

# Deciphering Biblical Gifts of Tongues

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You and everyone else sensed it. Somehow this Feast of Weeks was going to be very special. Those gathered in the upper room grew fidgety in anticipation, not knowing what to expect.

You have been told by none other than Yahshua the Messiah Himself just before He ascended to the heavens that you and the other disciples were to wait for the sending of the Holy Spirit and “power.” What did He mean, anyway?

Suddenly, a deafening sound like a hurricane fills the room. Your immediate concern is that the roof may collapse. And then...what’s this? It looks as if everyone’s hair is on fire! You hurry down to the street and many come running over to ask what were those incredible sounds they heard. As you begin to explain the unbelievable event you have just witnessed, another astonishing things happens.

As you begin to relate the incident and other truths to the many foreigners gathering round, you suddenly realize that they understand perfectly every word you speak. Every one of them. And they don’t speak your language! They don’t even speak the same language to one another.... If you could have been one of those in Acts 2 keeping the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost, this experience would have been permanently seared into your memory. You would have truly understood the power of the Holy Spirit.

Many today try to re-create these Pentecost phenomena in what they call baptism with the Holy Spirit. They claim that unless you have had a “charismatic experience,” that you do not show evidence of the Holy Spirit working in you. By that they specifically mean you must “speak in tongues.”

The tongues they talk of is an unintelligible outpouring of sounds that follows a period of “calling down,” which means a gradual building up of emotions.

## Is Sincerity Alone A Test of Truth?

Witnesses to charismatic meetings claim they see sincere people who really do believe they are empowered with the Holy Spirit. And for some, that’s all the evidence they need.

But is sincerity alone the test of truth? Millions of Moslems are sincere in their faith, too, more sincere than many Christian are in theirs. In their devotion Moslems take time out from whatever they are doing five times a day to pray toward Mecca.

Many millions of Hindus are sincere as well in their pagan worship – in their self-denial and focus on higher consciousness. Would you say, based on sheer sincerity, that Islam and Hinduism are true religions? Of course not. You and millions of others believe otherwise because the Bible tells us differently.

Yahshua warned in Matthew 15 that even though people profess a sincerity, they may be totally deceived. *“This people draws nigh unto me with their mouth, and honors Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men,”* vv. 8-9.

It is possible to worship Yahweh in utmost sincerity and do it all for nothing. We can worship in vain!

## A Unique Event in Acts 2

What does the Bible teach about “speaking in tongues” anyway? Is it a gift everyone should possess as proof that they have the Holy Spirit?

We find no command in Scripture to seek or perform miracles. We do, however, find that we are to study and obey Yahweh's Word, 2Timothy 2:15. Always keep in mind that we must never base our worship of Yahweh on what man says. We want His Word – the Bible itself – to teach us. When faced with what seems a contradiction or problem, we must let the Bible itself resolve that, too.

So let's go back to the Pentecost observance in Acts to see what exactly took place when the manifestation of the Holy Spirit occurred to the disciples of Yahshua. This is the ONLY Biblical account giving details of the "tongues" phenomenon.

The entire narrative begins in Acts 2:1:

*"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.*

*"And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

*"And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language [Greek dialektos].*

*"And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, 'Behold, are not these which speak Galileans?*

*"And how hear we every man in our own tongue [dialektos], wherein we were born?*

*"Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the three parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews, and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of Elohim.'*

*"And they were all amazed, and were in doubt saying one to another, 'What does this mean?'*

*"Others mocking, said, 'These men are full of new wine.'"*

## **Like Wind and Fire**

How many today really understand what happened on that memorable Feast called Pentecost and WHY it happened?

The key to the entire event is found in what Yahshua told the disciples in the previous chapter. This is when He said that the Holy Spirit was about to come:

*"But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and you shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth," Acts 1:8.*

He said that when the Holy Spirit came they would get power. We will learn later that the Holy Spirit constitutes the power of Yahweh. Once endowed with that power they would be witnesses for Him in nations around the world. In other words, they would be able to communicate the truth about Yahshua and His teachings to other nationalities. These nationalities would be speaking various languages.

## **A Unified Body**

Let's see how all of this was accomplished.

