

To Speak in Tongues

“If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, and always perseveres. (1 Cor 13:1-7)

Tongues: When Will They Be Stilled?

“...But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away....” (1 Cor 13:8-12) The gifts of the Holy Spirit will not vanish until we are all called to heaven. “For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.” 1 Cor 14:2 Weymuth translates this verse simply, “He speaks divine secrets.” When we get to heaven there will be no more mysteries or secrets, so it will not be necessary to speak with tongues. When we get to heaven, there will no longer be a need for tongues in the field of battle; the battle will already be won!!!!

Are Tongues Really Important?

“And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts 2:4) The manifestation of the fullness of the Holy Ghost is the visible manifestation of tongues! You want to be filled to overflowing so that His power over flows onto the lives of others! “For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers

kinds of tongues; to another the interpretations of tongues.” (1 Cor 12:7) These are spiritual gifts. The gifts of the Spirit may be manifested through the laity: “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.” (1 Cor 12:7)

Tongues in Public Services

The Corinthians overestimated the importance of the gift of tongues in public worship and were emphasizing it at the expense of the other gifts. They were exercising this gift without interpretation in public services.

Prophecy edifies the church more than uninterpreted tongues: prophecy brings conviction of sin and the knowledge of God’s presence. Prophecy and tongues with interpretation are equally important to the church.

Speaking in tongues in public worship services without interpretation is of no benefit to others. Those who speak or pray in tongues in the church should seek to edify the church by praying for the gift of interpretation. Speaking in tongues and prophesying must be regulated so that order is maintained in the church.

Paul’s Wish for You

“I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but....” (1 Cor 14:5) This is Paul’s wish for you in your private devotional time with God. Clearly such tongues have value for the individual Christian’s personal worship and prayer. Paul refers to his own experience, to his own private use of tongues. “I pray with my spirit” means to pray in tongues with one’s own spirit under the impulse of the Holy Spirit. The believer’s spirit prays as the Holy Spirit gives the utterance. (1 Cor 12:7,11; Ac 2:4) Paul is speaking of the private use of tongues directed to God. Paul used tongues not only for praying, but also for singing, praising and giving thanks to God. To “pray with my mind” means to pray and praise with one’s own mind in a learned language, also under the impulse of the Spirit.