The GIFT ON GUES

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THE GIFT OF TONGUES: IS IT THE ONLY SIGN OF HAVING THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Many people have a ready answer to this question; they say, "Certainly it is the only sign," and, they refer you at once to Acts, chaps. 2, 10 & 19. It is quite true as you look at these chapters that we see tongues there, and if these were the only passages in the whole Bible, then, of course there would be no argument. But, we cannot stay in the Book of Acts alone, and establish our doctrine. To find out the truth, there are three helpful ways which we should follow. I enumerate them below:—

Ask yourself :-

- (1) Is this teaching taught in the Gospels?
- (2) Is it exemplified in the Book of Acts, and practised by the Apostles?
- (3) Is the doctrine you state further elaborated and established in the Epistles?

For instance, take the matter of Baptism. It is commanded in the Gospels, followed by the Apostles in the Book of the Acts, and further explained in the Epistles. As to the Lord's Supper, the same applies. The Lord Jesus commanded it, the Apostles carried it out, and it is more fully explained in the Epistles. In the same way we may examine the laying on of hands: Is it commanded in the Gospels? Is it exemplified in the Book of Acts? Do we find that after being baptised, the people had the laying on of hands, to shew forth the "Unity of the Body of Christ?" The answer is in the negative. And look also in the

epistles. Are we told to lay hands on people after they are baptised, to shew forth the unity of the Body? No, we are not; therefore we do not practise it.

Now, in this matter of Tongues, certainly nothing was commanded about it in the Gospels, and though we do read of it in the Acts, to fully understand it we must refer to the Epistles. "Unless you speak in tongues, you have not received the Holy Spirit" is what some say. Is this true? Does it stand up to the Word of God? It certainly does not. Let us take up a few points one by one:—

1. How could just one sign be an evidence of the Holy Spirit?

In Galatians 5:22, 23, we read of the fruit of the Spirit, and though "Fruit" is in the singular, it is seen to be nine-fold:—Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, and Self-control. If these things are the enumerated fruits of the Spirit, how could we turn aside from them, and pin our faith to only 'one' evidence of the Spirit? How can we then say that 'Tongues' are the only sign? We cannot, because it is not taught in the Word of God.

2. Do all speak in tongues?

The answer to this is given in 1 Cor. 12:30, that all do not speak in tongues; that is the clear inference of the passage. Nor is it correct to say that the paramount sign of the Holy Spirit is the gift of tongues. This is entirely false, as may be seen in verses 8 to 11 in this chapter.

3. Let us now look at those who did not speak in tongues.

You speak of Acts 2:4, but what about Acts 2:41, 3,000 people, the same day being added to the church, yet it certainly does not state that they all spake in tongues. There is no mention of that. They believed in the Saviour, and were baptised, as we

read in Acts 2:41. Undoubtedly they received the gift of the Holy Spirit, but there is no record whatever that any of the 3,000 people spake with tongues. We read of many additions after this, the number steadily growing and becoming very great. In 4:4 the number of men who believed is given as about 5,000. This is A Second GREAT GROUP but DID THEY ALL SPEAK with tongues? No INDEED! Look at Chap. 6:1, the number of the disciples was multiplied and again in Verse 7 we read "The number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly." We read, too, in Acts 21:20 that thousands of followers of Christ came forward and stood for the truth, but we do not read of them, that they spake with tongues. Why then insist on this one evidence, when in so many instances the contrary is the case? Your contention therefore is wrong. What about the experiences in Acts 16, of Lydia and the Jailor? These were the first converts in Europe, and we could not question the reality of their conversion. Lydia's heart was opened and she became a true believer. In the same chapter we read about the Jailor. We do not question his experience; he was deeply shaken and cried out, "What must I do to be saved?" The servants of God told him, to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and that in believing he would be saved; also. they mentioned that his family would be saved, if they too, would believe the Saviour. They did so, and were saved and baptised, and they began to rejoice—see Chap. 16:34. Lydia was also baptised after she believed, and became a helper in the Gospel, receiving the servants of God into her house; but in neither of these cases is there any mention of tongues. The very fact that they had assurance and joy, and peace, was proof that they had received the Holy Spirit. I repeat, that to insist in every case when the Spirit is received there must be the evidence of tongues, is wrong, very wrong.

