. 8:20; 2 Tim. 3:16-17 written near end of written revelation)

(c) “Love” is the **mature principle** right now Paul uses to guide the churches in the more mature use and practice of immature spiritual gifts – v. 13 (1 Cor. 12:31-14:1). Love does not seek self-edification above the edification of the church (14:1-19). Love seeks to abide within the guidelines of scripture (vv. 20-22). Love does not violate order and create confusion (vv. 23-40).

4. Now Faith, hope and love are the present principles to judge a mature use of spiritual gifts during the time of INCOMPLETE revelation from God for *New Testament faith and practice* – vv. 12-13

G. The Third Corrective – ch. 14:1-5 – Love seeks to emphasize Prophecy as it is better than Tongues for edifying others spiritually

1. It is better because “foreign languages” in the context of the church are not

understood by anyone including the speaker without an interpreter and therefore is known only to God – v. 2 (with vv. 9-11; 19). The unknown tongue speaker, speaks only to God as no one else understands what is said.

2. Speaking a foreign language in the church context with no interpreter benefits no one but self (negative self-edification – building yourself up at the expense of others) – v. 4
3. Prophecy is better than tongues in a church context because it builds everybody up – v. 5
4. Speaking foreign dialects is for the mission field not the church (v. 19) and for unbelievers not believers – vv. 20-21

H. The Fourth Corrective – ch. 14:6-12 – Seeking Edification of all is better than speaking in foreign Languages

1. Unknown foreign languages are mere noise in the church without an interpreter – vv. 6-8
2. Unknown foreign languages only have value if they are understood by all – vv. 9-11
3. Seeking the edification of the church is BETTER than speaking gibberish – v. 12

I. The Fifth Corrective – ch. 14:13-17 – Understanding what someone is saying is BETTER than Hearing gibberish

1. It is better for the speaker's own edification – vv. 14-15 – this repudiates the idea that tongues are for self-edification as Paul denies there can be “self” edification without the mind understanding. Paul refuses to speak in tongues or use any spiritual gift where his mind is not engaged.
2. It is better for others hearing you – vv. 16-17 – if not it fails the test of edification

(NOTE: Paul would not pray in tongues if his mind could not understand what his mouth is saying as there can be no positive self-edification only negative self-edification = pride)
3. Understanding with the mind is here defined as essential for edification of self and/or others.

J. The Sixth Corrective – ch. 14:18-25 – The Church is not the MATURE place to Speak with Foreign Languages

1. Paul spoke in foreign languages more than all of them but not in the church – vv. 18-19
2. The Mature use is according to the Biblical purpose for this gift – vv. 20-22
 - a. The gift of Biblical tongues is designated for the Jews and their dispersion – v. 21
 - This is a quotation from Isaiah 28:11-13
 - The Jews will reject this “sign” to them – v. 21b “they will not hear”
 - b. The gift of Biblical tongues is a “SIGN” gift – v. 22
 - Sign gifts are not for believers therefore it is not for the church
 - Prophesying is the gift for believers
 - the Jews were learned in the Scriptures
 - the “unlearned” unbelievers were gentiles because they had no training in the scriptures and would not recognize “tongues” as a sign but think you were crazy.
 - c. The confusion of using a missionary gift in the wrong place – v. 23
 - d. The blessing of using the right gift in the right place – vv.24-25

K. The Seventh Corrective – ch. 14:26-31 – The Biblical use of gifts in the church

1. Every gift exercised in public worship must edify the whole church – v. 26
2. No more than three should speak foreign languages in the church – v. 27a
3. No more than one speaker at a time – v. 27b
4. No more than one person doing the interpreting – v. 27c
5. None should speak in tongues if there is no interpreter – v. 28
6. Same rule of order applies to Prophets –vv. 29-31 “one by one”
7. The spirit is subject to the speaker – meaning the Holy Spirit is not the source of loss of self-control as in “slain in the spirit” snake slithering, etc. The fruit of the Spirit is self-control.

L. The Eighth Corrective – ch.14:32-40 – Order not Confusion is the evidence of the Spirit

1. People led by the Spirit do not lose control of themselves – v. 32
2. People led by the Spirit do not cause confusion – v. 33
3. The Holy Spirit does not reverse God's roles for men in women in the home when they enter the church as that makes God the author of confusion – vv. 34-35
4. Women speaking in the church violates the Divine order of the Sexes and submission to their husbands – vv. 34-35
5. Spiritually led people acknowledge all these things as God's commandment – vv. 36-37
6. Those who reject these standards are IGNORANT and unspiritual v. 38
7. Tongues and prophesying should not be forbidden as long as they fit within these guidelines – v. 39
8. Everything is to be done decently and in the order commanded above – v. 40

NOTE: No other church epistle has any reference to tongues being used in the churches, because other churches used that gift according to its Biblical design – missionary gift for lost Jews outside of the church. Sign gifts were the mark of the Apostolic office (2 Cor. 12:12) which the apostles conveyed through the laying on of their hands (Acts 6; 8:15-17; 19:6; etc.). This is why no sign gifts are noted in the churches in Rome (Rom.12) as no apostle had been there yet and Paul wanted to come to convey such gifts through laying on of apostolic hands (Rom. 1:11). Tongues “ceased of itself” when the apostles died out because none others could convey them as that was the “sign” of the apostolic office (2 Cor. 12:12).

M. The Modern Day Tongue Movement is not of the Spirit of God

1. It characterizes confusion and disorder and God is not the author of that
2. Every single one of its self-proclaimed prophets have failed the Biblical tests of a Prophet

- a. Commanded to test the spirits in regard to self-proclaimed prophets – 1 Jn. 4:1
 - b. Miracles confirming false doctrine is demonic in origin – Deut. 13:1-5
 - c. Failure of prophecy to be fulfilled as predicted is a sign of false prophet – Deut. 18:20-22
3. Crosses denominational boundaries by common experience without changing heresies embraced. Protestant Pentecostal can observe the idolatrous Mass with tongues speaking Catholic Charismatics and all be slain in the Spirit – demonic worship. Gospel of works, denial of justification by faith without works (eternal security of true believers – Jn. 6:37-40). United Pentecostal preach “another Jesus” deny Trinity and teach no salvation apart from tongues, etc.,
 4. Violate the Holy Spirit’s inspired guidelines for speaking in the assemblies – 1 Cor. 14:26-38

Today’s “tongues” are not the Biblical tongues but the common ecstatic utterances found in every world religion and found in all ages starting long before the coming of Christ. It can be emotionally worked up by or self engaged after some practice or it can be demonic originated. It is of the flesh and of Satan.

NOTE: The charismatic movement crosses denominational lines without changing doctrine or practice. Protestants can partake of the ungodly mass with Catholic Charismatics, all speaking in ecstatic utterances and being slain in the Spirit. However, the Holy Spirit is the “Spirit OF TRUTH.”

Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14

Introduction to 1 Corinthians 12-14

There is no portion of scripture more abused by the counterfeit revival movement than 1 Corinthians 12-14. The primary Biblical support for this movement is drawn heavily from interpretations of these three chapters.

However, the reader must keep in mind that these chapters are not written by Paul to condone what was going on in the worship service at Corinth, but was written to condemn and correct their abuse of spiritual gifts, as he claimed they were “ignorant” in these matters (1 Cor. 12:1) and had more in common with past demonic led worship than with Christ (1 Cor. 12:2-3).

Ecstatic utterances were of ancient origin with all false religions (Isa. 8:19 “mutterings”) and was common at Corinth among the false temples these Corinthian Christians attended (1 Cor. 8-10), as they have been throughout history and today (Mormon apostles, Hindu, Pentecostalism, etc.). The priestesses in these temples often fell into altered states of mind and spoke in ecstatic utterances.

Both Jesus and Paul explicitly warned of a last days false apostolic like wonders, signs and miracle movement (Mt. 24:24-25; 2 Thes. 2:9-12).

Therefore, how do you know the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement, which has a documented beginning point in the 20th century, is not that predicted apostate movement? Jesus said, “sanctify them through thy word, thy word is truth” (Jn. 17:17).

Does the “Spirit OF TRUTH” energize an experience (tongues/ecstatic utterances) that passes over denominational lines without uniting people in truth? Does the Spirit OF TRUTH” authenticate by a common experience (tongues) those who are in gross doctrinal confusion with each other? For example, the United Pentecostal Church claims that tongues are the “seal” of the indwelling Spirit of God without which none are saved. In addition they deny the very doctrine of the Triune God! The Word of Faith movement perverts the doctrine of Christ and God. The movement as a whole perverts the gospel of Jesus Christ. Every false doctrine imaginable can be found within this movement but all manifest the same common experience (tongues)!

The specific point of controversy in these three chapters is in regard to the nature of “tongues.” Are there various kinds of tongues (human versus angelic) or only different kinds of human languages? Is it “unknown” because it is a special prayer tongue between the human spirit and God or is it “unknown” only in the context of the church without interpretation? Is it for believers or is it designed as a “sign” for a special class of unbelievers – the Jews?

All of these issues will be addressed in the following commentary on these chapters.

Expository Remarks on 1 Corinthians 12

Diversity in Disunity – vv. 1-3

1 ¶ Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

There were several issues that the Corinthians had wrote Paul and asked about (7:1, 7:25; 8:4; 12:1, 16:1) and one was about “spiritual things” (Gr. pneumatikon – spiritual things). Notice the word “gifts” is in italic demonstrating no Greek term is found in the text to support it. Paul is dealing with more than just “gifts” but also with the order and position of members in the body (12:12-28). They were “ignorant” in this matter and these chapters are instructive and corrective in nature.

2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.

Either those guilty of ignorance in this area were primarily “*gentiles*” and/or the vast majority of the membership were “*gentiles*.” Something about their present chaotic and confused manner of worship reminded Paul of their former pagan worship. Outside of Corinth there was a road that led up a hill where all the false temples were found. In these pagan temples, worship was conducted indecently, chaotic, and in confusion. The priestesses of Delphi would work themselves up into frenzy, lose control and speak in ecstatic utterances under the influence of demons (“*carried away*”). Some of the Corinthians still visited the pagan temples to buy meat (1 Cor. 8:1-23; 10:18-28). The words “carried away” demonstrate they operated under the influence of demons “*even as ye were led*.” Their former false worship was directed or under the control of demons.

3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

Here Paul introduces the Greek preposition “*en*” within the phrase “by (Gr. *en*) the Spirit” in direct contrast to “even as ye were led” in verse 2. Hence, the contrast is between demon leadership versus Holy Spirit leadership in regard to speaking. From this point forward the prepositional phrase “by the Spirit” or “by one Spirit” means “under leadership” or “by direction of” the Spirit.

Paul is speaking about more than mere verbalization as one could pay a drunk five dollars to merely vocalize “Jesus is Lord.” The term “Lord” carries the idea of a servant master relationship. He is speaking of the whole expression of worship and whether it conveys true submission to Christ in the sense of this servant master relationship. Hence, to say Jesus is Lord is to convey submission to him in the manner they speak and worship. The unregenerate man cannot convey this (Rom. 8:7) but is in rebellion and resistance to His Lordship. Likewise, no man speaking under the direction/control/leadership of the Spirit calls Jesus “accursed.” Certainly anyone verbalizing such words would not be under the Leadership of the Spirit, but again, Paul is speaking more than mere verbalization but the complete expression of the content and manner in which they conduct their worship. The Holy Spirit never leads anyone to dishonor Christ or rebel against Him. The whole expression of their worship at Corinth was confusion and disorderly and contrary to the very character of Christ and leadership of the Spirit.

The Corinthian worship resembled their previous pagan form of worship more than Christian worship. They were divided (1 Cor. 11:17-19) and seeking preeminence over each other.

Diversity in Unity –vv. 4-6

4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

In contrast to their former manner of pagan worship, and their present chaotic divided self-centered worship, worship under the leadership of the one Triune God (same Spirit = The Holy Spirit; same Lord = The Lord Jesus Christ; same God = the Father) was manifested in diversity, but in unity.