First, notice in chapter 2 verse 1 that they were “*ALL WITH ONE ACCORD*” and in one place when Pentecost was fully come. This was a High Day meeting, a special, Biblically commanded observance and one of the seven annual Feasts of Leviticus 23.

The gift they were about to receive was not given to unify people of diverse doctrines and beliefs, as “speaking in tongues” is used today. The Holy Spirit was given because they were ALREADY unified. No doctrinal divisions or differences existed among them. Those who received the Holy Spirit were brethren of the early, True Assembly, who worshiped Yahweh and kept the seventh-day Sabbath, Feast days, and other laws.

A person receives the Holy Spirit at baptism only AFTER repentance and committing to a life in Yahweh – to live in harmony with the ways of the Creator. “*And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Spirit, whom Yahweh has given to them that obey Him,*” Acts 5:32. The Spirit is imparted once a repentant and changed heart is manifest. Yahweh does not grant the power of His Holy Spirit to a rebellious, unconverted sinner. A submissive and pliable heart desiring to change must come first.

There was a prior purpose for their coming together that day – to fulfill the Biblical command to keep this Feast of Pentecost or Feast of Firstfruits. This was nine days AFTER Yahshua had ascended to the heavens. The “Old Testament” Feasts were still in effect and these disciples of Yahshua were in obedience to Yahweh’s laws.

Most of those who engage in the modern “speaking in tongues” phenomenon in imitation of what took place in Acts 2 completely overlook WHY they gathered. If they are imitating what happened in Acts 2, should they not be coming together annually on the Holy Days of the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost)?

Either the disciples never got the message that these days had been abolished, or the Savior’s death did NOT do away with these holy days. And why is it that some churches today will acknowledge “Pentecost Sunday” but ignore the six other annual Holy Days? Request our free booklet, **Biblical Holy Days** and learn about the seven important Feast days still in effect today.

### **Unique Among Experiences**

There has never been a duplication of the phenomena we see in verse 2 and 3 in any charismatic meeting since apostolic times.

No one in Acts had to “pray down” the Holy Spirit by agonizing, pleading, crying, chanting or repeating certain words or phrases. They didn’t need a leader or prompter to get them in the mood. The power of Yahweh came instantly from heaven and those gathered were caught completely by surprise and, no doubt, were quite startled.

Modern charismatics, on the other hand, believed they must seek the gift of glossolalia (Greek *glossa lalaia*) and so developed “tarry” meetings within Pentecostalism, as groups of people will ‘tarry’ and be taught how to expand their consciousness in order to bypass the intellect and to open themselves up to the baptism of the Spirit,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, pp. 1102-1103.

Today’s typical charismatic gathering with its shouting, pleading, dancing about, and “praying down” is not unlike EliYah’s experience with the 450 prophets of Baal, who cried out from morning to noon, leaping on their altar and cutting themselves in a futile attempt to gain the attention of their deity Baal (1Kings 18:26, 28). Emotionalism in worship was part of the ritual of pagan mystery religions, as we will see.

Furthermore, we read that the disciples were sitting when the Holy Spirit came to them, not standing, rolling on the floor, convulsing or leaping frenetically about. Nor do we find any of

them falling backward as the Spirit came, but it hovered about each of their heads. Nowhere in Scripture do we see real gifts of the Spirit operating when someone is out of control or under a supernatural seizure. A characteristic of the Spirit is self-control, Galatians 5:22-23.

Has anyone ever heard of or seen the following, supernatural phenomena in any modern tongues meeting:

- Deafening sound of a mighty wind?
- Fire-like flames above everyone's head?
- A multitude of foreign languages being spoken, and each being understood by someone else?

If we are to genuinely duplicate this outpouring of the Holy Spirit that we see in Acts 2, then surely these same miracles should be repeated today. Not also that the miraculous sounds – as well as SIGHTS – were initiated EXCLUSIVELY by the Holy Spirit and did not arise from the mouths or actions of human beings.

Why was there a sound of wind when the Holy Spirit came? The Hebrew term for the Holy Spirit is *Ruach Ha Kodesh* and means “The Hallowed Wind.” In the Greek it is *Pneuma Hagion*, meaning “Sacred Wind or Breath.” In John 20:22 Yahshua gave His disciples the firstfruits promise of the Holy Spirit. He did this when He “*breathed on them.*” Wind is associated with the Holy Spirit's power, the invisible force and extension of Yahweh Himself. Evidence shows that they still did not have the Holy Spirit working within them until Acts 2.

