

Bible Study on Hermeneutics – Handout Section 8

Controversial Doctrines, Practices, and Passages

Grace Bible Chapel

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Pastor/Teacher Jim Bryant

The Holy Spirit (Quick Overview)

- The third Person of the God head co-equal with the Father and Son (Gen 1:2; Job 26:13; 1 Cor 2:9-11; Heb 9:14). He performs the works of God (Job 33:4; Ps 104:3; Luke 12:11-12; Acts 1:5; 1 Cor 6:11).
- Actively central in revelation (1 Cor 2:9-11), regeneration (John 3:3-7; Titus 3:5), and sanctification (John 16:13; Gal 5:16-18; Rom 12:1-2).
- He indwells all who are born again in the present age (Rom 5:5; 8:9,11; 2 Cor 5:5; Gal 3:2).
- He baptizes (places into the body of Christ – 1 Cor 12:13), and seals us (identification of ownership and protection - 2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13).
- He fills (a state of compliance or obedience – Eph 5:18; 4:30; 1 Thess 5:19; Gal 5:16).
- His role in the OT – creation (Gen 1:2; Job 33:4); guidance & protection of Israel (Is 63:10-14); Revelation thru prophets (1 Pet 1:11; 2 Pet 1:20-21); selective indwelling (Joseph - Gen 41:38; Joshua – Num 27:18; David – 1st Sam 16:13 etc.).

The Gifts of the Spirit

The Holy Spirit gives specific gifts to individuals to perform a service for God, or for God in development and edification of the church (1 Cor 7:7). Paul describes the gifts using the Greek word *charismata* (Rom 5:15; 6:23) thus the term is used of charismatic gifts or Spiritual gifts.

• **The distribution of Spiritual Gifts**

- The gifts are sovereignly given by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:11; 18).
- Every believer has gifts (1 Pet 4:10).
- God's distribution of the gifts:
 - Not all believers have the same gifts (1 Cor 12:29-30).
 - Not all believers use the gifts exactly the same (1 Cor 12:5-6).
 - Not all gifts continue for the entire church age (Eph 2:20; Heb 2:3-4).
- God's design in giving the gifts:
 - There is a variety to cover all aspects of His purposes and ministry (1 Cor 12:4).
 - There is a specific purpose in each gift (1 Cor 12:22-24).
 - There are gifts designed to edify (1 Cor 14:26; Eph 4:16).
 - There are temporary gifts (Eph 2:20; 1 Cor 13:8-10).
 - There is a gift designed as a sign for non-believers (1 Cor 14:22).

• **The Gifts and their definition** (not an exhaustive listing)

- **Apostle**: those authoritative messengers from God who laid the foundation of the church (Eph 4:11; 1 Cor. 12:28).
- **Prophet or Prophecy**: those individuals who receive direct revelation from God and communicated it to men without error (Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 12:10; Eph 4:11).
- **Evangelist**: those who herald the gospel message in a new area for the establishment of a local body of believers (Eph 4:11).
- **Pastor / Teacher**: those who feed the people of God upon the Word of God that they may grow (Rom 12:7; 1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11).
- **Miracles**: the supernatural display of power which is outside the known laws of natural science (1 Cor 12:10).
- **Healing**: the supernatural ability to heal every and all afflictions of men (1 Cor 12:30).

- **Tongues**: the ability to speak in another language which was previously unknown to the speaker (1 Cor 12:10).
 - **Interpretation**: the ability to translate the known language uttered by the tongues speaker into the common language of the people (1 Cor 12:10).
 - **Ministering or Helps**: the ability to provide special aid to others (Rom 12:7; 1 Cor 12:28).
 - **Faith**: all Christians have faith. This is a special measure providing the abundant confidence in the Lord to meet each specific need (1 Cor 12:8-10).
 - **Exhortation**: the ability to encourage and admonish the members of the body of Christ unto godliness (Rom 12:8).
 - **Discerning Spirits**: the ability to distinguish between true and false sources of supernatural revelation when it was being given in either written or oral form (1 Cor 12:10).
 - **Mercy**: the ability to provide compassionate care for one who is sick or afflicted (Rom 12:8).
 - **Giving**: the abundant provision of one's resources to provide for the needs of others (Rom 12:8).
 - **Administration**: the divine wisdom necessary to rule and manage the local church (Rom 12:8; 1 Cor 12:28).
 - **Knowledge**: the gift of communicating insights into the mysteries of the God's Word (1 Cor 12:8; 1 Cor 8:1).
 - **Wisdom**: the disclosure of God's person and work in the ages (1 Cor 12:8; Eph 3:8-12).*
- *(listing from Pastor Joe Sahl's notes)