The words “diversity...differences” represent the same Greek word. There were diverse or different gifts, but all originating from, and under the direction of, the same Spirit. There were diverse or different “administrations” (Gr. diakinoi – same term translated “deacon”) or ministries. This term has to do with the object being ministered unto, rather than the subject doing the ministering. It refers to the various kinds of members placed in the body for the purpose to edify the rest of the body as in verses 11-27. Although the members were different, they were designed to act in unity with each other under the direction of the same Lord. They were designed and placed in the body according to the purpose of God (v. 18).

Some charismatic commentators attempt to make “differences of administrations” refer to different uses of tongues (pray, sign, singing, etc.). However, it is referring to the differing parts (members) of the body in this context (vv. 11-27).

“Diversities of operations” refers to the various measures of power operating within each member according to God’s design for it in the congregational body. The term “operations” translates the Greek term “energomai” where we get our English word “energy” and is translated in the New Testament elsewhere as “effectual working” (Eph. 3:20). The measure of effectual power differed in manifestation from member to member depending upon the nature of their gift. It differed between those members possessing the very same kind of gift.

Diversity by Sovereign Design – vv. 7-11

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

The consequence of the Triune work of diversity in unity was that each member of the church at Corinth had been individually gifted distinctly different than the other members either in the nature of the gift (tongues versus helps) or in different measure of power if both shared the same gift. The purpose was to make the individual profitable to the whole body, as the whole body needed diverse gifted members to make it complete (vv. 12-27).

Contrary to all previous Scriptures (book of Acts) the words “divers kinds of tongues” has been assumed to include heavenly kind in addition to human kind, rather than different kinds of human languages, as clearly spelled out in Acts 2:4-11. This assumption is based upon an improper interpretation of 1 Cor. 13:1 and 1 Cor. 14:2. The language here does not support such a conclusion, nor does the proper interpretation of 1 Cor. 13:1 or 14:1 support such a conclusion. See comments on these two texts.

However, it was not the individual member that selected their own particular gift (v. 11). The Holy Spirit acted sovereignly in bestowing gifts in keeping with His own design (v. 18) for making the individual congregational body functional and complete. Gifts are “given...as he will” rather than as we will.

Diversity Required for Sufficiency – vv. 12-27

12 ¶ *For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.*

Paul is directing them to their own human body as an example of the Holy Spirit's work of diversity in unity in the congregation at Corinth. Their physical body was but "one body" and yet it was made up of diverse members, each particularly gifted in different measures of power and service but all necessary for that body to be complete and all necessary for that body to work together in unity.

He is not speaking of a universal invisible human body made up of all humans in the world. Neither is he speaking about a universal invisible church body made up of all believers in the world. He is speaking of the nature of the one church body existing at Corinth (v. 27) or at Ephesus or anywhere else Paul under the leadership of the Spirit had preached the gospel, then water baptized such persons and organized them into one congregational body.

13 *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

This verse simply summarizes the first three chapters in this epistle. They had been divided over the baptismal administrator (1 Cor. 1:12). In chapter 3, Paul concludes that all the various administrator's of their water baptism had been working with each other under the leadership of the same Spirit (1 Cor. 3:5-9) in order to form the congregation at Corinth. Therefore, it was the Holy Spirit that water baptism was administered under in order to form them into one "temple" indwelt by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16) at Corinth, even though it was administered through diverse human administrators. Likewise, it is the same Spirit that administered unto them spiritual gifts even though it was through the laying on of the apostolic hands (Acts 6:6; 8:17-19; Rom. 1:11; etc.). They were made to "drink" (metaphor for partake) of these diverse spiritual gifts from the same Spirit.

14 *For the body is not one member, but many.*

15 *If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?*

16 *And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?*

17 *If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?*

18 *But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.*

19 *And if they were all one member, where were the body?*

20 *But now are they many members, yet but one body.*

21 *And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.*

22 *Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:*

Paul's point is that the Corinthian body was intentionally composed of a diversity of members with diverse gifts in order to make it functional or complete as one body. God did this on purpose (v. 18). Hence, every member was "necessary" as every member was "gifted" (vv. 7-11) for the precise role it would fulfill in the congregational body at Corinth. Therefore, members were gifted differently, and thus gifts were limited (vv. 29-30) or else the whole body would be just an "eye" and thus incomplete and non-functional, as diversity was essential for a healthy complete functioning body. Just like different individuals have distinct personalities, so do different congregations, as they are individually made

different by God in order to fulfill the role they have been designed for in the geographical location God has placed them to serve.

23 And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.

24 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked:

Some members of the physical body are not as visibly prominent and/or comely as other parts. For example, the liver is hidden and not as comely (pretty) as other parts of the human body. However, without it the rest of the body would die. Every part is “necessary” for the whole to be functioning according to its designed potential (Eph. 4:15-16). Every member, every joint is designed to supply a role – even the lost members that God has intentionally set in the body have a role to play for the overall good of the congregational body (1 Cor. 11:18; Judas Iscariot – Jn. 17:12). Thus, the body is weakened and limited when it is not functioning together in unity, and as a whole, as designed by God.

25 That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.

26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

27 ¶ Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

The “body” in view is the congregational body such as the kind found at Corinth (v. 27). The only possible kind of body that can be without “schism” and where “all” the members can suffer or rejoice with the “one” member in the body is a local visible congregational body. Remember, the whole reason for this analogy is to restore unity and functional order to the congregation at Corinth. The so-called universal invisible body is by nature full of “schism” and it is utterly impossible for “all” of its members to even know about any “one” singular member, much less suffer or rejoice with or honour it.

Diversity in Unity Requires Priority – v. 28

28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Paul has metaphorically addressed the congregational body at Corinth in verses 11-27. He has stressed diversity in unity and the importance of all members to each other as a functional working unified body. However, he now admits that the church as an institution does have an order of priority, and that some gifted men and gifts are more significant than others. Indeed, a body can suffer losing some parts and still continue to live and thrive. However, the loss of other parts would be more crippling to the body. Hence, there is an order of priority when considering the diversities of gifted men and spiritual gifts. It seemed that the Corinthians placed more significance upon the sign gifts, and especially speaking in tongues.

However, in God’s order of importance the significance was determined by the ability to edify the whole body (1 Cor. 14:2, 5, 12, 24). In God’s order of importance were those gifted men which conveyed the Word of God (apostles, prophets, teachers) followed by those gifts that confirmed that such revelatory gifts originate with God (miracles, then gifts of healings – see Acts 2:22; Heb. 4:3-4). Then followed gifts that provided service for each other (helps, governments). Service is important, but not as important as those gifted men that provided edification by the word of God. Tongues are found last in significance of order and importance. This is not accidental, as Paul continues in chapter 14 to assert that edifying gifts

such as “prophesy” are not only to be sought above tongues (1 Cor. 14:1,5) but all gifts that edify the church are more important than tongues without interpretation – 1 Cor. 14:12-13; 24-15. Chapter 14 deals with tongues without interpretation (14:5, 6-11, 13, 28).

Diversity in Unity Requires Limitation – vv. 29-30

29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?

30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?

All of these questions are rhetorical that call for “no” as the answer. However, in the Greek text every question is supplied with the actual word “no” (Gr. me).

Paul had already argued that the whole body was the eye, then where would be the function of hearing, and so forth. Diversity designed for complete functional unity requires limitations. Not all members can be the eye or ear or hand. Therefore, not all members are apostles, or prophets, or teachers and thus not all members are given the gift of tongues.

Notice the plural “tongues” thus incorporating all variations of human languages or the Pentecostal gift (Acts 2:4-11). Again, the assumption that it is limited to only one kind of tongue here has no basis in this text whatsoever. It is plural, and used without any qualifying words that would be necessary to distinguish it from its previous use in verse 10. In verse 10 there is nothing to distinguish it from its careful and explicit Pentecostal definition in Acts 2:4-11.

This limitation of “tongues” provides a real problem to Pentecostalism which demands that tongues are either necessary to be saved (United Pentecostal Church) or necessary for spiritual growth (sign of baptism in the Spirit, etc.) or spiritual prayer (All other Pentecostal denominations). In all such cases, Pentecostalism demands it cannot be limited but is essential for all Christians.

Since it is impossible to be a Christian without salvation, then the United Pentecostal Church is preaching “another gospel” when they demand that tongues are the seal of possessing the Holy Spirit, as those without the Spirit are “none of his” (Rom. 8:7). If tongues were necessary for salvation then it could not be limited to just some Christians.

Likewise, since praying in the Spirit and spiritual growth are necessary for all Christians, then tongues cannot possibly be interpreted in that manner.

Hence, Pentecostalism’s interpretation and understanding of the baptism in the Spirit must also be in error. If tongues were the sign of the baptism in the Spirit, and the baptism in the Spirit was essential to spiritual growth (second work of grace) or in order to be “spiritual” then tongues could not possibly be limited to just some Christians, as all Christians are commanded to be spiritual (Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:25).

Diversity in Unity Requires Love– v. 31

31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

The words “covet earnestly” translate a Greek term that can be translated two different ways, because its form is the same for the imperative mode, as it is for the indicative mode. Only context can indicate which way it should be translated.

The KJV translates it as an imperative or a command. However, the context does not support that intent. Indeed, the preceding context repudiates that idea completely.

Why would Paul command them to “earnestly seek the best gifts” after telling them that spiritual gifts are not a matter of personal selection but are sovereignly bestowed (v. 11) and God places them in the body as it “pleases him” (v. 18) not as it pleases us? Why would Paul command them to seek the best

gifts after telling them God does not give all gifts to all persons (vv. 29-30)? Wasn't that the very problem in the church at Corinth? They were claiming that the more showy gifts (tongues) was the most important, when God listed it as the least important (v. 28)?

However, when it is translated, as an indicative, it would read "*But you are coveting after the best gifts, and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way*" – the way of love (ch. 13:1-14:1). The contrast is obvious. You are doing that rather than doing this, which is better than doing what you are doing. Hence, it is a rebuke that it is wrong to seek gifts above love. They could not obtain the "best gifts" as that was strictly God's sovereign prerogative to bestow such gifts as "he wills" (12:11, 18) and His will limited certain gifts (vv. 29-30). So no amount of desiring by them would change that. However, it was not wrong to simply desire spiritual gifts (14:1) especially to use them in the way of love as it was God's will to bestow gifts upon each member (12:7-10).

Summary Conclusion

The Corinthian worship service was chaotic and divided because everyone was seeking to edify themselves at the expense of the edifying the rest of the body. They were not manifesting the leadership of the Spirit (12:1-3) but the leadership of demons in their worship ("confusion" – 14:33). They were "ignorant" concerning spiritual things, especially spiritually gifted men and gifts in general (v. 1).

True leadership under the Spirit is manifested in diversity acting in unity (vv. 4-6) under the leadership of the Triune God.

Diversity was not for division and confusion within the congregational body, but for full unified function and completion of the congregational body (vv. 7-27). Therefore, all gifts were "necessary", but not all gifts were equal in significance (v. 28). Significance was determined by the principle of love or edification of the whole. Since the body was diverse and needed different gifted persons to make it functional and complete, spiritual gifts were necessarily limited so that not all gifts were distributed to all members. However, the way they worshipped was divisive, self-centered and chaotic and that was due to being "ignorant" of the better way to pursue their use of gifts – the way of love (v. 31).

Expository Remarks on 1 Corinthians 13

Outline

Introduction

The Hypothetic Hyperboles – vv. 1-3

The Characteristics of Love – vv. 4-7

Complete versus Incomplete – v. 8

That which completes the incomplete – vv. 9-11

Now versus Then – vv. 12-13

Summary

Introduction

After Paul provides instruction concerning God's design and intent for making the congregational diverse in order to be functionally complete (vv. 4-27) with priorities and limitations (vv. 28-30), he then directs them to pursue the use of gifts according to the "better" way of Love (v. 31). Since, there is no inspired written revelation to deal directly with spiritual gifts or church policy, and since his super apostles opponents challenged his authority as an apostle, Paul wisely argues for the supremacy of love in

order to use it as a guiding principle to condemn and correct their abuse of spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:31-14:1). By this very process he provides them with inspired revelation (1 Cor. 14:3-38) thus establishing his apostolic preeminence over the gentile congregations. Also, this is another “in part” provision toward completion of “in part” prophetic gifts designed to furnish the finished written revelation as predicted by Isaiah (Isa. 8:16-20) and Christ (Jn. 14-17). His object is to prove that love is superior to spiritual gifts, and as such, should be recognized as final authority to determine the proper use of spiritual gifts until “that” which is perfect is come – the completed Biblical canon – which will provide written revelation as final authority for all New Testament faith and practice.

