

1 CORINTHIANS 14

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INTRODUCTION:

- A. A few definitions are in order as we study this chapter:
 - 1. “TONGUES”: earthly, human languages, given to the speaker by the Holy Spirit (and not through his own personal study) to convey the message of God to others (see Acts 2:3-11)
 - 2. “PROPHECY”: to speak forth the mind and counsel of God (see 1 Corinthians 12:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:20; Matthew 26:68; etc.)
- B. What has been said about signs in this book? See 1:22 cf. Exodus 4:8-9, 30; Mark 16:17-20
- C. Remember the duration of spiritual gifts, as studied in the last chapter (previous handout)

I. THE SUPERIORITY OF PROPHECY OVER TONGUES, 14:1-5

- A. Paul’s admonition to the Corinthians, verse 1.
- B. The superiority of prophesying over tongues, verses 2-5.
 - 1. “*Speaketh not unto men but unto God*”: the tongue speaker did speak to men (Acts 2) but not the Corinthians, for they were speaking without an interpreter (v. 21ff.)
 - 2. “*no man understandeth him*”: Why not? Because no interpreter! (see vv. 13, 27-28)
 - 3. But consider the one that prophesieth:
 - a. He speaks to all men for edification, exhortation, comfort
 - b. He edifies the church; thus it is a greater gift!

**NOTE: We begin to get an idea of the problem at Corinth: tongues were being spoken without an interpreter, causing confusion and no understanding. Who is edified by that? NO ONE!*

II. THE NECESSITY OF INTERPRETATION FOR TONGUES, 14:6-19

- A. Tongues without understanding are of no profit, verses 6-8.
- B. The results of tongue-speaking without interpretation, verses 9-12.
 - 1. Wasted effort - like speaking into the air.
 - 2. Of no benefit - as barbarians (foreigners)
 - 3. Their concern ought to be the edification of the church!
- C. Interpretation is a necessity, verses 13-19.

III. THE PURPOSE OF TONGUES, 14:20-25

- A. Paul exhorts the Corinthians to not be children in their understanding.
 - 1. Notice the quotation from Isaiah 28:11-12.

2. This is yet another proof that “tongues” were earthly, human languages for the “other lips” were the Assyrians whom God used to address Israel; Assyria invaded Ephraim and destroyed Samaria in 722 B.C.

B. Tongues were a SIGN to unbelievers, verse 22.

1. A sign for unbelieving Jews (1:22), as already noted (cf. Acts 2, 10, and 19)
2. “Tongues,” as other spiritual gifts, were for the purpose of confirming the Apostles message (see Mark 16:17-20; Hebrews 2:1-4; cf. John 20:30-31)
3. Prophecy was for believers (the church)

NOTE: Where were tongues being used by the Corinthians? In the church! But this Paul condemns (vv. 1, 5, 19). Where are so-called “tongues” done today? Think about this!

IV. THE REGULATION OF TONGUES, 14:26-40

A. Note the conditions that Paul lays down as requiring being met before tongues are used:

1. It must be unto edification.
2. Two or three is the most that can do this, and that in turn (one-at-a-time)
3. If there is not interpreter, the speaker is to be silent
4. Women are to keep silent (remember the context is speaking in tongues and prophecy: women are explicitly forbidden to do such in the church!)

B. The origin of this truth: from God

C. All things are to be done “*decently and in order*”

WHY I REJECT THE MODERN-DAY “CHARISMATIC” MOVEMENT

1. “Tongues,” as well as other miraculous gifts, had a purpose: confirming the Word of God. This purpose has been fulfilled and tongues have ceased (1 Corinthians 13:8).
2. The Bible declared that tongues would cease when that which was perfect (complete, mature) had come. We have God’s perfect, completed revelation of His will in the Bible (see 2 Peter 1:3; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; James 1:25).
3. “Tongues” in the New Testament were earthly languages which the speaker, never having studied, had the ability to speak as a gift from God. So-called “tongues” today is little more than gibberish and nonsense.
4. “Tongues” came through the laying on of the Apostles hands (Acts 8:12-18; 19:1-6). As there are no apostles today (Acts 1:15-26), the way this gift was given is gone.
5. Those who today claim to “speak in tongues” completely overlook for whom tongues was given and why: the gift of tongues was not for 20th Century Americans, but 1st century unbelieving Jews!
6. Those who today claim to “speak in tongues” completely ignore and violate Paul’s regulations of the gift in this chapter: they do it “in the church,” there isn’t always an interpreter, many speak at the same time, women are often the leaders, and confusion and disorder results. The point? If they had the gift of tongues (which they don’t), they would stand condemned before God for explicitly violating His regulations regarding the gift!