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THE SPEAKING OF TONGUES IN THE BIBLE

History of the tongues movements:

Speaking of tongues was a very real experienced in the New Testament churches without a doubt, it was widely practiced, and even so much abused. After the completion of the Bible, there were no more records of Christian speaking in tongues, which mean it has already ceased. During the middle Ages and the Reformation period, the only recorded file on the subject of tongues is on the reference to Cultic and Paganic groups.

Is speaking of tongues a legitimate gift in our present Age?

From the time the Bible was completed until 1906, there were no claims of tongues by the Evangelical churches. The tongues movement began its origin in California. A young lady in college claimed she had baptism of the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. From there, it spread from Kansas to Missouri and eastward. In Los Angeles, California, a pastor major on this subject, not on the doctrinal point of view, but on their own personal experiences and from there, it took on large proportion in the United States of America.

In early 50's the speaking of tongues was confined primarily to the Pentecostal groups and looked upon as questionable and unbiblical teaching. But in the middle of 1955, the organized Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International promoted the speaking of tongues effectively. Their clever and strong public relations and their bold aggressiveness were often been considered the spontaneous work of the Holy Spirit. The great controversy of the movement becomes their very attraction.

THE TONGUES IN THE BIBLE

The only purpose of tongues as revealed in the Scripture serves as sign for the unbelieving Jews. *Let's examine every portion of Scripture that mentioned speaking of tongues.*

ACTS 2

At the Pentecost the recipients of the Gospel message were all Jews from every part of the world.(verse 5), they spoke different languages understood by their own natives. The very purpose of the Pentecost was to convey the Gospel of Christ in the very languages of the listeners, (v.8) and to convince the Jews that the Gospel has come, the inaugurating the church composed of people from all nations who believe and accepted Jesus as their Savior (vv. 36,41). Those Jews heard the Gospel proclaimed in their own languages. Note that in Acts 2:4, the word used in Greek was “heteros glossa” which means foreign language not gibberish sounds.

ACTS 10:9-48

Please note that Cornelius was a Gentile; the purpose of manifestation of tongues in these passages was to convince the Jews who came with Peter that God is no respecter of persons, meaning that both Jews and Gentiles could be saved- together. Please note verses 34 and 35.

Those Jews considered the Gentiles as dogs, rubbish, scum’s of these worlds who cannot enter the gate of heaven. Therefore speaking of tongues from his text is just an authentic proof of their just received salvation.

ACTS 19:1-7

The Jews from this text were disciples of John the Baptist who responded to the call of repentance, but who never heard the Gospel for Christ. Those Jews evidently had not been in Jerusalem during the Pentecost. Paul sensed that they missed something important. In verse 2, he asked, “have you received the Holy Spirit upon believing? They trusted Christ as their Savior and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, spoke in tongues at the same time, then were immersed in water baptism. The speaking of tongues in this text appeared as a sign of the work of the Holy Spirit for those who will come to Him.

The Book of Acts is the history of the pre-canon Church Age. The Jews that have returned to Jerusalem were part of the Israelites scattered because of divine discipline (Leviticus 26:26-33). The transitory signs gifts were used by God to warn them of the incoming 5th cycle of divine discipline which took place in 70 A.D. when Titus destroyed Israel as a nation (1 Corinthians 14:21-22). The speaking of tongues is instrumentation for warning the Jews of the impending disaster. After the 5th cycle of divine discipline was administered in 70 AD, there was no longer any reason for the continuation of the gift of tongues (1 Corinthians 13:8-10).

Satan is exploiting the historical sign gift of tongues by making it nothing but emotional ecstatic experience. The spiritually ignorant believers and unbelievers are easily caught under this satanic scheming. They confused the Gospel for

some kind of gibberish tongues manipulated by sensationalism and emotionalism (2 Corinthians 6:11-12, Romans 16:17-18).

MARK 16:15-18

The three references of tongues in the book of Acts were all history. Furthermore, Mark 16:15-18 is the very verse that prophesied or foretold these events. When the risen Lord commissioned His disciples to proclaim the Gospel to every nation, Christ declared that the tongues were to be a sign. The apostles, and the disciples at the Pentecost knew about this statement- and it was very clear to the apostle Paul.

Tongues were given to the Jews because they demanded sign from God's servants. BUT THIS SIGN LASTED ONLY UNTIL THE COMPLETION OF THE BIBLE. After 1 Corinthians 14, tongues is NOWHERE TO BE FOUND in the Bible BECAUSE, IT IS NO LONGER NECESSARY.

THE TEMPORAL NATURE OF TONGUES

A careful study of 1 Corinthians 13, will disclose that the gift of tongues was not meant to continue throughout the history of the Church. The very purpose of this chapter is to SHOW THE SUPERIORITY OF LOVE OVER SPIRITUAL GIFTS the early Corinthian Christians were coveting.

This is confirmed by the fact that in the later Epistles of Paul, when the issue of spiritual gifts was discussed, the tongues was not mentioned or even named. (see Romans 12, and Ephesians 4)

WHAT TONGUES ARE NOT

TONGUES ARE NOT SIGN OF BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT

In the chapters that majors in the spiritual gifts, (1 Corinthians 12-14), particularly 1 Corinthians 12:13, Paul points out that all believers have been baptized into one body- with one kind of baptism in the Spirit, not just those who have one particular gift of the Spirit.