4. What then is the evidence of having received the Holy Spirit?

I would answer this question at first by giving a caution, i.e., to ask for signs and tokens is no proof of true belief, but is rather a sign of unbelief—Christ said that a wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign. (Mat. 12:39) Thomas became a believer in the Resurrection only after seeing Christ. He was justly rebuked by the Lord, saying: "Because thou hast seen me thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." It is not healthy for Christians to be seeking signs: We don't see and then believe, we accept the Word of God without seeing signs, and believe—then we see. Peter reminds us of this that though we have not seen, we believe, and believing, greatly rejoice. It is true. 1 Pet. 1:8.

Certainly the Bible speaks of evidence of the Holy Spirit. Gal. 4:6 is very clear. It says: "Because ye are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Now, if this be so, will you not know it? If on your part too, you cry to God, as one of His—"Abba, Father" that shows that you have realised your position as a son in His family. You call Him "Abba, Father," proving that you are no longer afar off in sin, but that you have been brought nigh and are at peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. The work of the Holy Spirit is not to impart to you some strange tongue. His work is to comfort and assure the believer; one of His many names being, "The Comforter." And, now, how do we become the sons of God? This is answered simply in Gal. 3:26. "Ye are all the children (sons) of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Having been convicted of our need, we believed that Christ Jesus was the Saviour who died for us and rose again, and we opened our hearts and received Him.

Reader, I hope this is your experience. Having received Christ you were made a partaker of the Holy Spirit. There need be no

excitement nor feeling of great ecstasy, or some strange tongue given you. The deep calm assurance springing up in your soul, giving you a real sense of your unity with Christ—this is surely the great proof of having received the Holy Spirit.

5. Is it necessary then to wait and agonise for the Holy Spirit?

The answer to this is "NO." In Acts 2, of course, we know they did have to wait, because the Holy Spirit was not given until the 50th day. PENTECOST is the GREEK for "FIFTIETH." It was only on the Day of Pentecost that the Spirit came, and this was in fulfilment of Lev. 23:16. The day after the SABBATH! on Sunday, the LORD'S DAY—the 50th DAY the SPIRIT CAME. We are told in John 7:37-39 that the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. How many people there are who do not understand this!

The early Jewish believers of that time had to wait till the 50th day came, and then the Spirit was poured out. He could not come before the given DAY. Now the Spirit is here; we, now live AFTER PENTECOST. He has not gone away, therefore we do not now have to wait for His coming.

Notice what happened, as written in Acts 10, in the house of Cornelius. He had gathered his kinsmen and friends, in anticipation of Peter's coming to preach to them. These people were not Christians seeking a second experience of power, by way of the gift of tongues. No, they were unsaved Gentiles, eager to hear words whereby they should be saved. Read Acts 11:14 carefully, where this is very clearly stated. They wished to be saved and Peter was to come to teach them the way. Now see what took place. Peter's sermon is recorded in Chap. 10:34 onwards. He told them how the Jews refused and crucified Christ, and that God had raised Christ up, and shewn Him to witnesses, chosen before of God. Peter claimed to be one of those witnesses, and he said that they had even eaten with Christ,

after He rose from the dead. He announced too, that all who believe in Christ would receive forgiveness of their sins. Now what took place? Acts 10:44 is a remarkable verse:—"While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all of them which heard the Word." Had these people gathered to wait for the Coming of the Holy Spirit? "NO." Were they in a room fasting, and praying to receive the Holy Spirit? "NO." Had they been saved before and were now waiting, as a second experience, for the Holy Spirit and tongues? "NO." They were neither waiting, nor tarrying, nor asking: how could they? They were unsaved Gentiles desiring to hear the Word of Salvation at Peter's mouth: and when they heard it they believed, and were at once saved and sealed with the Holy Spirit. Had they been baptised in water before they received the Holy Spirit? "NO." Had anyone laid hands on them, in order that they might receive the Holy Spirit? Again the answer is "NO." They received the Holy Spirit at the moment of their faith in Christ. Now, this is the true doctrine of receiving the Holy Spirit. If you believe this, as taught in the Scriptures, it will save you much confusion. The question of how they spoke with tongues, on this occasion, is dealt with in a later paragraph.