When the Holy Spirit was poured out, all 120 were filled with this power from Yahweh, Acts 2:4. How many can claim that ALL at their charismatic meetings “receive the Holy Spirit” and speak in recognizable languages as they did in Acts 2?

### **Familiar Languages Spoken**

The word “tongues” in verse 4 is the Greek word *glossa* and means either the physical tongue or a language. This was not gibberish or some language unfamiliar to everyone, as we will see.

The word “tongue” or “tongues” occurs 60 times in the New Testament, and in none of them does it refer to strange and unknown speech. In 50 of those instances the word is *glossa*, meaning the physical tongue or known language.

Of the remaining 10 places where we find the word tongue(s), the Greek word is *dialektos* (occurring 5 times) and means discourse, dialect, language, tongue. *Hebraisti* occurs in 4 places and means Hebrew language. Occurring once is *heterglossos*, which means foreign tongues or languages.

All of these Greek words translated tongue(s) in the New Testament expresses either the physical muscle in the mouth or a recognizable language.

From verses 5 and 6 we learn that numerous Jews from many different countries were in Jerusalem at the time of Pentecost. At least 15 nations were represented, and a listing of the nations represented follows. These foreigners spoke a variety of languages and dialects.

What was astonishing was that “*every man heard them speak in his own language*” (vv. 6, 8, 11). Have you ever heard of such a thing happening today? A missionary travels to a foreign country and teaches, fully conversant in the language of the people without any prior knowledge of that language? The 120 were able to do exactly that.

This was one of the great miracles of Pentecost. It was one of the most astounding events of all history. And it happened just as Yahshua said it would: they would be empowered to be witnesses of Him to foreign peoples!

What passes for the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” today in charismatic meetings bears little resemblance to the Pentecost experience in Acts with in purpose or in the particular phenomena.

### **It Was WHAT Was Said, Not How**

We are awed by the way the Holy Spirit was first manifest to mankind. As miraculous as it was, however, it was only a tool, a means to an even more important end.

What most don't realize is that this gift to speak foreign languages was not only to further the Good News, but was also to show that Yahweh was now calling other peoples unto Himself, others besides Jews! We will see this more fully when we look at the few incidents where this gift of tongues was given.

The 120 were ministering "the wonderful works of Yahweh," verse 11. The multitude listening were "amazed" and were "in doubt" concerning what they said, not in how the disciples said it! (verse 12). The message was the resurrection of Yahshua the Messiah, as Peter detailed it in the verses that follow (14-36).

Many today want only the signs and miracles rather than the more important message behind those miracles, brought through the Word. They seek only the gifts while lacking the necessary spiritual understanding that leads to a changed life and obedience. They want the sign first, before they will believe and obey Yahweh. Of these Yahshua warned in Matthew 16:4, "*A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign...*"

In other words, unconverted people who disobey Yahweh's laws seek the Holy Spirit and gifts that are in fact given to the obedient (Acts 5:32).

Little has changed since the days of the Apostles.

### **The Real Power Was in the Message**

Using this gift of a supposed ability to "speak in tongues" as the only evidence that one has the Holy Spirit is not only unscriptural, but also totally misses the point of the gift!

As was typical in Scripture, Yahweh was presenting great truths to unbelievers by way of miracles. It was a means of getting their attention. For the most part the Jews did not believe Yahshua was the Savior, let alone that He was resurrected from the dead. The miracle at Pentecost fulfilled Yahshua's promise of the event and helped to confirm that He was who He said He was.

The miracles that accompanied the Acts 2 message were not the most significant aspect of what happened, but the death and resurrection of Yahshua was. It was the power of Peter's dynamic sermon that converted 3,000 people that day, Acts 2:40-41.

The ability to speak in other languages was simply a tool as well as a way to add convincing proof of the message Yahshua taught.

Only a small number of disciples were sent to a vast number of people from different nations and tongues. To facilitate this work, the gift of speaking in various languages was given to them. Remember, though, that the message was the reason for their ministry, not the ability to speak languages without having learned them – which was only the means to TRANSMIT the message.