In chapter 13 Paul introduces hyperboles or purely hypothetical exaggerations “though” achieved would be “nothing” without love (vv. 1-3). He approaches it this way to show the importance of love. He follows by carefully defining the characteristics of love (vv. 4-7) and then contrasting the non-cessation (eternal) character of love with the cessation or temporal character of three selective gifts (v. 8). He then deals with the process that will complete such gifts and thus cause them to cease (vv. 9-11). Finally he contrasts “now” versus “then” between the current incomplete process and their completion. He concludes with the superiority of love in contrast to its own inherent parts (vv. 12-13).

The Hypothetic Hyperboles – vv. 1-3

1 ¶ Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

Take note of the repetition of “though” throughout these verses. The “though” represent the Subjunctive mode in the Greek text. Paul is merely speaking hypothetically, rather than considering any kind of realities. This is further evidenced by the obvious hyperboles (expressions of exaggeration). For example, the reality of obtaining “all knowledge” would demand becoming God, as only God is omniscient (all knowledge). Even in the glorified state no creature will ever have “all knowledge.”

Paul’s point is even “though” one could achieve any of these hypothetical exaggerated things, without love it would profit them “nothing.” God has “all knowledge”, but “God is love.”

Paul is not suggesting that they could speak in the tongues “of angels” any more than he is suggesting they *could* have “all faith” or “all knowledge” or “understand all mysteries” or *would* give up all belongings and give their body to be burned.

Pentecostals jerk this one item out of context “tongues of men and angels” and claim it to be a reality in direct contradiction to the other things listed. They presume that “tongues” is generic and includes different kinds – human versus angelic, when in fact, it only includes different HUMAN kinds of languages as Luke makes perfectly clear in Acts 2:4-11. They also make this argument based upon 1 Corinthians 14:2 that tongues of the angelic kind are spoken to God. However, this text and its context demonstrates that Paul is speaking of different human languages spoken in the assembly without interpretation (vv. 2-5) which is forbidden by Paul (vv. 12-13) because in the assembly it is worthless to men, just as worthless as expressing meaningless air (v. 9). Only God understands what is being said without interpretation, but “no man” including the speaker understands what is being said (vv. 6-12).

The Characteristics of Love – vv. 4-7

- 4 ¶ *Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,***
5 *Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;*
6 *Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;*
7 *Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*

The characteristics of love condemn every aspect of the worship at Corinth. They were all about self, carnal (ch. 3:1-3) and judgmental (ch. 4). They were highly divided (chs. 1-4) immoral (chs. 5-7), proud and arrogant (ch. 8) and involved in pagan worship services (chs. 8, 10), disobedient, disorderly, self seeking, fussing and fighting (ch. 11). They were ignorant of spiritual things (chs. 12-14) and had among them serious false doctrine (ch. 15).

In verses 4-6a Paul describes love negatively in relationship to others and self. In verse 6b-8a Paul describes love positively in its relationship to others and self.

In verse 7 love is inclusive of both faith and hope, (“believeth all things...hopeth all things”) and therefore superior to both (v. 13) because it is comprehensive of both.

It is these attributes of love that Paul applies in a practical “way” in prescribing the proper manner and priorities for the use of gifts in the assembly in chapter 14. For example, the emphasis is to be on gifts that edify others (vv. 1, 5, 12,24) as love “seeketh not its own”. For example, love “is kind” and therefore respect for others is manifested in speaking one at a time decently and in order instead of speaking over each other and producing confusion (vv. 26-33).

In verse 6, true Biblical love is holy, because it is based in truth and responds negatively toward “iniquity.” In 1 Cor. 5:1-3 they were rejoicing in iniquity of others. Truth was not the guiding principle for determining the value of all their actions and worship practices. The counterfeit revival in America is characterized by love in every aspect except this aspect. It is not truth based love, but a warm fuzzy, man centered love.

Complete Versus Incomplete – v. 8

- 8 ¶ *Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.***

In verse 8, Paul introduces the complete and permanent character of love in contrast to the incomplete and temporal character of a selective group of spiritual gifts. Charity “never faileth” (Gr. *ekipto* – fall, fail, failure) and the idea is that nothing must occur to replace, supersede or complete it. It is complete in and of itself and thus permanent in its character. “But” this is not true in regard to certain gifts (tongue, knowledge, and prophecy).

The reader should ask, why does Paul select these particular gifts to contrast with love? These are revelatory gifts especially related to the prophetic office and the process of providing verbal and written revelation from God. Tongues is explicitly identified as a “sign” or confirming gift (1 Cor. 14:22) whereas, “knowledge” is not speaking of knowledge in general or knowledge gained by study or experience, but direct knowledge, such as received through dreams and visions necessary for the prophetic office in providing inspired oral or written revelation. Paul is referring to those necessary gifts used in the process of completing inspired revelation directly from God. It is a process because it culminates or is perfected when it is finalized as written/completed revelation. All prophetic utterances were confirmed by miracles, signs and wonders (Acts 2:22; Heb. 4:3-4). The completion of the Biblical

canon (consisting of the Old and New Testament Scriptures) is the goal of the prophetic office with its confirming signs and wonders according to Isaiah:

Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. And I will wait upon the LORD, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.

Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion. – Isa. 8:16-18

This passage is quoted by the writer of Hebrews (Heb. 2:12) and applied directly to Christ and the Apostles (Heb. 2:3-4). Biblical miracles, signs and wonders had a divine goal, which was to confirm the words of a prophet to be from God (Acts 2:22; Heb. 2:3-4). Christ and the apostles understood they were called to complete the Biblical canon of scripture, as a permanent finished revelation. Jesus told the apostles that the Holy Spirit would lead them into “all truth” (Jn. 16:13) and that through their words all future generations of believers would come to know Christ in salvation (Jn. 17:17-22). Peter acknowledges that all the epistles of Paul are equal to “other scriptures (2 Pet. 3:15-17). Paul recognized what he wrote was inspired by God and scripture (1 Cor. 14:37; 1 Thes. 2:13). The apostle John realized that he was actually writing the last book of the Bible, completing the “testimony” Isaiah referred to (Isa. 8:16; Rev. 1:3) that was necessary to be the seal (Rev. 22:18-19) that completed the Biblical canon, whereas the only future next revelation will be the coming of Christ from heaven (Isa. 8:16-17 with Rev. 22:18-20). Hence, the prophetic office would cease with the completion of Scriptures.

In each congregation, the leadership was provided with such revelatory gifts (Acts 8:17-19; 13:1-3; 14:21; 2 Tim. 1:6) through the laying on of apostolic hands. Indeed, this was Apostolic practice with every congregation formed (Acts 6:6; 8:17-19; 14:22; Rom. 1:11). All other members were dependent upon receiving inspired revelation from God through such gifted members. No one had a completed New Testament that revealed God’s will concerning New Testament church practice or policy. Until the Biblical canon was completed it was piece meal and incomplete or “in part.”

That Which Completes the Incomplete – vv. 9-11

9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

In verse 9 Paul defines what is presently incomplete. He is not referring to general knowledge or general prophesy. He is referring to those revelatory gifts which are used by the prophetic office in the process of producing written revelation, which is the final product of revelatory gifts.

Paul uses the passive voice in verse 8 for knowledge and prophecy indicating that something must stop them. However, tongues are referred to in the middle voice - stop of themselves, thus not needing anything to stop it. Thus it is dropped from consideration in verse 9-12.

Furthermore, verses 10-12 provide three axioms (self-evident truths) in the form of principles that provide a progression in thought, but basically say the same thing.

- Verse 10 - what is in part remains in part until that which completes it arrives.
- Verse 11 - what is immature remains immature until that which matures it arrives.

- Verse 12 - obscure indirect revelation remains obscure until it is replaced by direct clear revelation.

However, “now” in lieu of no clear direct written revelation concerning the proper use of spiritual gifts in the assembly, love provides a mature principle to guide them in this matter. Love is complete and is greater than faith or hope because it is inclusive of both (“believeth all things” “hopeth all things”). Hence, love provides a mature principle to define the proper use of spiritual gifts “now” (14:1) until “in part” revelatory gifts are done away by a more direct completed revelation – the finished word of God.

Therefore, “that” in verse 10 does not refer to the coming of Christ or the new creation as some believe. The term “that” translates a neuter gender Greek term. Hence, it cannot refer to Christ. It refers to what completes revelatory and sign gifts or what they were designed to provide – the finished written revelation.

Now versus Then – vv. 12-13

12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

Notice the contrast throughout verses 12-13 between “now” versus “then.” Now defines the period of incompleteness (the apostolic age) whereas “then” defines the precise time when that which is presently incomplete is completed (end of apostolic age).

Also notice the progressive transition from one axiom to the next. In verse 10 Paul simply states a generic truth – incomplete things are only completed by “that” which completes them. In verse 11 Paul says the same thing but in terms of maturity with emphasis on speech. Tongues and prophecy were immature forms of revelatory speech. Tongues are a temporary “sign” gift, whereas “prophecy” is an immature revelatory gift. However, such immature means were to be replaced by the mature finished written revelation. Hence, the “generic” illustration is advanced to a more specific illustration (maturity).

In verse 12 the transition finds completion in the very metaphor commonly used for inspired written revelation or “the glass.” The ancient brass mirror was a means for self-revelation. This same metaphor was used to describe scriptures as a means of self-revelation (James 1). The present scriptures were Old Testament in nature and although suitable for self-revelation in regard to personal character, they were not suitable for “self-revelation” in the area of New Testament policy and practice. You could not look into the Old Testament with clarity and see where you were in error in regard to the church institution and your responsibility as a church member. Thus, Old Testament scriptures were “darkly” in regard to New Testament policy and doctrine. Moreover, the present “in part” revelatory gifts were not distributed to every child of God but only to special gifted persons among them (Acts 13:1; 14:22; 1 Cor. 12:29-30) and so such revelatory gifts and gifted men were indirect, partial, as all others were dependent upon those special gifted persons for New Testament policy and doctrine – thus “darkly.” However, when that which is the complete (v. 10) and mature (v. 11) means of revelation (v. 12) (completed Biblical canon – Isa. 8:16) has arrived then the man of God would be “thoroughly furnished unto all good works” so that he may be “perfect” (complete/mature) in all things (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

However, that time has not arrived. Right “now” no complete inspired written revelation was available to guide them in the proper use of spiritual gifts. However, the characteristics of love were indisputable abiding principles that Paul could use right “now” in connection with his own prophetic gifts to provide part of the coming finished New Testament scriptures (1 Cor. 14:36-38). Hence, Paul employs the way of charity (1 Cor. 12:31) as the defining mature rule in determining the proper use of gifts in the assembly and the proper manner of their conduct in the assembly (14:1).

Some interpret this passage to refer to either the coming of Christ or the future new world. However, in verse 10 the word “that” represents a “neuter” and so the person of Christ cannot be in view. Secondly, charity has already been defined to be inclusive of both faith and hope (v. 7) in its abiding never failing character (v. 8a), and it is charity, as thus defined in verses 5-7 that “abideth” (v. 13) now. The superiority of charity to faith and hope makes it suitable as the basis for establishing written revelation through the prophetic gifts (knowledge, prophesy) being exercised by Paul in writing this very epistle.