We are told clearly in Gal. 3: 2 that now, we who believe, receive the Spirit by the hearing of faith. First: Hear the Word of God. Second: Believe in the Saviour, and receive Him as your very own. Third: You will receive the Holy Spirit, at once, and be sealed unto the Day of Redemption. This is according to Eph. 1: 13 and 4: 30. Afterwards Peter commanded these people to be baptised in water. Today many are telling us that you must wait and fast and agonize to obtain the Holy Spirit. Also that we must first be baptised in water, and have hands laid on us. This is not true. In Acts 19 Paul did lay his hands on those disciples of John, who had never heard about the Holy Spirit, but that is not our experience today.

People do not now become disciples of John, and later become disciples of Jesus Christ. In Acts 8, it is true that Peter and John had to lay their hands on those Samaritans before they could receive the Holy Spirit. There was great enmity between the Samaritans and the Jews (Read John 4:9.) But now all was changed—in Christ Jesus there was to be no Jew, and no Samaritan, but all who believe are one in Christ Jesus, and to show this forth this laying on of hands took place. Peter and John were Jewish disciples of Christ, and as such, naturally would not have had any interest in the Samaritans. So God had to arrange for them to come up from Jerusalem, and have fellowship with these new believers, even though they were Samaritans. By so doing, they declared their oneness with these former enemies.

The early Church of Christ was made up of Jewish people, and it was very difficult for them to accept the truth that God wished to save Gentiles also. This explains Peter's vision, as recorded in Acts 10. The Jews were meat-eaters, true, but in that sheet let down from Heaven, there were not only clean animals, but also unclean animals, which a Jew must not cat. Yet, a voice from Heaven said—"Rise Peter, kill and eat." Peter remonstrated, and said—"Not so, Lord." Then the voice said— "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common or unclean." This was repeated three times. Later, it was all made clear to Peter, by the call which came to him to preach the Word of Salvation in the house of Cornelius, the Gentile. He preached, and these Gentiles heard and believed, and were at once sealed with the Holy Spirit. No waiting, no fasting, no praying, no laying on of hands first, but because of faith in the Saviour, they were at once made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and tongues were given as a sign, not to the believers, but to those who came with Peter, for they could not believe at first, that God would save unclean Gentiles. We can say of them

that they were unbelieving, because they did not know then God's plan concerning the Gentiles; but hearing these new Gentile converts speak in tongues, assured them at once that in God's sight they were all one. God had given to these Gentile converts the same gift as was given to them at Pentecost. Without any fear then, or hesitation they conceded the fact, that God had given to Gentiles who believe, as well as to Jews who believe, repentance unto life. This was the conclusion arrived at late. See Acts 11:18.

6. Can you force God to give you the gift that you think you must have?

You believe that you must speak in tongues, because you mistakenly think that this is the one great sign of having received the Holy Spirit; therefore, at whatever cost, you are determined to acquire this gift of tongues. A few months ago I received a letter from a dear Brother, saying he could not come to see me in the town where I had meetings. He said that "As I have now retired from Government Service, I am tarrying here for the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the manifestation of tongues." I have known this Brother for years, and believe him to be a born-again child of God, but he has been caught up by this false teaching regarding the manifestation of the Holy Spirit. He is going to remain in a locked room until God gives him what he asks.

What about 1 Cor. 12: 11? Surely we must give attention to the Word of God! In this chapter we read of the different gifts or manifestations of the Spirit. Verse 11 says that though gifts and manifestations are many, not just one, yet they all work the work of the one and the self-same Spirit. We then read that He, Himself, the Spirit, divides these gifts and manifestations, i.e., divides them to every believer, "Severally, as He will." The Holy Spirit is sovereign, as to the bestowal of gifts and manifestations. On what grounds, then, can you force God to give you

one certain manifestation? Certainly all God's people will not speak in tongues — this is sure — see again — 1 Cor. 12:30. Now, hear the word of God. Be warned in time! Give up seeking to influence God regarding the sign of tongues.

