

Spiritual Gifts

Part 4

Sept. 25, 1994

REVIEW

This will be our last look at the Spiritual gifts. We have developed many foundational principles which must be a part of our Biblical worldview which we use to discern good from evil. Therefore by way of review, here are those principles which we have proven so far:

PART 1

- The presence of Spiritual gifts does not imply spirituality.
- The Holy Spirit distributes the gifts according to His will and purpose.
- We should not seek to all have the same gifts.
- All Spiritual gifts are for the edification of the body, *not* the individual believer.
- The revelatory gifts were used to testify to the validity of someone and/or something said.

PART 2

- The gifts are worthless if not administered in love.
- The revelatory gifts (prophecy, tongues, special knowledge) are temporary.

- The Gift of Tongues

Four Foundational Principles of Tongues

PART 3

- New Testament tongues were foreign languages;
- New Testament tongues were a revelational gift (tongues + interpretation = prophecy);

PART 4

- New Testament tongues were for the public edification of the church;
- New Testament tongues were a sign of judgment.

- New Testament tongues were for the public edification of the church;

1 Corinthians 14:6-19

6 But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching? 7 Even things without life, whether flute or harp, when they make a sound, unless they make a distinction in the sounds, how will it be known what is piped or played? 8 For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare himself for battle? 9 So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air.

- One of the primary objectives that Paul has throughout this entire chapter is to instruct the Corinthians on the proper importance of tongues. It would appear that the church had placed too much emphasis on the gift; so much that the body wasn't being edified and the worship services became unruly. In these verses he points out the uselessness of a message that no one can understand. Simply having the ability to speak a foreign language (which would probably only edify the speaker) was of no value; "...speaking into the air."

10 There are, it may be, so many kinds of languages in the world, and none of them is without significance. 11 Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to him who speaks, and he who speaks will be a foreigner to me. 12 Even so

you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel. 13 Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. 14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful.

- Paul continues to defend the necessity for clarity, intelligibility by comparing the gift of tongues with the languages of the world which all have meaning and would be of no value as a language if no one could understand them. This creates a self imposed foreigner status on everyone in the worship service, resulting in disunity when the primary purpose of Spiritual gifts are to build up the body not vivisect it.
- The zeal that the Corinthians had for Spiritual gifts was probably motivated by the desire to appear spiritual; they wanted these gifts (especially tongues) so that they might be individually edified. Paul specifically teaches against this by directing that their zeal should be directed toward edifying the whole body.
- Verse 14 further clarifies that the person with tongues does not have a cognitive understanding of what he is saying unless he has the gift of interpretation.

15 What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding. 16 Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say? 17 For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified. 18 I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all; 19 yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue. (NKJV)

- The conclusion that Paul draws is that if someone does not have the gift of interpretation it would be better for him to speak in his own language rather than in tongues because such a man prays without understanding.
- They are to do all that they do (praying, singing, blessing and giving of thanks) both with their minds and their spirits.

- **New Testament tongues were a sign of judgment**

1 Corinthians 14:20-26

20 Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature. 21 In the law it is written: "With men of other tongues and other lips I will speak to this people; And yet, for all that, they will not hear Me," says the Lord. 22 Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe. 23 Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those who are uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind? 24 But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. 25 And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you. (NKJV)

- Paul corrects their childish thinking (self edification of tongues) by instructing them on the mature understanding of the gift. This instruction is foundational to our understanding of the purpose of this gift and the relevance that it carries today. Paul quotes Isaiah who had prophesied the impending occupation of Judah by the Assyrians of the Babylonian conquest of Israel. Isaiah teaches that the word of God had become useless to them due to their childish thinking ("...rule on rule..."). Therefore the implication of the prophecy is that if Israel would not listen when the word of God was spoken plainly through His prophets maybe they would listen when they heard foreign tongues spoken in their land. (cf. Deuteronomy 28:49, Jeremiah 5:14-15)
- This Spiritual gift was a sign to unbelieving Jews that the kingdom was to be stripped from them and given to the gentiles. This was a sign of the impending destruction of Jerusalem. This gift was a gift that would drive people away (vs. 23) *not* evangelize. If the church was to evangelize, the gift that would be fruitful during the corporate gathering was the gift of prophecy.

- The presence of Spiritual gifts does not set aside the requirement of respect, submission and orderly conduct

1 Corinthians 14:27-40

26 How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. 27 If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret. 28 But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God. 29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge. 30 But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent. 31 For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged. 32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. 33 For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints. 34 Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. 35 And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church. 36 Or did the word of God come originally from you? Or was it you only that it reached? 37 If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord. 38 But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant. 39 Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues. 40 Let all things be done decently and in order. (NKJV)

- The two most important verses in this section are verses 26 and 40. All things were to be edifying to the body and done in a respectful, orderly fashion.

• The Cessation of Revelatory Gifts

After all of this teaching on the proper use of all Spiritual gifts, there becomes the need to answer the questions "Are these gifts necessary today?" Although there is not a specific verse that addresses this questions in an unequivocal manner, I believe that there are a number of principles that must lead us to a conclusion:

- We know that signs, wonders and miraculous gifts were used to testify to the validity of someone or something said. We do not need this testimony today because we are building on the foundation of the Apostles, Prophets and Christ. We need not have our message testified to because it already was.
- As a sign, tongues would not have the significance that it was suppose to in the early church. Jerusalem was destroyed almost two thousand years ago. Unbelieving Jews of today would not be warned by this sign.
- If God is still giving us new revelation today through prophecy and the interpretation of tongues then someone should be taking very detailed notes at these occurrences because this means that God is still giving us scripture. Yet, since we know the canon is closed, this poses the most significant problem for these gifts today. If tongues is simply restating things previously revealed or things which can be known to all naturally, then even though it may be interpreted, it is not prophetic.