- Gifts come in varying degrees, and many of these gifts are basic to all those in Christ Jesus.

Practical thinking in Judging Controversial Doctrines, Practices, or Passages

Whatever command, practice, or issue found in the Bible must be consistent with the purpose of God. It is impossible for any true Christian endeavor developed in the Bible to not be in perfect alignment with God's personal glorification, God's plan to establish His Son & kingdom, God's revealed will, and God's righteous character. Therefore any interpretation of a command, practice, or issue that does not align perfectly with these cannot be correctly interpreted. In simple language - God has no command, practice, or issue that is focused on man, promotes man, supports man's selfishness, or does not otherwise make sense because it is outside the revealed will of God's personal glorification and plan. All rules of hermeneutics must be exercised in evaluation.

The Gift of Tongues

- **Brief History in the church**
 - Introduced on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2)
 - Recognized as active in 1st Corinthians (although Paul's concerns were largely a rebuke).
 - Paul wrote at least twelve epistles after 1st Corinthians and never mentioned tongues again. Peter never mentioned tongues, nor did James, John, or Jude.
 - Montanus in about 150 AD claimed to speak in tongues (ecstatic tones) and received strong universal opposition from the church. He was condemned and silenced.
 - Early church writers such as Polycarp, Papias, Cyprian, Chrysostom, Augustine, Origen etc. never mention tongues.
 - Church age greats such as Wycliffe, Huss, Jerome, Luther, Calvin, Knox, Bunyan, Owen, Edwards, Spurgeon, and thousands of others never spoke in tongues and never mention it. It was not practiced in any form by the then church for more than 1,600 years.
 - The "Shakers," a break-away from the Quakers, were founded in 1758 by a woman named Ann Lee. The sect was characterized, among other things, by the practice of ecstatic utterances in worship.
 - In more modern times, the initial introduction of speaking in tongues started around 1901 and was founded in the traditional Pentecostal movement by Charles Parham of Bethel College, Kansas.
 - Another major development of following in tongues speaking came with neo-Pentecostalism or the Charismatic movement when it entered many churches in the early 1960's. It began in Van Nuys, California, under Dennis Bennett, Rector of St Marks Episcopal (Anglican) Church.

- The Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement started in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1967 among students and faculty of Duquesne University, and has spread remarkably by 1993 to over 100 million Catholics in over 238 nations.
- The Evangelicals started the tongues movement 1981 at Fuller Theological Seminary through John Wimber. By 1990, an estimated 33 million in the world were labeled “Pentecostal” and “Charismatic”.
- **From Wikipedia about Pentecostal’s:**

Pentecostalism is a renewal movement within Christianity that places special emphasis on a direct personal experience of God through the baptism in the Holy Spirit^[1] which is evidenced by speaking in tongues. The term *Pentecostal* is derived from Pentecost, a Greek term describing the Jewish Feast of Weeks. For Christians, this event commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the followers of Jesus Christ, as described in the Book of Acts, Chapter 2,^[2] and Pentecostals tend to see their movement as reflecting the same kind of spiritual power, worship styles and teachings that were found in the early church. For this reason, some Pentecostals also use the term *Apostolic* and/or *Full Gospel* to describe their movement.