7. Tongues have now ceased.

We have now come to a very difficult part in this study, so I beg of you to hear me patiently. If your Bible is handy, turn to I Cor. 13. This chapter follows Chap. 12, which deals with spiritual gifts and manifestations, and as we read it, we are humbled, perhaps, and discouraged, saying to ourselves — "This gift is not mine; that gift is not mine; where am I?" When we come into Chap. 13 however, it is all simplified. In fact, the last verse of Chap. 12, makes it clear that we are to covet, not only the best gifts, but to understand the *more excellent way*. That is the way of Love; not our own natural love, for that has in it the elements of sin and death. The Love spoken of here, is the love of God, which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit — Rom. 5:5. We hear little about this gift of love. Many seem to have the gift of prophecy and say they understand many deep things in the Bible, but we fail to see in them the love of God. They seem cold, distant and impersonal. But in this Chap. 13 we are told that we ought to manifest, pre-eminently, the gift of love. To have the gift of tongues, without love, is to be as a tinkling cymbal. Or, to have the gift of faith, without love, is of no profit. Today there are people who emphasize the gift of tongues, others who emphasize Pentecost, in fact their mission is called the 'Pentecost Mission.' Why not then, start a Love Mission? Of course, the idea of founding certain groups to emphasize only one truth is wrong. The children of God are to hold on to the whole Word of God, and must not overemphasize any one truth more than another.

Now in 1 Cor. 13 not only is the gift of love upheld, but another truth is brought before us. This is that some gifts were given only for a certain time, and have now ceased, whereas other gifts are permanent. Think about this! Some of the gifts were not given to remain forever, they were to operate only for a certain period. You ask what gifts are those that have ceased. In verse 8 we read that three gifts have now ceased. The gifts: Faith, Hope and Love have not ceased, they will abide. Those that have failed, or ceased are as follows:—

1. The gift of Prophecy. 2. The Gift of Tongues. 3. The Gift of Knowledge. Now, unless you pay careful attention here you will probably, at this point, consign this writing to the wastepaper basket. Don't do this, but hear me patiently. The gifts of prophecy and knowledge, have stopped. (In Chap. 12:8—10 we read again of these two gifts). Now let us ask the question: Was it not through the gifts of Prophecy and Knowledge that the New Testament was written? Holy men of God spake as they were moved, by the Holy Spirit, and thus they wrote the Old Testament Scriptures. See 2 Peter 1:21. The New Testament was written in the same way, by the Apostles, who were instructed and enlightened by the Holy Spirit.

Christ promised the disciples, before He went away that the Spirit of Truth would come, and He said, — "He will guide you into all truth." See John 16:13. He did guide them into "All truth," and they wrote it down. So, the New Testament was completed. Peter wrote, also John, and the other writers, so today we have in our hands—How much truth? ANSWER:—ALL TRUTH. Now, here is a fundamental question:—Can Christians today, claiming to have the same Spirit of Knowledge and Prophecy, write something beyond the present writings of the New Testament, as the Apostles were moved to write? Is

this possible, or permissible? Of course not. The writing of Scripture has ceased. Some years ago I received some papers from California, entitled, "Messages from Heaven." After looking over them I wrote to the people not to send me any more such papers, because I told them I had in the Old and New Testaments the words and messages from Heaven, in complete form, and did not need any of their writings. They claimed to write under Divine Inspiration. This is a very grave error, i.e., to add to the Holy Scriptures. Such a thing is strongly condemned. Kindly note that the words of John in Revelation are called 'Prophecies.' See Rev. 1:3. They are inspired by the help of the Spirit of Prophecy. But, can you or I write like that today? Most decidedly not. Therefore the gifts of Prophecy and Knowledge which helped the writers of the New Testament to write, have ceased. There is no longer any need for these gifts; their work has been accomplished, and they have been taken away.

Read Rev. 22: 18, 19 which contains a solemn warning to anyone who would transgress and seek to add to the Word of God. Today we need the Spirit of Knowledge and Truth, — not to write more scripture, but to understand that which has already been written.

I repeat, the work for which these two gifts, i.e., Knowledge and Prophecy, were given, has been completed, and the gifts have ceased. In the same way we must understand that 'Tongues' have ceased. As in the case of Knowledge and Prophecy, the need no longer exists, so, there is no longer the need for the gift of Tongues. We have no need for signs and visions and tongues, to enlighten us as to what is the right way or the wrong way. The Bible is the Word of God. Trust its writings and you will be safe and secure. In 1 Cor. 13:10 we read—"When that which

we are now in that perfect time; we have a perfect Saviour—a perfect offering—and the Bible is a perfect Book. Paul says that he speaks to those that are perfect. (See 1 Cor. 2:6.) This is true. We read,—"By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Heb. 10:14. The fuller perfection, of course, will be when Christ comes again; that is another line of truth.