What should be obvious, is that Paul’s dependence upon the abiding character of love to define principles for the proper use of spiritual gifts in the assembly would not be necessary if there already existed written revelation that addressed that issue. The Old Covenant house of God had a body of completed scripture to guide it. The New Covenant house of God had no such scripture, but it is the clear prophetic prediction of Old Testament Scripture that such a completed body of scripture would be provided (Isa. 8:16-20). It is the clear prophetic prediction by Christ that such would be provided, but that had not yet arrived “now” when Paul wrote the Corinthians. However, when “that” which completes what is “now” incomplete, “then” the immature prophetic gifts will have been made mature in their objective goal, “then” the present incomplete revelatory gifts (“glass darkly”) will be completed in a more direct personal revelation (“face to face”) – the New Testament Scriptures.

Expository Remarks on 1 Corinthians 14

Intro: The Way of Love

The Pentecostal Gift of Tongues - Acts

I. The Immature Use of Tongues – vv. 1-19

A. Why Tongues without interpretation should not be used in the Assembly– vv. 1-12

1. Three Reasons why Prophecy is superior to tongues without interpretation in the assembly. – vv. 1b-5
2. Four Reasons why Tongues without interpretation is Unprofitable for anyone – vv. 6-12

B. The Apostolic Prohibition and Position against the use of tongues without interpretation– vv. 13-19

II. The Mature Use of Tongues– vv 20-33

- A. The Biblical Design for tongues – vv. 20-23
- B. The Apostolic Order to avoid Confusion – vv. 24-33
- C. The Apostolic Prohibition of Women speaking publicly in the assembly – vv. 34-35

III. The Apostolic Conclusion - vv. 36-38

The Way of Love – 1 Cor. 14 – Principles for Faith

With no prior written revelation to instruct or guide them in regard to orderly and decent worship, Paul points them to the way of love for guiding principles to provide a basis of faith for what is to be expected (hope) in the assembly. In doing so, he claims inspired revelation concerning this very epistle he is penning (1 Cor. 14:37) and also as “part” of the process that ultimately will provide “that” which is complete – the finished Biblical canon predicted by Isaiah, Christ and the apostles.

The primary principles of love that are used in this passage are “love seeketh not its own” and “love...is kind.” With these principles in view he formulates the doctrine that spiritual gifts must be used with edification of the whole church in view rather than self-edification at the expense of the whole church. He formulates the doctrine that all things must be done decently and in order as it is simply not “kind” to speak over others, compete for the floor, but an orderly process where all are given opportunity to express themselves without confusion or disregard for others.

Paul’s argument begins with the command to desire spiritual gifts, but in the way of love (v. 1). He then provides three reasons why prophesy is superior to tongues when used in the assembly without interpretation (vv. 1b-5). He follows this by listing four essentials that are necessary to make tongues profitable for use in the assembly (vv. 6-11). Paul commands that they excel in doing all things for edification of the church (v. 12). He then personally addresses the tongue speaker and commands him not to speak unless it is with interpretation (v. 13). He provides His own personal apostolic opposition to speaking in the church by any manner without understanding what is said by both the speaker and those listening (vv. 14-17). He then turns to his own use of tongues (vv. 18-19) in keeping with the mature use of tongues according to the Scriptures (vv. 20-23), and why tongues are not best suited for use in the congregation without interpretation (vv. 23-24). In verses 25-35 he provides the restrictions for use of gifts in the assembly, but especial more severe restrictions for tongues, the prophetic office and women. He does not prohibit the use of tongues in the assembly but neither does he promote it. His restrictions would remove the use of tongues from the Corinthian assembly altogether, as those restrictions prohibited all the reasons they exercised that gift in the assembly. No other assemblies are corrected or even addressed in regard to the proper use of tongues in the New Testament. This was the only assembly that scripture indicates that used tongues in the assembly.

However, before we enter into chapter fourteen, we need to examine the Pentecostal gift of tongues and how it is used and understood in the book of Acts. We need to do this because Pentecostalism attempts to take the three corrective chapters in the book of Corinthians and completely reinterpret the book of Acts. We believe that it is the book of Acts that provides the true character of Biblical tongues and that Paul is merely reaffirming what the book of Acts lays down in clear and explicit language.

Introduction to the Pentecostal Gift of Tongues

The only other mention of the Biblical gift of tongues in the New Testament outside of 1 Corinthians 14 is found in the book of Acts (Acts 2, 10, 19), and in each case it is found outside the assembly. Only in Corinth is it found being used in the assembly, and there without interpretation.

The very first mention of Biblical tongues is found in Acts 2:4-11:

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

5 ¶ And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?

8 **And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?**

9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,

10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,

11 Cretes and Arabians, **we do hear them speak in our tongues** the wonderful works of God.

Luke says they “*began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance*” (v. 4). Where the Spirit gave them utterance seems to be in the public aspect of the Temple where they could be heard by unbelieving “Jews, devout men, out of every nation” (v. 5).

In this first instance, the writer Luke provides a clear, explicit and repeated definition of the Pentecostal gift of tongues. Indeed, he defines it four times (vv. 4, 6, 8, 11), so that there can be no misunderstanding. Thus in the mouth of two or three witnesses it is established.

1. Verse 4 “**other tongues**” (Gr. *heteros glossais*)

2. Verse 6 “every man heard them speak in his **own language**” (Gr. *idia dialekto*)

3. Verse 8 “And how hear we every man in our **own tongue**, wherein we were born” (Gr. *idia dialekto*)

4. Verse 11 “we do hear them speak in our **tongues**” (Gr. *glossais*).

In verse 4 Luke uses the term *heteros* which means *different in kind* and it is used in contrast to the Galilean dialect (v. 7). In Galatians 1:6-7 Paul uses *heteros* (**different in kind**) in contrast to *allos* (**same in kind**). The false gospel was *heteros* or **different in kind** to what Paul preached, and therefore was not the **same in kind**, as he preached. The languages being spoken in Acts 2 were **different in kind** from the Galilean tongue (v. 7). Therefore, “diversities of administration” refers only to different kinds of human dialects in the book of Acts.

He also uses the term *glossais* translated “tongues.” In 1611 King James English, the word “*tongues*” was the common term for human dialects or languages. For example, on the title page of the King James Bible, the translators say: “*Newly translated out of the original tongues.*” Thus it is used for diverse (*heteros*) human “languages.” Such diverse languages are listed by Luke in verses 9-11.

8 **And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?**

9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,

10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,

11 Cretes and Arabians, **we do hear them speak in our tongues** the wonderful works of God.

Notice that Luke after stating “*wherein we were born*” immediately lists those places they were born (verse 9-11) and after listing those places, he closes that listing by saying again “*we do hear them in our tongues.*” Hence, there can be no misunderstanding that the nature of the Pentecostal gift was speaking in diverse foreign human kind of dialects.

In verses 6 and 8 Luke uses the Greek term *dialekto* from which we get the English term “dialect” and in both cases uses it with the word “own” (Gr. *idia* = ones own) thus our own native tongue/language.

After listing all the places where they were born in verses 9-11 he closes by returning again to his original use of “*glossais*” in verse 11 “in **our tongues.**”

Luke bends over backwards to make every reasonable effort to make sure his readers understand clearly that the gift of Pentecostal tongues was the ability to speak *diverse human kinds* of dialects.

Hence, the diverse administration of tongues in the book of Acts has to do only with diverse **human kinds** of dialects (1 Cor. 12:4-6).

After carefully, clearly and repeatedly defining what the Pentecostal gift of tongues is four different times, this gift is never redefined ever again by Luke. In the final two times it is found in Acts. Indeed, the final two times are but mere passing references assuming his readers understand it is nothing more than what he has already carefully defined at the beginning. If not, he would have had to carefully redefine it, so they would understand it is something different.

Ac 10:46 *For they heard them speak with tongues*, [Gr. *glossa*] *and magnify God. Then answered Peter,*
Ac 19:6 *And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues*, [Gr. *glossa*] *and prophesied.*

In both of these cases, it was either Jews hearing the tongues, as in the Pentecostal case (Acts 10:46), or speaking in tongues as in the Pentecostal case (Acts 19:6). In all three cases (Acts 2, 10, 19) the gift of tongues were spoken outside of the assembly in the presence of Jews only, and in known human kind of dialects.

Therefore, the book of Acts covers the early history of New Testament congregations from the resurrection of Christ to the imprisonment of Paul or a period somewhere between 30-62 A.D. (depending on when the birth of Christ is dated - 6 B.C. to 1 A.D. and thus when his resurrection is dated 27-33 A.D.) The book of Acts provide absolutely no example of any other Pentecostal gift of tongues, other than, the human kind, all of which are either spoken, or heard by Jews, and all outside the assemblies of the saints.

No other congregation in the New Testament, except at Corinth are described as speaking with tongues in the assembly, and by gentiles without interpretation. However, Paul is not writing to the Corinthians to condone their use of tongues, but to condemn and correct their “ignorant” use of it (1 Cor. 12:1).

The whole modern Pentecostal movement, and their interpretation of tongues, as heavenly languages, or a special prayer language, is based solely upon three chapters designed to condemn and correct the “ignorant” usage by the Corinthians (1 Cor. 12:1). However, a careful study of the very passages used to support these ideas collapses this theory upon investigation.

I. The Immature use of Tongues – vv. 1-12

A. *Why Tongues without interpretation are unsuitable in the assembly – vv. 1-19*

1 ¶ Follow after charity, This is a mild rebuke, as well as a command (“follow” - imperative mode). Hence, this is not an option, but an apostolic command. The Greek term translated “follow” has the idea of *hot pursuit*, or *to pursue eagerly and intensely*. The intensity of pursuit behind this term is such, that it is sometimes translated “persecute” or “prosecute.” Hence, it means to really go after someone or something with intensity. Instead they had been in hot pursuit after the more showy revelatory and sign gifts. They had been pursuing self-edification at the expense of the edification of others. In this chapter Paul applies the characteristics of the way of love as described in 13:1-7 to properly show them how spiritual gifts are to be used in the assembly. The assembly is the sphere of this activity under consideration (14:4-5, 12, 19, 23, 28, 33, 35). Indeed, worship in the assembly has been the subject since chapter 11 (11:2, 16-20, 22, 33-34; 12:27).

and desire spiritual gifts, Paul was correcting their abuse of spiritual gifts, but did not want them to think he was opposed to their “desire” for spiritual gifts. He simply wanted them to desire spiritual gifts in

keeping with their proper use, priority and design, as defined by the principle of love. He is not encouraging them to seek “all” spiritual gifts, as God does not distribute “all” spiritual gifts to any one person (1 Cor. 12:29-30).

1. Three Reasons why Prophecy is superior to tongues without interpretation in the church. – vv. 1b-5

But rather that ye may prophesy. With this statement, Paul introduces the first reason why prophecy is superior to tongues when it is used without interpretation in the assembly. In the previous phrase, he simply approved of desiring spiritual “gifts” in general. However, Paul classifies “prophecy” separately from “spiritual gifts.” He is not referring to the prophetic “gift” or that which characterizes the prophetic office whereby prophetic revelation or prediction of future events are manifested. That gift is not distributed to all (1 Cor. 12:29-30; 29-32).

“Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?” – 1 Cor. 12:30

In the Greek text 1 Cor. 12:30 the actual Greek word for “no” is supplied (Gr. *me*). Therefore, Paul is not referring to the prophetic “gift” when he says “ye may prophesy” but rather to the general sense of using the already confirmed word of God provided by prophets for “edification, exhortation and comfort.” This is not a “spiritual gift” but a privilege that all saved people can do without any spiritual gift. Hence, “all” are encouraged to desire and seek to “prophesy” in this sense, in an orderly manner (vv. 1, 4, 24) and can do so in an orderly manner (v. 25).

However, the office of prophet and the prophetic gift is limited in its use in the church to only “three” at the most, and with other additional restrictions (see commentary on vv. 29-32).