### **Only Three Instances of Tongues**

There are only three instances in the New Testament where speaking in tongues or languages followed the giving of the Holy Spirit. Each time it was to a specific and different group of people to show that they, too, were included in the Body of the Messiah.

➔ The first instance we've already seen. It was to Jews "*dwelling in Jerusalem, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.*" When they were convicted and asked Peter what they needed to

do next, Peter told them to repent and be baptized in the Name of Yahshua for the remission of sins, Acts 2:38.

Verse 39 explains clearly the reason for bringing the message of salvation to these Jews (with the aid of miraculously spoken languages): *“For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as Yahweh our Elohim shall call.”*

Who else is called? Let’s look at the remaining instances where foreign languages were miraculously spoken.

→ The second instance is in Acts 10, when Peter and converted Jews went to Caesarea at the invitation of the Gentile Cornelius, a Roman centurion. After Peter heard of the invitation Yahweh inspired in Cornelius, Peter said, *“Of a truth I perceive that Elohim is no respecter of persons but in very nation he that fears Him, and work righteousness, is accepted with Him,”* Acts 10:34-35. Notice verses 45-46:

*“And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify Yahweh.”*

The Holy Spirit’s gift of languages was a demonstration that nay Gentile can be called by Yahweh to be in the Body of the Messiah.

What impressed them was not so much the supernatural gift, but to WHOM it was given: *“When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified Elohim, saying, Then has Elohim also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life”* (Acts 11:18).

Had they had not seen the gifts, the Jews may not have believed the Gentiles were included in the promise.

And what did they hear these Gentiles speak, gibberish? No, it was the same gift that he and the other disciples received on Pentecost, the ability to speak *glossa* – languages! Peter confirmed that Yahshua gave them the same gift “as He did unto us” (Acts 11:15, 17).

→ The last instance is in Acts 19:6-7. Here are 12 disciples of John the Baptist who had undergone the baptism of repentance under John. They had not understood or complied with the baptism of salvation through Yahshua the Messiah. Their ability to speak in languages (*glossa*) after Paul immersed them in Yahshua’s Name showed that they also had been accepted. Now these brethren could evangelize Ephesus and its hinterlands through speaking the various languages there.

### **A Sign for the Unbelieving**

Paul clearly explained the purpose for the gift to speak in languages: *“Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not,”* 1Corinthians 14:22. Yet today we find people who already believe (in their own way), trying to convince their believing brethren with a tongues sign intended for unbelievers!

Once the New Testament could be written and distributed all over the world, with the proofs recorded for us, there was no need for the gifts to speak in languages. That is why Paul said in 1 Corinthians 13:8 *“whether there be tongues [glossa], they shall cease...”*

The Book of Acts is a record of the early Assembly in transition. The supernatural phenomena we read about in Acts were exceptional events with a specific purpose, not everyday occurrences, and were always in association with the ministry of the apostles and with apostles or their direct appointees present. The decreasing frequency of miracles is dramatic from the beginning of Acts to the end. Twenty-five years after the New Testament Assembly was established, when many miracles were performed, we find the Apostle Paul suffering from a

disability (2Cor. 12:7-10) and unable to cure Timothy of ailments (1 Tim. 5:23). He also left a brother sick at Miletus (2Tim. 4:20).

The Biblical phenomenon of “speaking in tongues” is the ability to speak in unlearned, foreign languages. This gift of the Holy Spirit had a two-fold purpose:

1. to communicate the Good News to foreigners expeditiously and
2. to prove through the manifestation of the Holy Spirit that non-Israelites as well as Jews could now be included in the New Covenant.

The Greek expression, *glossa lalein*, meaning “to speak in tongues,” is used infrequently in the New Testament – found in only three New Testament books: Mark, Acts, and 1Corinthians. If this is the most desired and glorious gift, why is it not more prominent throughout the New Testament? And why does Paul continually downplay the significance of the gift of tongues, even while cautioning its use? Because he knew how it would be abused and misunderstood!

Paul is the only writer who deals with the gift of tongues in depth – in 1Corinthians 12-14. In 1 Corinthians 14 he zeroes in on tongues and offers a detailed and enlightening assessment and purpose of tongues as it compares with the other gifts of the Spirit.

### **1Corinthians 14 Examined**

Let’s look at **1Corinthians 14** verse by verse to see what else we can learn about the phenomenon of speaking in tongues from the teaching of Paul.