Baptism of the Spirit is not received by those who ask for it. Did the disciples in the Upper Room asked for such baptism? There was no record that the 120 disciples asked for baptism in the Spirit. No one asked for the baptism in Spirit during Pentecost, but the Spirit came suddenly as the Lord had promised. There is no command in the Bible for the Christian to seek the baptism of the Spirit.

TONGUES ARE NOT BIBLICAL METHOD OF CHRISTIAN GROWTH.

Speaking of tongues is not mentioned after 1 Corinthians 12-14, and Paul wrote to the Corinthian church TO CORRECT THEIR ERROR concerning this speaking of unknown tongues.

Why are we going to use the Corinthian church as a model for speaking of tongues when in reality PAUL CORRECTED THEIR MISTAKES?

WE Christian can grow only through the Word of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, as we fellowship with Christ alone, and with other believers, and not by speaking in tongues.

TONGUES ARE NOT EXCLUSIVE DOMAIN OF CHRISTIANITY.

Plato spoke in tongues, the Hindu monks speaks in tongues, the founder of Islamic cult spoke in tongues, Joseph Smith spoke in tongues, the Indian occults and spiritist speaks in tongues. The Satanists speaks in tongues- and many other cults are speaking in tongues.

TONGUES ARE NOT THE MARK OF SPIRITUAL MATURITY.

Christ commanded Christian to bear fruits that remains, (see John 15:16), since tongues is temporal, as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 13:8, it cannot be the kind of fruit Christ is talking about.

TONGUES ARE NOT CHURCH EDIFYING GIFT

1 Corinthians 14:14 is clear that those who speak in tongues for himself and therefore edify himself-alone.

Some claimed that they have prophetic messages to deliver for a particular person or group of individuals. Has the all knowing God forgotten something to include in the Bible that needs to be delivered through some questionable and confusing manners?

If God is my Father, will He call someone else to tell me something in His heart? Will He not talk to me personally?

Some who speaks in tongues exposes the sins of other born again believer way of public expose'. But God will not and will never accuse anyone whose sin are already paid by the Blood of Jesus.

Yes, God is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow, but God also respect the past as part of history. What is true about the Jews in the past does not necessarily applies today and what is true for the Jews is not always true to us now.

TONGUES IS NOT BASIS OF CHRISTIAN UNITY.

The basis of our unity in fellowship is the Blood of Jesus Christ that was shed for us. To change our basis or even to substandardize it with anything less like tongues, is direct insult to the redemptive work of God, through the Lord Jesus Christ. Some of the world religions are united under the flag of tongues, regardless of colors and doctrine.

TONGUES ARE NOT BABBLING OF UNKNOWN WORDS.

Chuck Swindoll defined tongues in the New Testament as the “ability to speak in a known language and dialect that has never been studied or learned, with the goal of rapidly disseminating the gospel into nations and cultures that have never heard about Christ.” This is nothing but deception

Tongues in the New Testament is not babbling of unknown sounds or tongue twisting but word understood by those who heard it. The babbling of unknown words (better sound) is not the originality of the Corinthian church but from the Ancient sun – god cult’s worshippers. We must remember that babbling of unknown words was spread by the New Testament Christians who were formerly sun- god worshippers.

If you have struggles with this teaching, please read the 14th chapter of 1 Corinthians, asking the Lord to teach you by the Holy Spirit, and open your spiritual “eyes.”

CONCLUSION

TONGUES ARE DIVISIVE.

Tongues have already taken its toll. Many local churches were split, divided, and some were “buried” because of this issue. If tongues are from God, then it must build what belongs to God, and not divide or destroy.

TONGUES ARE DECEPTIVE.

Those who speak in tongues are made to believe that they are more spiritual as long as they practice it, and they have the tendency to put their doubtful experiences ahead of Biblical teaching and depend on their emotions.

Tongues does not have biblical basis for our generation. Tongues are not commanded to us by the Lord Jesus. Tongues are not the sign of spiritual growth or maturity, and are totally not applicable in our times.

TONGUES ARE DIVERTING.

JESUS CHRIST IS THE CENTER OF OUR LIFE AND MINISTRY, and church life, worship and all activities. We must be on guard when something else is getting the limelight other than the Lord Himself.

Tongues are a minor doctrine with a very little importance to the life of each individual Christian in particular. Let us not major in this minor teaching.

As the apostle Paul said it: "better is five words in understandable speech, than a thousand words that no one else can understand. Anchor your faith in the solid Word of God, and not in your questionable experiences.

TONGUES ARE DANGEROUS.

Beware of deceitful spirits(1 Timothy 4:1)
Beware of spiritual lies (2 Thessalonians 2:11-12)

A PARTING WORDS:

Accept tongues as a historical spiritual gift.
Rebuke, refute, re-educate but not abrasive or harsh.
Seek not to speak, but seek to understand the Word of God.

Suggested Further Readings:

The Charismatic: A Doctrinal Perspective
John MacArthur
Zondervan Press 1984

The Gift of the Spirit: Charisma
Siegfried Grossman
Key Publishers, Inc. 1976

Charismatic Confusions
Earnest Pickering
Regular Baptist Press

They Speak With Other Tongues
J. L. Sherill
Victor Books, 1987

History of the Church on the Subject of Tongues
By Eusebius

Deceitful Spirits
Earnest Pickering
Regular Baptist Press, 1981

He Gave Gifts
Charles Swindoll & Bryce Klabunde
Insight for Living, 1992

Complete Expository Dict. Of Ot & NT Words
Vine, Unger, and White
Nelson, 1984
Tongues –pp. 636-637

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