The office of prophet provided for new revelation and then confirmed (confirmed by two other prophets – v. 29) it as the inspired revealed will of God. This confirmed prophetic word was then supplied to the churches in verbal or written form (e.g., vv. 36-38). As such, it provided each child of God with the authorized basis for prophesy in general for “edification, and exhortation and comfort” (v. 3). Hence, “prophesy” simply means to “speak forth.” Peter tells them what they are to “speak forth” when he says, *If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.* - 1Pe 4:11

Later Paul says, *“How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine...”*(v. 26) showing that the already confirmed word of prophets was the basis for speaking forth or general prophesying. This is precisely what the written word was to be used for according to Paul: *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:* - 2 Tim. 3:16

When they all spoke forth the word of God then the lost would be exposed and convicted of their sins – *But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.* – vv 24-25

This is precisely what the written inspired word of God is designed for that the man of God may be “perfect” (mature, complete)

2 For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue Paul now introduces his first argument by contrast why prophesying is better than speaking in tongues in the church. This contrast concludes in verse 5 with Paul claiming that prophesying is “greater” than tongues in the assembly “except he interpret.” Hence, this proves that in verses 2-5 he is considering tongues (1) within the assembly, and (2) without interpretation. This explicit context explains why the King James translators inserted the term “unknown” (in italics) when it is absent from the Greek text. When tongues are used in the assembly without any interpretation

“unto men” then what is said would be “unknown”, and thus what is said would be “mysteries.” However, the immediate context determines if it is known (Acts 2:6-11) or unknown (1 Cor. 14:6-11). In the context of Acts 2:6-11 it is understood by all men hearing the tongues. But in this context, it is “unknown” as the context is about the use of tongues without interpretation in the assembly. Indeed, the use of tongues without interpretation is the continued context in verses 5-19, as Paul explicitly states that prophesying is greater than tongues in the assembly “except he interpret” – v. 5. Paul explicitly commands the tongue speaker to first “pray that he may interpret” – v. 13. Paul explicitly states that he would rather speak five words that can be understood than speaking ten thousand words that cannot be understood in tongues (v. 19). Hence, the entire context is about tongues being used in the assembly without interpretation and thus “unknown” unto all in the assembly.

Speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; Here is the first reason why prophesying is greater in the assembly without an interpreter. Again, the whole issue is about tongues without interpretation (vv. 12, 13, 16-17, 19, 27) throughout this whole context. The words “to God” are the same as “speak into the air” (v.9) in regard to all men listening. Without an interpreter “no man” within the assembly could understand what was said, including the speaker (vv. 14-15). The difference between “to God” (Gr. *theo*, dative case singular) and “unto men” (Gr. *anthropois*, dative case singular) is defining who understands what is said. Tongues without interpretation “no man” (including the speaker) understands because what is said is incomprehensible to men or “mysteries” so that none but God understands. Therefore, it is “to” God because God alone understands. It is not “unto” men because men do not understand. Speaking “to God” is expressed as speaking “into the air” (v. 9) for the very same reason – no understanding by men (vv. 6-11).

3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. – This is what prophesying accomplishes “unto men.” “Unto men”, prophesy provides “edification” (to build up), “exhortation” (encouragement) and “comfort” (counsel, help). Speaking in tongues, “except he interprets” (v. 5b) does not provide any of these things “unto men” (including the speaker) as “no man” understand what is said.

So tongues without interpretation, benefits “no man” in the church, including the speaker, as only God understands what is said (as argued in verses 6-11), but prophesy benefits all the church (as argued in verses 2-5, 12).

Notice that Paul does not say “prophesieth” provides new inspired revelation from God, or revelation of future events. He is speaking of “prophesy” according to its general meaning “to speak forth” which is something all the members can do without any spiritual gifts by simply knowing and using the scriptures (“a psalm, a doctrine...” – v. 26).

This is exactly what *speaking forth* the revealed will of God provides (2 Tim. 3:16) so that the man of God may be “perfect” (complete/mature). Therefore, Paul encourages “all” to seek prophesying (vv. 1, 5, 24).

4 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself - We now come to the second reason why prophesy is better than tongues. It is better because the church is edified, but speaking in tongues without interpretation (v. 5b) edifies self. However, it is “in the church” which is under consideration (vv. 4b, 5, 12, 19, 23, 26, 28, 33, 34). Speaking in tongues without interpretation is in view (v. 5b). He says that speaking in tongues “edifieth himself.” However, this is intended to be a rebuke not a compliment, as Paul is making a direct contrast here between “edifieth himself” versus “edifieth the church.” The tongue speaker is edifying self at the expense of edifying the church which violates the way of love, which is sin. The way of love “*seeketh not its own*” but seeks first, the edification of others. The acrostic JOY (Jesus, others, you) is the way of love. This is a rebuke, or improper use of the gift of tongues, as he explicitly commands them “*seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church*” (v. 12).

No spiritual gift is strictly provided for self, as Paul has already demonstrated that such gifts are placed in, and designed for the mutual edification of the whole body (1 Cor. 12:18-26). Self-edification properly occurs whenever that gift is being ministered to others, as “love seeketh not its own” but others first. Hence, the words “edifieth himself” is a rebuke, as it is found in contrast to what love demands to be the proper priority for edification. In verse 5, the implication is that the church at Corinth had been instructed that those speaking in tongues without interpretation, speaking “mysteries” were to be regarded “greater” than those exercising other gifts. However, this idea was due to being “ignorant” (1 Cor. 12:1) of the proper use of spiritual gifts in the assembly according to the way of love (1 Cor. 12:31-14:1).

But he that prophesieth edifieth the church. Again, the context for this explanation of tongues is in “the church” without an interpreter. Without an interpreter it does not edify the church or the person speaking. In direct contrast “prophesieth edifieth the church.” Why? Because of the content that characterizes the nature of prophesying – “*edification...exhortation...comfort.*”

5 I would that ye all spake with tongues, - We now come to the third reason that prophesying is better than tongues. However first, Paul wants them to know that he has no personal horse in this race. In other words, he has personal bias against anyone obtaining this gift.

However, these words infer that not all had this gift or else he would not have to say this. Second, these words should not be interpreted to contradict the limitations he has already placed on the distribution of this gift (1 Cor. 12:29-30) nor any of the further restrictions he will place on the number who can use this gift in the assembly or how it is to be restricted (vv. 26-34).

but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, - Obviously, the tongue speakers at Corinth either had been taught by the false apostles (2 Cor. 12) and/or were teaching that speaking in tongues without interpretation was the “*greater*” gift, thus drawing attraction to themselves, building up themselves in the eyes of men and taking preeminence among the brethren. However, this was contrary to the way of love “*charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up*” and it was contrary to “*charity seeketh not its own.*” This was part of the ignorance that Paul was condemning and correcting (1 Cor. 12:1).

Except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying. Prophesying is “*greater*” than those who speak in tongues *unless* speaking in tongues comes with interpretation. Interpretation provides understanding. This is essential to understand Paul’s meaning of *edification* in the context of tongues. Without interpretation (understanding) there is no edification to the church. With interpretation (understanding) the church is edified. Hence, understanding with the mind is the key to the Pauline meaning of edification in this context. Tongues provide no edifying profit unless they convey at least one of four essentials (see verses 6-12). This is equally true of the individual tongue speaker as Paul makes clear in verses 13-19.

2. Four Reasons why Tongues without interpretation is unprofitable for everyone – vv. 6-12

There is really no “self-edification” purpose for tongues without interpretation, without the mind grasping what is said, as without interpretation what is said remains a mystery to the speaker as much as to all listeners (v. 14). Paul is going to provide for essentials for tongues to be profitable to people, all people, regardless if they are the speaker or hearers.

(a) The Right Content for Profit – v. 6

6 ¶ Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine? Paul has finished

his argument for why prophesying is superior to speaking with tongues without interpretation in the assembly. Now, he proceeds to argue why tongues without understanding provides no profit for anyone. Indeed, he argues that for tongues to provide edification for anyone (including the speaker) they must have understandable content. Paul identifies four categories of understandable content that must accompany the use of tongues for it to be profitable or edifying for anyone.

Those four essentials to make tongues profitable (edifying) are – “revelation...knowledge...prophesying, or by doctrine.” If it has “revelation” (Gr. *apokolupsis* – to uncover) for its content, then by definition, it is not conveying unintelligible “mysteries” or covering up anything, but unveiling or revealing truth to the mind. If it has “knowledge” (Gr. *gnosis* – understanding, insight) as its content, then proper understanding of a truth or revelation is being conveyed to the mind. If it has “prophesying” as its content, then it is conveying things that edify, exhort, and comfort to the mind (v. 3). If it has “doctrine” as its content, then it is conveying instruction to the mind.

If tongues do not have such content, it is without “profit” or edification for anyone (including the speaker) as no one understands what is said but God. Hence, in verses 6-11 he argues that without such profitable content it is worthless, and it should not be exercised at all (“but keep silence” – v. 28) unless the speaker “pray that he may interpret” (v. 13).

(b) The Right Sounds for Profit – vv. 7-9

7 *And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?* In verse 6 Paul defines what makes tongues valuable. Now, in verses 7 he makes another assertion in regard to the value of tongues. Tongues are not from things “without life” but are from “life giving sound.” However, Paul argues that even things “without life giving sound” are without profit if the sound is either unintelligible or without a knowable purpose or design as described in verse 6. Thus making this assertion in verse 7, he continues in verses 8-11 to illustrate and prove this assertion.

8 *For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?* In the army the trumpet provides many purposes (1) calling men up from sleep; (2) calling them to prepare for battle; (3) calling them to charge; (4) calling them to retreat; (4) calling to bed; etc. If the sound is not understood, it conveys no purpose, then it does not meet the criterion for edification, and is thus without “profit.”

9 *So likewise ye,* demands all that has been previously said is being directly applied to the Corinthian tongue speakers.

Except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? Now, he turns from things “without life giving sounds” to things with life giving sounds or human utterances. He makes another general assertion. The use of the tongue must “utter” or speak words that are not merely understandable but “easy to be understood” or else it cannot “edify” and serves no profitable purpose, but is simply excluding air from the mouth (Gr. *aer* – to blow air).

For ye shall speak into the air. To “speak into the air” is one and the same to speak “mysteries” or speaking “to God” because what is said are “mysteries” not “easy to be understood” and are thus worthless “unto men.”

(c) The Right Realm for Profit – vv. 10-11

10 *There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification.* He is not referring to languages spoken outside of this world or from another world, but “in

the world.” Biblical tongues are spoken “*in the world.*” Acts 2:6-11 makes it clear in three different explicit statements that the Biblical or Pentecostal gift of tongues was not only known languages “in the world” but even lists where “in the world” they originated (Acts 2:11-15). If the Biblical gift of tongues was a “heavenly language” he would have not limited his illustration to only voices “in the world” as that would mischaracterize the Biblical gift of tongues, if it included a “heavenly language” spoken to, and understood only by God alone, as many interpret verse 2. Some attempt to interpret 1 Corinthians 13:1 and the words “tongues of angels” to be included in the diversities of administration of tongues. However, Paul is listing hyperbolic impossibilities. It is no more possible to speak in the tongues of angels, as it is to understand “all mysteries” or to have “all knowledge” or have “all faith.” His argument is that “though” one could achieve the IMPOSSIBLE it would be worthless without love, not that any of these hyperbolic statements were actual goals to strive for and/or achievable. To have “all knowledge” or “all wisdom” or “all faith” is to be equal with God. That is not possible here on earth or eternity in heaven. To give up all that you have and give your body to be burned without love would accomplish “nothing” even if you did achieve that. Diversity of administrations refers to diverse kinds of human languages as clearly demonstrated by Luke in defining the nature of Pentecostal tongues.

11 Therefore - Paul is drawing his conclusion to apply to the tongue speakers at Corinth. ***If I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me.*** This is exactly what was happening in the Corinthian assembly when there was no interpretation. One must “know” (Gr. *eido* – to perceive, comprehend) the “meaning” (Gr. *dumamis* – power) or the articulating power of the air over the vocal chords that give intelligible sounds for that voice. If not, then that person is a “barbarian” to me and me to him, as these persons cannot intelligibly communicate with each other. This is how the Corinthians were using tongues in the assembly. Such use of Biblical tongues makes it completely worthless without profit, and thus without edification. If it does not profit or edify the hearer due to lack of understanding, it cannot edify or profit the speaker without understanding.

