

A Biblical Evaluation of Charismaticism #3 The Cessation & Abuse of Tongues

Ephesians 2:20

Pastor Kurt's book on the gift of tongues can be found at: <http://trainingtimothys.org/books/book-12-the-truth-about-tongues/>

Why is this topic important?

Charismatics are claiming a super prayer gift.

The biblical teaching on the gift of tongues

Is tongues the sign that you have been baptized with the Spirit? (cf. 1 Cor 12:13 and v. 30)

One of the clearest statements about the gift of tongues in Scripture.

So you see that speaking in tongues is a sign, not for believers, but for unbelievers. (1 Cor 14:22)

My primary point: The biblical gift of tongues was the ability to miraculously speak in a foreign human language the speaker did not know. Its purpose was to be a sign to the Jews that God was beginning a new covenant. The gift ceased long ago. The modern practice of it by millions claiming to be Christians, is one of the most deceptive, damaging, and even demonic phenomena to ever invade the Christian church.

Paul's statement lines up perfectly with the clear description of the gift of tongues in Acts 2:1-12.

My first challenge to the Charismatic movement is to explain this: How is your praying in gibberish a miraculous sign to unbelievers of anything?

The Religious Context of 1 Corinthians 14

What the Apostle describes in 1 Corinthians 14 as a spontaneous, obscure, meaningless utterance was commonly observed in the temple worship of the Greek mystery religions operating in abundance at the time. My point is this. Paul believed the fake pagan version of the gift of tongues being practiced in pagan temples in Corinth was being practiced in the church and he was trying to get rid of it. (cf. 1 Cor 10:20; 12:1-3)

Jesus Christ also condemned the pagan practice of praying in gibberish in His day. And by doing so, He again condemned the modern Charismatic movement. (Matt 6:5-9)

The Greek text of 1 Corinthians 14

Paul is describing two very different versions of the tongues phenomenon in this passage. 1, the real gift. The other the fake one. One way Paul distinguishes between these two versions of tongue utterances is in the Greek text. He uses the singular word "tongue" [*glossa*] for the unknown possibly pagan version. He uses the plural word tongues [*glossais*] for the authentic gift of tongues.

1 Cor 14:2- the only reason Paul says the utterance is to God is because only God knows if the utterance is from the Spirit or being faked. Cf. v. 9 where he says the same thing means you are merely "speaking to the air."

1 Cor 14:4 is a condemnation of the selfish practice of speaking or praying in gibberish. (cf. 1 Cor 12:7; 13:5; 14:1; 14:14-15)

Finally, one reason we know the modern practice of tongues in the charismatic movement is unbiblical is because they rarely if ever will follow Paul's rules. And this is a serious thing. (cf. v. 37; v. 34; vs. 27-28)

Applications: 1) Compassion 2) Wisdom 3) Vigilance