

## ~ Receiving the Holy Spirit at Pentecost ~

*And they were all filled with the holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Acts 2: 4*

God confused mankind's language (or tongues) at the tower of Babel. The same God overcame the language (or tongue) barriers at Pentecost. Is He still doing it? Today there are schools to teach languages.

All agree the tongue-speaking recorded in Acts 2: 6-11 refers to speaking in foreign languages. When the disciples received the holy Spirit at Pentecost, they spoke in foreign tongues. What was the result? Jews, gathered in Jerusalem from many lands, heard the Gospel in their own languages. Charismatic tongue speaking today is not in foreign languages. Rather, it takes the form of ecstatic utterances and it is claimed that the speaking in tongues discussed in chapters of 12 to 14 of first Corinthians refers not to the foreign languages of Acts 2: 6-11, but to ecstatic utterances.

However, 1 Corinthians 14: 21 provides a proof that *tongues* as used in 1 Corinthians 14 means foreign languages, as in Acts 2: 6-11. Indeed, 1 Corinthians 14: 21 refers to an Old Testament prophecy on tongue speaking that was fulfilled in Acts 2: 6-11. In connection with saying in 1 Corinthians 14: 22 that "tongues are a sign not to them that believe but to them that believe not", Paul says in verse 21, "In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak to this people; and yet for all that they will not hear me, saith the Lord". From where in the law or Old Testament was Paul quoting? Isaiah 28: 11 (RSV) reads, "By men of strange lips and alien tongue the LORD will speak to this people...yet they would not hear."

When were Jews to be spoken to in an alien or foreign tongue? Verse 4 of Isaiah 28 tells us, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD ye scornful men that rule this people which is in Jerusalem." The day of Pentecost in Acts 2: 6-11 is the only Scripturally recorded time that

unbelieving Jews in Jerusalem heard the Gospel preached in foreign languages. Both 1 Corinthians 14: 21 and Acts 2: 6-11 refer to the same incident. Both use *tongues* to denote foreign languages. Therefore, *tongues* as used in 1 Corinthians, chapters 12 to 14 are a reference to foreign languages and not ecstatic utterances.

1 Corinthians 13: 8, in contrasting *tongues* and other gifts of the Spirit with love, tells us that *tongues* shall cease but love will never fail. Our Charismatic friends say, Yes, *tongues* will cease when the Church is caught up with Christ. But notice verse 13, “And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three, but the greatest of these is love”. Regardless of how we interpret verses 9-12, verse 13 tells us that faith, hope, and love abide after something ceases. After *tongues* and the other gifts of verse 8 cease, then faith, hope, love abide, or continue on. There is a time that faith and hope will exist after *tongues* and the other gifts cease. How long will faith and hope last? Until the Church is united with Christ in the first resurrection. Then there will be no need. Faith and hope will end in the reality of being with Christ. Therefore, *tongues* must cease sometime before the Church’s history on earth ends. But, when?

With the exception of Pentecost, the gifts of the Spirit were only bestowed on Christians through the ministry of the Apostles. Acts 8: 13-21 makes clear that even Philip, though able to perform miracles and signs, could not confer the gifts of the Spirit but was obliged to send for Apostles to do this for his converts. The following Scriptures, Acts 19: 1-6, Romans 1: 11, and Galatians 3: 5 also show that only the Apostles could confer gifts. Shortly after all the Apostles died, *tongues* and the other gifts would shortly cease.

How do we explain the phenomena of *tongues* today? It is interesting to note that speaking with tongues is also a phenomenon in many heathen religions throughout the world today. Certainly this is not the work of the holy Spirit. The books of Matthew 24: 3, 24 and of 2 Thessalonians 2: 9-11 reveal that one of the signs of the end of the world or of the age would be miracle-working deceptions of Satan in the Church. This is a possibility that all Christians should ponder.

For a complete Scriptural discussion on speaking in tongues, send for a free copy of *Glossolalia (and What Are Its Implications)?* Click

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