Hence, with this verse Paul concludes his second argument against the use of tongues without interpretation. His first argument against tongues without interpretation was prophesy provided understanding for the assembly and is therefore “greater” than tongues without understanding. The second argument is that tongues are worthless in the congregation if they do not provide such understandable content characterized by “revelation...knowledge...prophesy or by doctrine.” Mere noise without understanding, without design or purpose does not profit/edify anyone.

(d) The Right Conclusion for Profit – v. 12

12 Even so ye, These words again demand direct application to what has been said to the tongue speakers at Corinth.

Forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church. With verses 12-13 we come to the conclusion of both previous arguments against speaking in tongues without interpretation. Verse 12 provides a general application of his previous arguments concerning speaking in tongues in the assembly without interpretation. He appeals to their zeal for “spiritual gifts” in general, and directs them to “seek” that in all uses of “spiritual gifts” in the assembly, especially tongues, that “ye may excel” in making edification of the church their foremost goal.

B. The Apostolic Prohibition to use tongues without Interpretation— vv. 13-19

After commanding that the church makes edification its ultimate goal for the use of “spiritual gifts” in general, he then turns to the individual tongue speaker in verses 13-19 and provides his own apostolic opposition for the use of tongues without understanding by both the speaker and other church members of what is being said. His opposition is set forth as the authorized and commanded pattern for tongue speakers in the assembly.

With verse 13, there occurs a transition between **general** arguments against the unprofitable speaking in tongues without interpretation (vv. 1-12) in the assembly, unto **specific** and individual **direct** apostolic opposition to doing that by tongue speakers in the assembly. Paul opens verse 13 with the word “*wherefore*”, which calls the reader back to consider the preceding arguments in verses 1-12, as the basis for his apostolic command that tongue speakers cannot speak without interpretation (v. 13) and his personal position (vv. 14-15) based upon apostolic reasoning (vv. 16-17) that he set forth as the apostolic pattern to be followed by all tongue speakers in the assembly (vv. 18-19).

The direct address to the individual tongue speaker is noted by the second and third person pronouns (“*him...he...thou...he...thou*” - vv. 13, 16, 17). However, each time the individual tongue speaker is directly addressed, Paul provides his own personal example as the authorized pattern for them to follow which is noted by the use of the first person pronoun (*I...I ...I...I ...I ...my...my...F*). (vv. 14-15, 18-19).

Notice the alternating pattern: “*him....he*” (v. 13) “*I...I...F*” (vv. 14-15), which is then immediately followed by making it applicable to each individual tongue speaker “*thou...he. Thou*” (vv. 16-17), closing with his own personal example “*I.I...my...my...F*” (vv. 18-19). Thus he directly addresses the tongue speaker by apostolic commands and provides personal apostolic examples as their pattern to follow. Verses 18-19 provide the conclusion to this personal direct address to the individual tongue speaker. Paul’s aim is to make sure the individual tongue speaker realizes that his apostolic command and example is to be followed as the pattern for the use of tongues.

1. The Apostolic Command and Position - vv. 13-14

In the previous verse (v. 12) Paul concludes his reasons why tongues must be accompanied by interpretation or else it provides no “profit” which Paul defines as “edification” for the church. He directs the church to “excel” to the edifying of the church as that is his definition of “profit” (see verses 6-11). Now, in verse 13 he turns and directly addresses the individual tongue speaker, by the word “wherefore” making it clear that all the previous reasons given in verses 1-12 apply to them as individuals and support his command in verse 13 that they must seek first interpretation in order to speak in tongue within the assembly.

It is important at this point to remind our readers that this whole section (vv. 13-19) has to do with the exercise of gifts in the assembly. This is especially true of verses 16-17, as the context is in the public hearing of others (“*how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen*” – v. 16 and “*the other is not edified*” – v. 17). Therefore, the Pentecostal idea that these verses are referring to personal private prayer and/or a private prayer tongue are absolutely repudiated by this text. Furthermore, the continued use of the personal pronoun by Paul “*I...my*” shows that he is not finished with this section until verse 19 where there is no question he is still referring to speaking in tongues in the assembly rather than any kind of private tongue.

13 Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret. This is not stated as an option, but as an apostolic command (imperative mode). This command is based upon, and is the conclusion drawn from, the previous arguments provided in verses 1-12. However, verses 14-19 provide more reasons for obeying this command.

In addition, this command makes the individual tongue speaker responsible for making sure he does not speak in the church without interpretation. This is made clear in verse 28 where the tongue speaker is

commanded to be silent if he has no interpretation. This demonstrates clearly that an interpretation must be first obtained by the speaker, prior to speaking – a miracle in itself.

Indeed, verse 28 commands that the interpretation must be provided by one of the three who are going to speak in tongues, rather than some other member of the congregation. Hence, this infers that the gift of tongues and interpretation of tongues are inseparable gifts.

14 For - indicates he is giving a reason why he commanded the individual to “pray that he may interpret” (v.13).

If I pray in an unknown tongue, Meaning, a tongue without interpretation. When there is no interpretation, there is no positive self-edification, as self-edification requires “understanding” for what was said. God may understand it, but God does not need to be edified.

My spirit prayeth, - The human spirit (“my spirit”) is the means through which the Holy Spirit operates from the spiritual world through man (Jn. 3:6; Rom. 8:16) to the physical world. It is in the human “spirit” we have *other* world consciousness. The soul of man is *self*-consciousness (mind, heart, will) and the body is *outer* world consciousness (five senses).

But my understanding is unfruitful. – Edification must include understanding because there is no edification of the church without interpretation (v. 5). Profitable tongues has been previously defined, as tongues conveying one of four essentials for understanding - “revelation....knowledge....prophecy....or doctrine” (v. 6). Unprofitable tongues have been defined in verses 7-11 as mere unintelligible noise, without purpose other than to expel air (v. 9). In the church, ALL that is done must excel to obtain edification or it is wrong (v. 12). That is precisely why Paul argues that tongue speaking in the church must involve both his spirit and mind in the very next verse (v.15).

2. The First Apostolic Conclusion – vv 15-17

15 ¶ What is it then? He is referring to speaking in tongues without interpretation or understanding. According to his arguments set forth from verses 1-13 it is inferior to prophecy, incapable of edifying and no better than exhaling air into the atmosphere. It is without “profit.” Thus it is “nothing” (see 1 Cor. 13:1-3). **I will is** repeated four times (“I will...I will....I will...I will) and shows his determination that his own verbal expressions in the assembly are comprehensible to himself. This is his determined apostolic position. He is setting forth the apostolic position, as the pattern to follow. He will never verbally express himself in the assembly without understanding. He will therefore, **pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also**: He does not say “or” but he says “and” including both “spirit” and “mind” as both equal necessities for all speaking done in the assembly regardless of what mode of expression is used (prayer, singing, exhortation, teaching, prophesying, etc.). Paul personally refuses to speak just “in the spirit” in the church, because his own mind is “unfruitful” providing no personal profit to himself or to anyone else, but God (v. 2) as, he is merely speaking into the air (v. 9).

I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. Remember, Paul has already identified four different ways tongues could be expressed profitably in verse 6 (revelation, knowledge, prophecy and doctrine). Here he adds *prayer* and *singing* as comprehensible expressions that are compatible “with the understanding.” Every language is commonly used to convey such variations of expression. This is Paul’s determined apostolic position, and the pattern for all tongue speakers to follow in the assembly.

16 Else –indicates Paul is about to provide a supportive argument for what he has just defined as his personal position. It also shows that hearers are present and so that is why the initial command to “pray that he may interpret” is still in view within the assembly.

When thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, Here he introduces for the first time the “unlearned.” In verses 21-22, the “unlearned” are set in contrast to “this people” unto which tongues are given as a “sign.” There are two types of unbelievers in the world. There is the unbeliever that is *learned* in the Old Testament Scriptures (the Jew) who would know Isaiah’s prophecy and would recognize tongues are a sign from the prophecy of Isaiah 28:11. Indeed, the Isaiah prophecy (v. 11) is sandwiched by the words:

For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little: (vv. 10, 13) proving the Jews were learned in the Scriptures although unbelievers. They would recognize tongues as a “sign.”

However, there is also the “*unlearned*” unbeliever or the Gentile who has no previous training or exposure to the Old Testament Scriptures and they would think the Corinthians were simply crazy. When he says that “*occupieth the room of*” the unlearned, he is referring to that state of mind – no Biblical understanding or training. Such a person cannot even agree with or say “amen” (so be it), as he has no idea what you are saying, just as the speaker has no idea of what he is saying, as his mind is without comprehension. In other words, it does not profit the lost Gentile at all who hears this kind of speaking, but would drive them away, because they think you are crazy (v. 23).

Seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? – Here is proof that Paul is not speaking of some kind of special personal or private prayer language, but is still speaking of the assembly where lost people are present and observing. Thus, he is continuing his discussion about tongues used in the assembly without interpretation and why that is wrong. It is wrong for all the reasons already listed in verses 2-12. It is wrong, as it violates the apostolic command in verse 13. It is wrong because it violates the apostolic position in verses 14-15

17 For thou verily givest thanks well, The issue is not the content of tongues, as God would never provide wrong content through your spirit. The issue is being able to understand the content. What is said is being said well, but what is being said is not understood without interpretation.

The problem is that tongues are not designed for God, as God can understand the content of any language regardless of what particular form of expression is intended. The problem is “**but the other is not edified**” that hears the tongues. It does not matter if the tongues are being expressed in prayer, singing, (vv. 14-15) or speaking revelation, knowledge, prophesying or expressing doctrine (v. 6).

The words “he understandeth not” (v. 16) and “the other” (v. 17) proves he is not speaking about a special private prayer tongue or a special private singing tongue, but about tongues without interpretation in the assembly being heard by the rest of the church members.

3. The Second Apostolic Conclusion – vv. 18-19

Even though Paul spoke in tongues more than all of them, (v. 18) he had no interest in using tongues in the assembly (v. 19), but used tongues in keeping with its intended Biblical design and purpose (vv. 20-22). Verses 1-17 simply argue that tongues are not to be used in the assembly without profit to the understanding or else they do not edify anyone at all in the assembly.

18 I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: Paul excelled in speaking in tongues “more than ye all.” It is doubtful that he ever used tongues in the assembly (vv. 19-22). However, in the assembly his use of tongues would not be contrary to the way of love (v. 1). In the assembly his use of tongues would not be without interpretation (v. 5). In the assembly, his use of tongues would not be without understandable content (v. 6). In the assembly his use of tongues would not be incomprehensible or without an understandable purpose (vv. 7-11). In the assembly his use of tongues would excel to the edifying of the assembly (v. 12). Outside of the assembly his use of tongues were understood by those people, in whose presence he used it (vv. 21-22). He used tongues according to the mature Biblical purpose for tongues which was outside the church to the unbelieving Jews, as the other apostles did in Acts 2:6-11 (see vv. 20-23).

19 Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. This is an emphatic way to get his point across that tongues in the church should never be heard without interpretation. Indeed, that was his command (vv. 13, 28). This verse closes his argument from verse 13 in regard to his apostolic command and personal example, that tongues never be personally used without interpretation (vv. 14-17) in the congregation. Paul reasons for personally not using tongues in the church is given in verses 19-23. Use in the congregation is not the Biblical design for the gift of tongues (vv. 20-22). Hence, for Paul, he would rather speak “five words with my understanding” to convey edification to others by his voice than ten thousand words in an unknown (without interpretation) tongue. Paul set forth the standard for the use of tongues in the assembly in verses 1-17. However, where he personally chose to use tongues was not in the assembly (vv. 18-19) but on the mission field to the Jews (vv. 20-22).