- From a **Pentecostal web site:**
 - “Many have read of the November 2000 Reinhard Bonnke crusade in Lagos, Nigeria. An estimated 6 million people attended in six days! 1.6 million were present for the final night. There were miraculous healings, multiple salvations, and hundreds of thousands baptized in the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. It was through and through a Pentecostal revival!
 - Almost all of the world’s 50 largest churches hold Pentecostal-charismatic beliefs.
 - There are an estimated 500 million-plus Pentecostals and charismatics worldwide.”

*(from website “jimfeeney.org”)

- **The General Beliefs of the Tongues movement:**

- **In order to show one is saved they should speak in tongues.** Nowhere is this asserted in Scripture, or demonstrated in Scripture. The idea is taken from 1st Cor 14:22, and is a misinterpretation. By contrast, the book of 1st John has as its stated purpose of clarifying true salvation, and bringing assurance to those in Christ.
- **Tongues is a special prayer language to God.** This is taken from 1 Cor 14:2: “one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men, but to God.” Here, Paul compares tongues to prophecy and by comparison states unless it is understood by the church (14:3, 12), nobody can understand except God. This is actually a rebuke because edification of the body is the purpose of tongues (1 Cor 14:5). This is the reason Paul requires that there be an interpreter (14:12-13).
- **Tongues is uncontrolled ecstatic utterance.** In every account in Scripture it refers to actual languages (beginning in Acts 2). Paul requires that tongues be interpreted or it is useless to the church, then he expects those who exercise the gift to be able to refrain if no interpretation is present (1 Cor 14:6-9).
- **Tongues should be sought through practice and learning, therefore, someone should continue trying to do it until they can.** Paul teaches (1 Cor 12:11) that it is the Holy Spirit that distributes the gifts according to His will, not ours. God had a purpose for each gift, and He is moving according to His sovereignty to use them. He does not need help. The Corinthians were exercising a gift in order to show off, but Paul said they should seek ways to edify the church (1 Cor 14:12). This was a rebuke.
- **Those who receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit give evidence by speaking in tongues.** This is taken from Acts 2:4; and Acts 11:15-18. The idea of a second blessing is derived from this. We must keep in mind the book of Acts was a transition book. There were believers before the new age that did not possess the Holy Spirit, and so it was easily identifiable at its reception. This is not true today – all in Christ Jesus have the Holy Spirit or they are not His (Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 3:16; Gal 4:6; Eph 1:13; 2 Tim 1:14; 1 John 3:24). The baptism of the Spirit is the placement of all God’s elect into Christ (Rom 6:3-4), and occurs at regeneration (Titus 3:5).

From the Pentecostal web site (Pastor Jim Feeny Phd):

“The **gifts of the Holy Spirit**, including speaking in tongues, divine healing, prophecy, and other supernatural signs and wonders were a blessing to the early Church. So were the ministries of apostles and Christian prophets. They **continue** to be a blessing to the Church **today**.”*

*(from website “jimfeeny.org”)

Consideration: The argument is these gifts are still active today – on what basis do they claim they continue active? 1) experience 2) the fact they are a blessing – ie: what is or was their purpose?

- “**Pentecostal Christianity** worldwide is believed by some researchers to number **half a billion** members. The vast majority of them strongly hold the doctrinal position that a person **baptized with the Holy Spirit** will **speak in tongues** as the **initial evidence** of that experience. That is the position that will be put forth in this bible study. Verses used to support these beliefs (Acts 1:4-5; 2:1-4; Acts 10:44-46; Acts 19:6).”

Consideration: The argument is that so many people are involved they cannot be wrong, and verses are used to support their premise. These verses will be examined in their context.

