



The Holy Spirit

His Person and Work

The Holy Spirit

Spiritual Gifts and Time

Review from Acts

1. There is no pattern of speaking in tongues established in Acts for the early church.
2. There are no instances in which people are instructed to speak in tongues in Acts.
3. There is a consistency in known languages being the evidence of tongues speaking.
4. The pattern in Acts is the presence of Jews and apostles, the salvation of people, and the speaking of known languages.

The Rules of 1 Corinthians 14

1. Tongues are not prohibited in the church, but they are secondary to gifts that edify (vs. 1-5).
2. Tongues without interpretation that builds the church is meaningless (vs. 6-12).
3. Five intelligent words is preferred over 10,000 uninterpreted words (vs. 13-19).
4. Tongues are a sign to unbelievers (Jews in particular) (vs. 21-22).

The Rules of 1 Corinthians 14

5. Since edification is the purpose of church gatherings, then an interpreter is required for all tongues speaking (vs. 27-28.)
6. Only a limited number of individuals, one at a time, may speak in tongues at a service (vs. 27, 29, 33).
7. Women may not speak in tongues in the church (vs. 34-35).
8. All should be done in decent order (vs. 40).

Conclusions

1. The gift of tongues is the gift of speaking a foreign language previously unknown to the speaker.
2. Church history recognized that tongues were a foreign language.
3. The gift of tongues is identical between Acts and 1 Corinthians.
4. The gift of tongues had rules for congregational use.
5. Failure to follow the rules resulted in excommunication (vs. 37-38).

Questions

- *What was the use of spiritual gifts in the early church?*
- *Are there different types of spiritual gifts?*
- *Are all spiritual gifts functioning today?*
- *Will all spiritual gifts function in the future?*
- *Are there indications or is there direct Scriptural teaching that the gift of tongues have ceased?*

Historical Practice

1. Tongues as demonstrated in the Scriptures has not been a consistent practice through church history and is not being practiced today.
 - Babbling was not a new phenomenon in the NT era.
 - There are limited historical accounts of tongues within fringe groups (Monasticism).
 - The “latter rains” of the current Pentecostal movement has no likeness to the NT gift of tongues.

Apostolic Signs

2. Some spiritual gifts are identified as apostolic signs and were foundational to the early church.

A. Seasons of miracles accompanied Divine revelation.

- Time of Moses - Law
- Time of Elijah - Prophets
- Time of Gospels/Apostles - NT

B. They were distinct signs of apostleship.

- 2 Corinthians 12:12
- Hebrews 2:3-4
- Ephesians 2:20

The Ceasing of Gifts

3. Spiritual gifts that were revelatory in nature were given a terminus.
 - A. Apostleship ceased when the last apostle died. With him the corresponding signs of apostleship would cease.
 - B. Revelatory gifts will cease when the “perfect” arrives.

1 Corinthians 13:10

1. What is the main point of the passage?

- Paul is correcting the Corinthians because of their misuse of spiritual gifts.

2. How does Paul correct their thinking?

- He emphasizes the permanent versus temporary. Paul uses the same verb four times in three verses. In verse 8 it is used as a future, indicative, passive having the meaning “to render inoperative; to make ineffective or powerless.” This verb is used of prophecies and knowledge in verse 8, of that which is partial in verse 10, and of childish things in verse 11.

1 Corinthians 13:10

3. Why does Paul change the verb for tongues?

- Paul uses a different verb that can mean “to come to stop by itself.” (I would suggest that a strong case cannot be built on a single word.)

4. Why does Paul pick these particular gifts to cease?

- Two options: 1.) They were revelatory gifts that were signs of the apostle. Thus, Paul was emphasizing that revelation would end.
- 2.) These were the gifts that the Corinthians were arguing over, so Paul identified them as temporary in nature.

1 Corinthians 13:10

5. What is the “perfect”?

- Seven options are offered by scholars. Three have weight:
 1. The Scriptures: This conclusion is strong if one concludes that Paul is arguing primarily for a final, complete revelatory book.
 2. The Return of Jesus: This conclusion is strong if one concludes that the only true perfection and final revelation is Jesus Himself.
 3. The Maturation of the Church: This conclusion is strong if one concludes that Paul’s goal is illustrate the temporary nature of revelatory gifts as compared to the final maturation of the church which would have all revelation it needs.

1 Corinthians 13:10

Conclusion:

1 Corinthians 13:8-12 intertwine revelation, cessation, and maturation. Paul is arguing revelatory gifts will cease, thus love should be embraced. The specific time of that cessation is unknown to him. From his perspective it could be upon seeing Jesus or at a point in time when Divine revelation is complete. But when it happens the church will have a full, complete revelation which will allow them to be mature and “see clearly.” In hindsight, we now know that complete revelation (the Bible) preceded the Lord’s return and that we should be mature in light of that.

Sufficiency of Scripture

4. The nature of Divine revelation is unique, complete, sufficient, and not given to private interpretation.
 - 2 Peter 1:18-21 - The Word comes from the Holy Spirit and bears witness to the unified message of God.
 - John 14:26; 15:7-10 - The Spirit speaks in accord with His purpose to declare Jesus, not to provide private instruction.
 - 2 Timothy 3:16-17 - The Word is for purposes of edification, instruction, and sufficiency for the whole Body of Christ.
 - If further revelation is needed to know God, then what would that do for previous generations and our current Text?

Does the biblical gift of tongues exist today?

1. If it does, it must fit the pattern of the book of Acts.
2. If it does, it must adhere to the rules of 1 Corinthians.
3. If it does, it must be of like kind to the NT, namely speaking in a known foreign language.
4. If it does, one must overcome the biblical evidence that apostolic gifts ceased with the death of the apostles, the completion of the Bible, and the maturation of the church.
5. A note on the future, see Joel 2:28-29.

Why is this important?

“Pentecostalism is the fastest growing and most vital Christian movement on the globe today.”

Harvey Cox, Harvard University

In 1995 the aggregate number of Charismatics/Pentecostals in the world numbered 463,000,000 second only to the Roman Catholic Church.

Vinson Synan