IV. The Mature Use of Tongues – vv. 20-33

We find no other congregation needing this instruction. We find no other congregation being rebuked for the abuse of tongues in the assembly. No other congregation is even mentioned that used tongues in the assembly. Tongues were not designed for use in the assembly, but were designed to be used as a “sign” to the Jewish people that their Messiah had come, and rejection of Him would end with the destruction of Jerusalem (Isa. 28:11-17). When Israel rejected their Messiah, and Jerusalem was destroyed (A.D. 70) the Biblical purpose for the gift of tongues ceased and tongues “ceased of itself” (1 Cor. 13:8 middle voice). God never designed tongues for personal edification or for use by believers among believers (v. 22-23). The use of tongues by the Corinthians was for selfish purposes, and self-preeminence. The apostolic restrictions placed upon the use of tongues in the church would cause it to cease being used in this assembly, as the restrictions denied all the purposes for which they had used it for in the assembly.

A. The Biblical Purpose for Tongues:

20 Brethren, be not children in understanding: The Corinthians had been “children” or immature in their *understanding* (Gr. *phren* – faculty of discernment and judging) of the mature Biblical use of tongues. They used tongues for all the wrong reasons in the wrong place. They are the only congregation mentioned in the New Testament where tongues are used in the assembly. No other congregation can be found where tongues are used in the assembly. No other congregation needed instruction in this area. **howbeit in malice be ye children,** In regard to evil (Gr. *kakia* – evil “malice”) Paul wished them to be completely ignorant as “babes” in their experiential understanding of evil. **but in understanding be men.**

Paul uses the imperative mode – the mode of command. This is not an option but an apostolic command – grow up in your understanding of the mature use of tongues!

21 ¶ In the law it is written, How could they mature in their understanding of tongues? By understanding the Biblical purpose for the gift of tongues. It is the scriptures that provide mature understanding (2 Tim. 3:17 – “that the man of God may be perfect [mature]). No New Testament Scriptures had been provided. Paul uses the completed Old Testament canon of scriptures. He refers them to Isaiah 28:11-18, as his quotation is a contraction of that passage.

With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.

The people for whom God designed tongues for as a “**sign**” (v. 22) are “**this people.**” Whoever “**this people**”, are in the Isaiah passage, they are identified by Paul as people who “**will not hear**” or receive this “**sign**” gift from God. Hence, that means they are unbelievers. What is the purpose that God has behind giving this “**sign**” to “**this people**” even though “**they will not hear me**”? Isaiah explicitly identifies precisely who “this people” are, and the purpose of tongues to this people.

Isa. 28: 11 *For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to **this people**.*

12 To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.

13 But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

14 ¶ Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem.

15 Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves:

16 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

“**This people**” are explicitly identified as the unbelieving Jews over which “**scornful men rule**” (v. 14) from “**Jerusalem**” – the Jews.

Tongues are provided as a “**sign**” that Jesus Christ is their promised “**rest**” or Messiah (v. 12) or the “**foundation stone**” upon which “**he that believeth shall not make haste**” (v. 16)

This is also a “**sign**” of coming destruction of Jerusalem if “**they will not hear me, saith the Lord.**” The destruction of Jerusalem is referred to by Isaiah as “**the overflowing scourge**” that “**shall pass through then shall ye be trodden down by it**” (Isa. 28:15). Luke refers to this destruction of Jerusalem by using the exact same language “**trodden down by the Gentiles**” (Lk. 21:20-24).

The gift of tongues was a “**sign**” (v. 22) to the unbelieving nation of Israel that their Messiah had come and refusal to believe in him would result in a devastating destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of Israel into all nations. When the destruction of Israel occurred in A.D. 70 so did the Biblical purpose for the sign gift of tongues as it “**ceased of itself**” (1 Cor. 12:28 middle voice). Tongues ceased before “**knowledge and prophecy**” ceased. Tongues is dropped from the list in 1 Corinthians 13:9-10 where “**that**

which is perfect” stops those things “*in part*” or incomplete. Tongues already had ceased prior to what brings completion to knowledge and prophecy.

22 Wherefore tongues are for a sign clearly denies that the Biblical purpose for tongues is for personal edification, or necessary for spiritual prayer or singing! Paul, personally refused to use tongues in the church, (at least without interpretation)

Not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: because it was never designed for believers, and that is exactly what the church is to be composed of – baptized believers. Tongues are a “**sign**” to unbelieving Jews, just as it was used on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:6-11). Hence, the Scriptural use of tongues is not for the personal use by believers for self-edification, but is designed for unbelieving Jews. This is exactly how it is used throughout the book of Acts.

But prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, Unregenerate unbelievers do not have the ability to understand and receive (1 Cor. 2:14) the content provided by prophesy (1 Cor. 14:3). The carnal mind resists the word of God (Rom. 8:7).

But for them which believe. The general imparting of the word of God is received by born again believers as something which does provide “edification...exhortation and comfort” (v. 3).

B. The Apostolic Order to avoid Confusion – vv. 24-33

1. Two contrasting hypothetical scenarios – vv. 23-24

23 If therefore and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?

The words “**if therefore**” provides a hypothetical (“**if**”) scenario, as an additional support to his opposition for the use of tongues in the congregation without interpretation. It is suppositional, because verse 26 forbids domination by any single gift.

The whole church be come together into one place, - obviously “the whole church” cannot refer to all believers in heaven and earth or the myth of the universal invisible church theory. This same language is used in chapter 11 for observing the Lord’s Supper and refers to the local visible nature of the New Testament congregation.

And all speak with tongues, If the gift of tongues dominated the whole worship service, **and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers,** will they not say that ye are mad?

Then those who are “**unlearned, or unbelievers**” will not respond to this as a “**sign**” for them to believe, but “**will they not say ye are mad.**” In the Isaiah passage it is clear that the Jews would understand it as a “**sign**” because they were not “**unlearned**” in the Scriptures but as Isaiah says,

Isa. 28:13 but the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little

In contrast, unbelievers who were “**unlearned**” in the Old Testament Scriptures would not recognize tongues as a “**sign**” to believe in Jesus Christ, but would think they are crazy. The Corinthians were Greeks who spoke the Greek dialect. Other unbelieving Greeks coming into their assembly would simply be confused and think they are crazy.

24 But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all:

Again, this “*if all*” is a hypothetical scenario rather than actual because verse 26 forbids domination by any one gift. However, it is designed to contrast between the value of tongues and the value of prophesy to non-Jewish (Gentile) unbelievers. Remember, Paul has already defined what edifying value that prophesy conveyed to believers (**v. 3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort**). Speaking forth the confirmed inspired revealed will of God does not provide the lost with “edification, and exhortation, and comfort”, but God does use the speaking forth of God’s Word to reveal and expose sin.

25 And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth. The preaching or speaking forth of God’s word, is used by the Spirit of God to convict, convince and convert the lost to salvation. Many times I have simply preached the word without any knowledge of what people are going through, and they think I had purposely prepared the sermon with them in mind. Or strangers will come in struggling with issues and the Lord will lead me to preach on a subject that they were struggling with which made manifest the “secrets of his heart.” This is the normal way that the Holy Spirit uses His word through His people. Pastors are first to seek the will of God in what they are to preach to the congregation. As such, they act as “messenger” boys between God and men. This is precisely why the Pastors of the churches in Revelation 2-3 are identified as an “angel” (Gr. Messenger) to the church from Christ. His point is that prophesy (speaking forth the Word of God) is understandable and edifying whereas speaking in tongues without an interpreter is not understandable, but chaotic and confusing.

2. The Conclusion of the Hypothetical consideration – v. 26

26 ¶ How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, Again, he is referring to worship in the assembly as the continued place for consideration of gifts from verses 1-25. **Every one of you** does not mean that each person has all these gifts, as he previously denied that such is the case (1 Cor. 12:29-30). Nor does he mean that the scenario’s presented in verses 24-25 were actual as this text prohibits any one gift or person dominating a service. What he means is that each one can participate in the service thus providing all these gifts that is severally/individually divided among them, ***hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, and hath an interpretation.*** But in keeping with the way of love, which demands “*all things be done unto edifying*” which is additionally defined within the following restrictions in verses 27-34.

3. Apostolic Guidelines for Tongue Speaking in Assembly

The apostle did not prohibit the use of tongues, but did not promote it either, as he placed it under such tight restrictions that would discourage how and why the Corinthians used it in their assembly. There is absolutely no mention of any other congregations using tongues in the assembly. These restrictions would discourage the use of tongues at Corinth because those restrictions prohibited how they used it and why they used it.

27 If any man speak in an unknown tongue,

As in all places within this chapter the term *unknown* is not found in the Greek text. Although, it was appropriately inserted in dealing with verses 1-19, it is inappropriate in this text, as Paul is now speaking

of tongues that must be expressed within the confines of “*all things be done unto edifying*” (v. 26) and therefore tongues without interpretation is prohibited (v. 28). So we should ignore the inserted italic term “unknown” here.

Let it be by two, or at the most by three, The phrase “*by two or at most by thee*” infers that Paul is intentionally discouraging any kind of domination of tongues in the assembly, if not discouraging it altogether short of actually prohibiting it altogether.

And that by course; “by course” means “by turn” or one at a time (Gr. *meros* – a part, not the full).

And let one interpret – the implication is that the gift of interpretation must accompany the gift of tongues. He does not say let one of the other members interpret, but he says that one of these three speakers must interpret. The interpretation must be obtained first or else they are to remain in “silence” (v. 28).

The Corinthians had been exalting this gift above all others, and using tongues to build up themselves in front of others, as a sign of superiority, without interpretation. These restrictions would simply do away with that kind of self-centered use of tongues altogether.

28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.

God is the only one he can speak to (v. 2) when there is no interpretation, as only God can understand what is being said. Without an interpreter his apostolic command is “*let him keep silence.*” This is not an option but a command found in the imperative mode. That is, he is not to speak in way he can be heard by others in the assembly. He is to speak under his breath, silently. However, this does not provide the show of self-attention or superiority for which it was being used in the assembly. In effect, this command would prohibit the speaking of tongues according to how they had been using it in the assembly.

4. Apostolic Commands for Prophetic Office – vv. 29- 33

Paul now deals with the office of prophet, whose very office was dedicated to providing inspired revelation from God and was subject to all the Biblical tests for a prophet “*let the other judge.*” Prior to this, he uses the term “prophesy” according to its general meaning “speak forth”, in order to share revelation that had already been tested and confirmed to originate from God. Thus the confirmed word of God provided “***edification, and exhortation, and comfort***” (see verse 3). All members could participate in sharing confirmed revelation of God. However, the prophet was limited to three at most in a single service for the reasons he provides.

29 Let the prophets speak two or three. The same order given tongue speakers is given prophets in the assembly. Two or three in a given service are the limit. More than one person speaking at a time is mere confusion (v. 33). However, the prophetic office is subject to the Biblical tests for a prophet, therefore, “**and let the other judge.**” One reason for limiting the activity of the prophet office in the assembly to “two or three” is the time necessary to “judge” each prophetic utterance. The Old Testament Scriptures provided several tests to judge whether a prophet was a true prophet (Deut. 13:1-5; 18:20-22; Isa. 8:20; Jer. 23:32). New Testament Scriptures provided even more tests for a prophet (Mt. 7:15-20; 1 Cor. 14:36-37; 1 Jn. 4:1-6). The Church at Ephesus had used such tests:

“.....*how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:*” – Rev. 2:2

30 If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.

Even if only “two or three” was the limit, some individual might simply control the floor. Paul forbids controlling the floor by any one person. If another prophet has a revelation, then the other one is not to prolong his talk, but is to finish and sit down. The prophetic office provided the inspired revelation from God, but it does not mean the prophet understood the interpretation of what was revealed. Other gifts were required to provide insights and proper interpretation of a revelation. For example, Peter says,

1 Pet. 1:10 ¶ *Of which salvation the prophets **have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:***

11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify,

Jesus told his disciples:

Mt. 13:16 *But blessed are your eyes, for **they see** [Gr. *Blepo* – visual eye sight] : and your ears, for they hear.*

*17 For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired **to see** [Gr. *eido* – mental sight] those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.*

Therefore, other gifted persons complimented and fulfilled the gifts of others, as Paul taught in 1 Cor. 12:14-27. Thus all the gifted persons were important to the service (v. 26). Paul provides limitations to insure all could participate rather than any particular person or gift dominating the service. Later, after the New Testament Scriptures had been largely completed, the Pastoral office dominated the service (1 Tim. 3:1-13; Rev. 2-3) because the revelatory gifts and confirming sign gifts were ceasing because the finished product or “that which is perfect” had been provided (2 Tim. 3:16-17). See our extended notes on 1 Cor. 13:8-13.