As we read the history of the Christian Church through these nineteen centuries we find evidences, that at seasons of special revival and visitation, many times tongues have been evident, but, do not forget—Tongues as a sign have ceased. If under some strange pressure people now break forth into ecstatic sounds do not regard them as the one true manifestation of the presence of the Holy Spirit, because that is not so. Tongues as a sign have ceased. The early Jewish believers not having in their hands at once the New Testament, were not sure that God would save Gentiles. At the first they preached only to Jews—See Acts 11:19. But when they saw Gentile Believers saved and speaking in tongues—they were assured by that sign that God had received them. See Act 10:45, 46.

In this I warn my readers that if any of them persist in tarrying and waiting for some strange manifestation, which they would call 'Tongues,' as a sign of the Spirit's presence, they are doomed to failure. Many teachers, in such cases, will say to the individual seeking the gift of tongues—"Let yourself go." Now this is grave error, and not only so, it is very dangerous, for we are told clearly that we must be careful, at all times, to keep our spirits under control. (See 1 Cor. 14:32.) "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." If you hand your spirit over to some strange power and let yourself go, allowing

that power to control you, you have then passed over into the realm of demons. Do be careful. Be warned in time. Walk humbly with Christ.

We now know from the written New Testament that it is God's plan that Gentiles as well as Jews be saved—so tongues as a sign have ceased. That which is complete—the complete Revelation in the New Testament—has come, so now the incomplete has been done away. Tongues are a sign of incomplete days.

Remember one final word on the matter. The Holy Spirit never calls attention to Himself. We find a great many people drawing attention to themselves—speaking of their inward feelings., and their many experiences of the Holy Spirit. If they are not careful it will be a case of exalting themselves rather than Christ. Now this is the very antithesis of what the indwelling Spirit does.

I beg of you to listen carefully to the words of John 15:26 in which Christ very specifically says that "When the Holy Spirit is come He shall testify of Me." The first great work of the Holy Spirit is to make real to us in our experience "Christ": the Christ Who died for us; the Christ Who lives for us; the Christ Who indwells us; the Christ Who intercedes for us, and the Christ Who is coming again for us. His work is to testify of Him.

Some people would say—"Look at me." "See the power I enjoy." "Notice the wonders of the Spirit in me." This only leads to spiritual pride, and spiritual pride leads to a fall. It is when a believer says,—"I am standing," and when he thinks he is strong, that he is in great danger. Do be warned in time.

One says: "But I am after the Tongues of Angels.

1 reply to this:—As a SAVED SOUL you have a message Angels cannot sound out. Your song is to be "WORTHY is the Lamb who redeemed us by His BLOOD." Angels cannot testify to this: this is your SPECIAL TESTIMONY—See Rev. 5:9. Covet not then to worship Angels, or to speak down here their language; speak up for CHRIST now in the tongue of the Country you live in and open your mouth wide and speak well of the Saviour! Do it today.

One other question

But does it not say in Mark 16:17, that those who believe would speak in tongues, and this would be a sign?

Answer.—Yes, it is so said, and did they not speak in tongues? Was this not fulfilled at Pentecost? Of course it was. And then did not Paul write later, that tongues would cease, is that not true too? Therefore, as we now read in the writings of Paul in 1 Cor. 14: 22, we see that tongues are not a sign to the believer, but to the unbeliever. You wish to make it a sign for the believer today. You are wrong.

DID THEY NOT SPEAK IN TONGUES, AFTER THE LAYING ON OF HANDS TOOK PLACE?

This is still another question, and there is an answer—Those who laid hands on the persons were Apostles, and have we Apostles like that now? The days of Scripture-writing Apostles is past, and those Apostles were the foundation, with Christ, for the Church; we as believers are built on their foundation—see Ephesians 2:20. So today, we have not the hands of the Apostles to rely on, but we have their writings, and which is best?

To have the *hands* of the Apostles on your head, which today is impossible, or to have the writings of the Apostles in your heart, and this is possible today. So do not go in for laying on of hands, but receive the Spirit, like they did in the house of Cornelius, by the hearing of faith.—See Galatians 3:2.

Now I think I have said enough, and I commend every reader to the abundant grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 5:17.

Yours, Rejoicing in the Saviour, (John 4:14.)

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