- “The first half of the twentieth century saw the emergence of many of today’s large **Pentecostal denominations**, with the associated manifestation of various **gifts of the Holy Spirit**. In the second half of the twentieth century, the **Charismatic Movement** led millions more Christians in non-Pentecostal denominations to embrace the present-day validity of these spiritual gifts. However, man’s experience and beliefs by themselves do not establish doctrine. That is the prerogative of the Bible. In the balance of this study, we will examine a number of Scripture verses which support the **ongoing validity** of the **gifts of the Holy Spirit** throughout the Church Age. Verses used to support these beliefs (1 Cor 12:4; 7-11; **Mark 16:15-18**; 1 Cor 1:7-8; 2:4-5; John 14:11-12; **Rom 11:29**; Heb 2:4; James 1:17; Gal 3:3; 1 Cor 13:8-12).”
*(from website “jimfeeny.org”)

Consideration: Again, first argument is the experience (“led millions more Christians in non-Pentecostal denominations to embrace present-day validity of these spiritual gifts”) of so many, and secondly verses that support their on-going use. Does their use correspond to the glorification of God, and His purpose, and if so how? Did the original people who spoke in Tongues (Acts 2) have to be led to embrace their validity? How are those practicing tongues led today? What basis of edification or benefit to the church or God can be claimed?

Looking hermeneutically at Tongues:

Acts 2:1-4

- Context is the promised visitation of the Helper, the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4; Luke 24:49; John 14:16; 15:26; 16:7).
- The language of wind & fire demonstrate this was a supernatural work of God (Gen 15:17; Ex 3:2-6; 13:21-22; 19:18; etc..).
- They did not have to be taught or prompted to speak with other tongues (Acts 2:4).

Acts 2:5-13

- The recipients were dispersed Jews from nations throughout the then world (Acts 2:5).
- These Jews were hearing in their own language (from their country – Acts 2:6, 8).
- It had to be supernatural as those speaking were made up of uneducated Galileans (Acts 2:7).
- They were understanding the words even in their own dialect (Acts 2:6).
- The Jews asked appropriately what this meant? (Acts 2:12).

Acts 2:14-21

- Peter explains (quoting from Joel) this is the beginning of the last days (Acts 2:14-21).
 - Peter uses Joel 2:28-32 (context of end time events).

- Peter quoted part which was fulfilled immediately; part which is being fulfilled soon, and part which is yet to be fulfilled.
- Prophecy of the outpouring of the HS (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17).
- “the last days” is not found in Joel but added by Peter (that is the context).
- There is a drastic change in the manner of the HS (Acts 2:17 “pouring forth on all mankind”).
- This pouring out of the HS would result in prophecy, visions, & dreams (fulfilled in the Apostles, prophets of NT era – prophecy (completion of NT – Eph 2:19-20), visions & dreams (Acts 9:10-12; 10:3-19; 11:5; 16:9; 18:9)).
- The HS had now become active in a new manifestation of God’s redemptive purpose – seen in the remainder of Peter’s message.

What do we learn from this?

- This is the dawning of a new era – the Holy Spirit has been granted to men.
- The new era is the beginning of the last days (we will learn later this is the church age).
- The manifestation was for a sign to the Jews of the new era or age called the last days.
- Gifts or abilities were given to these men by God without them seeking them.
- That which was supernaturally uttered was real languages and dialect.
- It was used of God to communicate praise to God in languages familiar to them (other than Hebrew).
- It was used by God to prove the validity of the message (that is God Himself was in it).

1 Cor 14:20-22

- After rebuking the Corinthians for their abuse of and misunderstanding of the gift of tongues, Paul explains specifically why God gave tongues.
 - Vs 20 – he tells the Corinthians to “mature” grow-up in their thinking about tongues.
 - Vs 21 – A quote from Isaiah 28:11-12 (context is Isaiah warning Judah after Israel was taken captive by the Assyrians in 722 BC).
 - Judah’s leaders would not listen – accused Isaiah of talking to them like babies (Is 28:9-10).
 - The context of Isa 28:11-12 is judgment on Israel for their closing their ears and making fun of the Lord’s message.
 - What would God do? He would take the Word of God and give it to others (strange tongues) – Gentile languages.
 - So Jews would be hearing the message of God in Gentile languages – this is a prophecy – a sign.
 - Vs 22 – Here then is God’s purpose in giving tongues on the day of Pentecost. He gave it for a sign to unbelievers (referring in context to Jews).
 - A sign to shame them – a sign of judgment.
 - The message of God had always come through the Jew, now it would come through Gentiles.
 - It was a fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy of judgment because of the hardness and rejection of the Jews for God’s message.
 - Paul also declares it was not for the church at all “but prophecy not for unbelievers but for believers” (prophecy here is the teaching of the Word of God). It is edification for the church.