31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

In context, this refers to those who hold the office of prophet, as the preceding verses (vv. 29-30) and the following verse (v. 32) demand. When one person is not allowed to dominate a service (v. 30) there is sufficient time for “all” the prophets to participate one by one. Therefore the words “ye may all” refer to the full number (two or three) being allowed to prophesy in any given service (v. 29).

32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. The word “spirits” does not refer to the Holy Spirit but to the human “spirit” of the prophet through which either the Holy Spirit or demonic spirits works. Paul speaks of “my spirit” (v. 14). The human “spirit” is the vehicle through which access is made into the spiritual world and through which the spiritual world operates through that person. When the Holy Spirit is ministering through the human spirit, it is under control, orderly, and edifying according to the way of love. However, when the prophet is manifesting power that violates the way of love, it does not originate from God, but is either of “the flesh” or demonic. Paul had implied that demonic power may have been responsible for the improper manifestations among them (1 Cor. 12:2-3). Hence, those who claim they are under the influence of the Spirit of God when they lose control, falling on the ground, out of control, are evident signs of some other spirit in control of them. The fruit of being under the influence of the Holy Spirit is “temperance” (Gr. *egkrateia* - “self control”).

33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. The term “for” shows the continuation of thought from verse 32 concerning out of control persons in the worship service. Paul bluntly claims God is not the source of those who operate out of control in a confused manner. That means, either it is demonic or of the flesh. This out of control and chaotic operation of “spiritual” gifts characterizes the modern Pentecostal and Charismatic movement. It is not of God. What is being applied to the congregation at Corinth is to be applied to “*all churches of the saints.*” During Paul’s day “all churches” were “of the saints” but not so today.

C. The Issue of Women speaking publicly in the assembly – vv. 34-35

Here Paul deals with the manifestation of public speaking gifts in the assembly by women. He forbids it. He does so in 1 Timothy 2:11-14 also. In every case, the basis for forbidding it, is not due to cultural reasons, or inferiority of person, but on the basis of scripture, and in particular the order established by God in creation in Genesis 1-3, and due to the woman taking the lead in the fall (1 Cor. 11:5-6; Eph. 5:31-32). The primary Creational basis is God’s intent in symbolizing the relation of Christ to the church by the persons of the man and woman and their primary roles (Eph. 5:22-31).

34 ¶ *Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.*

“Silence” is to be interpreted to be within the area of public exercise of speaking gifts in the churches (vv. 1-33). Note that he is not restricting this only in the church at Corinth, but in all “the churches.” Also, note the basis for this prohibition is not merely apostolic authority but “as also saith the Law” or Old Testament Scriptures. Notice that the basis for this command in scriptures is in the area of “obedience” to their husbands. Peter also, uses the scriptures to teach this same principle (1 Pet. 3:5-6). Paul traces this principle of obedience to the creational order and design behind marriage (Eph. 5:22-31). The husband is a type of Christ, and the woman is a type of the bride of Christ, and the home and public offices activities in the church is to reflect that symbolism. The man represents Christ in his three-fold office as Prophet, Priest and king. Hence, in the public congregation it is the males (Gr. *anar*) who are to lead the church in prayer (1 Tim. 2:8) in the priestly ministry of intercession with God. Moreover, since man represents Christ as Prophet, therefore the teaching offices in the church are to be men only (1 Tim. 3:1-3). In addition, the man represents Christ in his office as king in the congregation; therefore, men only are allowed to hold offices of authority over the congregation. However, many believe that the husband is in the position of authority in the home, but as soon as they enter the assembly that order is repudiated and reversed. God is not the author of confusion. There must be an order of authority in the home as in the godhead (1 Cor. 11:3). If the wife can repudiate the Biblical position of obedience to her husband then so can the children repudiate their obedience to their parents as it is the same Biblical basis for both. However, the scriptures make it very clear that the authority of the Husband is only “in Christ” (as is the authority over children by the parents) and therefore, his actions and attitudes must be in keeping with the way of love—“*even as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it*” is the pattern for the position of the man (Eph. 5:22-25).

35 *And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.*

Pastors have authority to teach the church but they do not have authority to teach the wives of other men in the assembly. One of the most common reasons for Pastors falling into sexual immorality is unbiblical

bonding that developed by women in the church seeking instruction, comfort, and leadership from the pastor or some other man in the assembly. The scriptures give this responsibility to older women (Tit. 2) rather than the Pastor or other men in the assembly.

It is “a shame for women to speak in the church” because it violates in principle the typology of Christ and the church that is symbolized by the persons and functions of the man and women in the home and in the church. If the woman is a symbol of the position of the bride of Christ, and the man a symbol of Christ’s position, would it not be shameful to portray the Bride, leading, teaching and exercising authority over Christ? Paul has already established the creational order in 1 Cor. 11:5-6 and in Ephesians 5:31 he explicitly states that God’s design in creation behind the relationship between the man and woman is to portray that very symbolism between Christ and His bride:

Eph. 5:22 *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.*

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

.....31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

Therefore, the roles given men and women in the Scriptures are not arbitrary without meaning, but have a creational and prophetic design behind them. God uses the church to teach the angels in heaven the very principle of “obedience” or submission to authority (1 Cor. 11:10; Eph. 3:10) as it was the angels who were first to rebel against the authority of God.

The Authorized Conclusion – vv. 36-41

We now come to the conclusion of Paul’s instructions concerning the way spiritual gifts are to be practiced in the churches. This conclusion begins with a strong apostolic assertion of authority and rebuke:

36 ¶ What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?

The revelatory gifts are designed to provide “the word of God” or the revealed will of God to His churches. The New Testament scriptures did not exist when Paul wrote this. The churches only had revelatory gifted persons among them to reveal God’s will for New Testament policy. The Apostles were the ultimate authorized gifted persons to provide the “Word of God” to the churches. Indeed, all of the written New Testament scriptures were provided either by Apostles or those under the supervision of, or closely related to the apostles (Luke, Mark, James, Jude).

There were those among them who claimed to be super apostles (1 Cor. 12; Rev. 2:2). The charismatic movement claims to be full of super apostles, prophets and those with revelatory gifts today. However, every primary prophet that began this movement or is considered a preeminent prophet among them has failed to pass the tests of a prophet. The same spirit behind their false prophecy is behind their miracle power, and behind those who follow their teachings and exhibit such power (denominations).

37 If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

The Charismatic movement today claims to be prophetic, and “spiritual” above all other non-charismatic denominations. However, they violate nearly every single one of these restrictions placed on speaking in tongues provided by the supreme apostle placed over the churches of the Gentiles.

Paul realized that he was actually completing that which is “in part” or perfecting the Biblical canon. He realized what he was putting into written form was the commandments of God and inspired scriptures.

1 Thes. 2:13 ¶ *For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.*

2Pe 3:2 *That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:*

Peter placed the commandments of “us the apostles” on equal level with “the holy prophets” or the Old Testament written Scriptures. He recognized that the apostles were given to Christ by God to “bind up the testimony and seal the law among my disciples” (Isa. 8; 16) as the final authority for faith and practice (Isa. 8:20).

Peter recognized Paul’s writings equal to “other scripture”:

2 Pet. 3:15 *And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him **hath written unto you;**
16 As also **in all his epistles**, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also **the other scriptures**, unto their own destruction.*

The Apostle John claimed that the apostolic words were final authority for New Testament Christians in order to discern truth from error:

1 Jn. 4:6 *We are of God: **he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.***

38 But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant. Therefore, by rejecting Paul’s Commandments proved they were not spiritual nor a true prophet of God, but were “ignorant.” Likewise, those claiming to be “spiritual” among charismatic movement them, who violate these commandments prove they are not true prophets or spiritual, but ignorant.

39 Wherefore, Paul comes to his final conclusion based upon apostolic authority just asserted. He has declared his epistles to be the commandments of the Lord, and thus the written word of God, and as such, it is confirmed to be used as the basis for prophesy, speaking forth as God’s Word by the Corinthians. Therefore, *brethren, covet to prophesy*, – speak forth – this revealed will of God concerning spiritual things (1 Cor. 12:1) within the assembly. Notice that prophesy is given a positive green light but “**and forbid not to speak with tongues**” is stated negatively rather than positively. What Paul means, is that tongues are not to be forbidden in the assembly, as long as they conform to the Apostolic guidelines in the way of love, which is summarized in the words **40 Let all things be done decently** (an appropriate and becoming manner) **and in order** (military term denotes the order and regularity by which an army is

drawn up). However, by demanding that tongues subjected to the order provided by Paul simply eliminated the use of tongues in this congregation, as such order completely denied how they were exercising that gift and their previous motivation for exercising it. Hence, allowing tongues under these guidelines virtually removed tongues from the assembly and provided only for the original Biblical design as a “sign” unto the Jews (1 Cor. 14:20-22) as the mature way to exercise this gift.

Conclusion

No other congregation in the New Testament manifests the use of tongues in the assembly. Paul’s restrictions eliminated the previous purpose and practice of tongues by the Corinthians.

If these same apostolic rules were applied to Charismatic assemblies today in their use of ecstatic utterances (which is not Biblical tongues) it would eliminate such from their assemblies. However, they routinely violate these apostolic commands in order to sustain their purpose and practice of ecstatic utterances.

1 Corinthians 12:29-30 simply repudiates the whole Charismatic/Pentecostal system at its very core. The gift of tongues is touted by Pentecostals to be (1) for all Christians because it is the manifestation of (2) the baptism in the Spirit which is essential for spiritual growth as a second work of grace, and (3) essential pray in the Holy Spirit. In addition, (4) The United Pentecostal Church demands that tongues are the sign of the seal of the Holy Spirit which is essential to salvation.

Certainly salvation is essential to be a Christian, and all Christians are commanded to pray in the Holy Spirit, even as they are to grow in grace in sanctification. Therefore, if all these things are dependent upon the gift of tongues then they must be essential for all Christians.

However, 1 Corinthians 12:29-30 denies that the gift of tongues is given to all Christians any more than the gift of apostle or prophet is given to all Christians. Hence, since spiritual led prayer, progressive sanctification and salvation are all essential and characteristic of all true Children of God, and then it is obvious that the gift of tongues is not essential for any of the above. That being the case, then the so-called gift of tongues among the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement has no relationship to the Biblical doctrine or gift of tongues. What they claim to be tongues is the common ordinary ecstatic utterances of all false religion.

The Holy Spirit is called “The Spirit OF TRUTH” but the modern so-called gift of tongues can be found among Pentecostals who deny the doctrine of the Trinity or nature of God (United Pentecostal Church, Mormons, Word of Faith Ministry) and among those who completely repudiate the gospel (Most Pentecostal groups, Roman Catholics). In the very context of the proper use of Biblical tongues, Paul declares that God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33). It is evident, that the modern ecstatic utterances have absolutely no relationship to the Pentecostal gift of tongues found in the book of Acts. Hence, their so-called gift of tongues is not the Pentecostal gift but only the common ecstatic utterance found among all false religions.

Ecstatic utterances were found in the days of Paul at Corinth among the false religions (1 Cor. 12:2). They can be found in all world religions (Eastern religions like Hinduism, African religions) among Mormon’s, and New Age Christian sects. It is a common practice found within all fractions of Protestant Pentecostalism regardless of doctrinal differences, as well as, among Roman Catholic Charismatic’s.

The modern so-called tongues are the common variety of “ecstatic utterances” found among false religions since the time of Babylon. Ecstatic utterances are a product of an altered state of mind produced

entirely by “the flesh” and/or demonic influence. It can be produced in the laboratory under the same general conditions it occurs in religious circumstances (power of suggestion, music and hype) technically; it occurs whenever mental control of the vocal chords is relinquished. It has been characterized as a “mental orgasm.”