What do we learn from this?

- Tongues was given for a sign for the Jews that they were judged by God – the Word of God was being taken from them (as they did not appreciate it) and given to Gentiles.
- Tongues was not for a church practice, it was for a sign to Jews, and fulfillment of prophecy.
- 1 Corinthians was written in AD 56 (Acts 18) a relatively early epistle (Scholarly estimates: Rom AD 57, Gal AD 56, Eph AD 61, Phil AD 62, Col AD 61, 1st Thess AD 51, 1st Tim AD 62-63). It is interesting that tongues is not mentioned in any other writing (other than Acts & 1st Corinthians).

This means that tongues was either not an issue with these other churches, or most likely had already ceased.

1 Cor 13:1-8

- **Vs 13:1-3** Paul uses exaggerated illustration to show that having gifts of tongues, and other gifts that are being exercised, and yet do not possess love it has no value. Love is the essence of true relationship with God (Mat 22:37-39; 1 John 3:14; 1 Tim 1:5).
- **Vs 13:4-7** Paul defines the supernatural nature of love – what love looks like.
- **Vs 13:8** Paul contrasts the lasting nature of love as compared to certain gifts.
 - **Done away** – *katargeo* – to abolish.
 - **Prophecy** – direct revelation from God.
 - **Knowledge** – communicating insights into the mysteries of God’s truth.
 - “Done away” is repeated in vs 10 with exclusive reference to prophecy & knowledge.
 - **Cease** – *pauro* – to come to an end.
 - **Tongues** – the ability to speak in another language previously unknown
 - The word “cease” used in other passages (Acts 20:1; 21:32) often related to “running its course” or “completing its purpose.”
 - The word “cease” was purposely used separately from “*done away*” in vs 8 so that it is not then necessarily connected to vs 10 “*done away*” when *the perfect comes*.
 - Heb 2:3-4 – the uses of signs, miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit is spoken in the past tense (vs 3) was confirmed. Hebrews was written in 67-68 AD, and this would strongly indicate tongues had already ceased by that date.
 - Certainly in 70 AD, at the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, Judaism ended (except as an exiled religion) as Christ had predicted. The warning of the sign as Paul stated in 1 Cor 14:22 had no further value.

What do we learn from this passage?

- The gift of tongues has no value of itself – what has value is a work of God in the heart “*do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or clanging cymbal*” (1 Cor 13:1). This means making noise is not sign for true conversion.
- Love, God’s kind of love, is the evidence of true relationship with God. The nurturing of love should be the goal of Christians, not showy gifts.
- Love, the reality of true conversion, will last while the gifts of prophecy, tongues, and knowledge all have an ending point.
- The ending of the gift of tongues is described separately and differently from the ending of prophecy, and knowledge. Its ending is associated with completion of its purpose, not with relationship to another factor.

Putting it all together:

- Speaking in tongues was a gift of the Spirit whereby men spoke in real human languages and dialect.
- Tongues was used at the initiation of the new age (the beginning of the last days) to confirm God’s presence on the Day of Pentecost.
- These gifts were sovereignly bestowed, not because men sought them.
- The Corinthian church was practicing the gift of tongues in the church in a manner unbecoming worship, and non-edifying to the body. Paul rebuked the Corinthians for their misuse, and clarified their purpose.
- The gift of tongues was fulfilled prophecy that because of Israel’s rejection of the truth God would speak to Israel in Gentile languages. This was a sign of God’s judgment for unbelieving Jews, not as a means of edification for individuals or the church.
- The gift of tongues ceased with the completion of its purpose. It is not mentioned again in later Scripture, nor by early church fathers, nor was it practiced in the church for more than 1600 years.