We begin in **verse 1**: “*Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that you may prophesy.*”

Love (charity) is essential for the True Worshiper. Without his or her faith is in vain. He or she should also desire the gifts of the Spirit, and the most important of these is to prophesy.

“Prophesy” is the Greek *prophetes* and means to speak under inspiration or to foretell events. *Cruden’s Complete Concordance* says, “Ordinarily this word is understood as meaning one who foretells future events. It meant, at that time our English Bible was being translated, also a preacher – and prophesying meant preaching,” p.517. Inspired teaching of others should be a highest of goals for the True Follower of Yahshua.

**14:2**: “*For he that speaks in an unknown tongues speaks not unto men, but unto Elohim: for no man understands him; howbeit in the spirit he speaks mysteries.*”

You will note that in some Bibles like the **KJV**, the word “unknown” is in italics in this verse and throughout this chapter. This means it was not in the Greek text, but was added by translators who thought they were making the meaning clearer. The meaning is clear when we remove the supplied word “*unknown*.” The non-italicized, legitimate word “unknown” is found only three times in the entire New Testament and in none of them is it in reference to speaking in tongues. (See 2Cor. 6:9, Gal. 1:22, Acts 17:23.)

*As The Complete Biblical Library* explains, “‘Tongues’ do not edify anyone else because no one can understand what is being said unless there is interpretation or, as occasionally happens, the ‘tongues’ are in a foreign language understood by someone present. Only [Yahweh] understands. ‘Not unto men’ shows that, whatever the intention, the person speaking in tongues still speaks only to [Yahweh]. If there is no interpretation, and no one present understood the language, then only [Yahweh] understands...The public assembly is not the place for such ‘private’ communion, unless the gift of interpretation is operating to produce edification” (Vol. Romans-Corinthians, p. 435).

By [or with] the “spirit” [*pneumati*] does not refer to the Holy Spirit, but to the person’s own spirit (see vv. 14, 15).

**14:3:** *“But he that prophesies speaks unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.”*

An inspired speaker has an important purpose. He is able to edify or build up the brethren, to teach and to comfort them. By doing so he displays true love, just as Yahshua did.

In the preceding chapter, Paul writes, *“If I should speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am becoming as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal,”* 13:1. Concern for the welfare of the brethren is love.

**14:4:** *“He that speaks in an unknown tongue edifies himself; but he that prophesies edifies the assembly.”*

Notice a crucial point here – the focus of this entire 14<sup>th</sup> chapter: Paul says that a person who speaks to the assembly in a foreign tongue essentially edifies HIMSELF. But he who speaks inspired, completely understandable words to the people edifies THE BRETHREN. So, which is more important?

Paul’s basic theme here is the need to edify, teach, exhort, correct, guide, and comfort the gathered assembly. He repeats throughout this chapter that the purpose of our speaking should be to educate and build up the Body of the Messiah, which we will see in upcoming verses.

Using a gift to speak in unlearned languages has the effect of self-edification, as it draws attention to the speaker and his gift. This by itself can overshadow any benefit to brothers and sisters in the faith. The significance is not HOW something is said but WHAT is said.

Spiritual gifts are not toys to play with, but tools to build with. To build the Body of Messiah is our purpose as True Worshipers.

**14:5:** *“I would that you all spake with tongues [glossa, languages], but rather that you prophesied: for greater is he that prophesies than he that speaks with tongues, except he interpret, that the assembly may receive edifying.”*

It is obvious that not all could speak in “tongues” (other languages). According to many charismatics, those who can’t speak in tongues do not have the Holy Spirit. But Paul says or implies no such thing. The gift to speak in foreign languages is only one of the gifts of the Spirit. Lacking it no more means one lacks the Spirit than does lacking any one of the other gifts.

Again, we see that the purpose for spiritual gifts is to benefit the assembly, which is possible through inspired speaking. If a person speaks in a foreign tongue, it is crucial that his words be translated, which is the meaning of “interpret” here.

Paul says he wishes all could speak in languages (*glossa*), but more importantly, that all could speak with inspiration. Only when a tongue is understandable can it edify the assembly.

**14:6:** *“Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?”*

What is the purpose of speaking in an unrecognizable language if it doesn’t convey understanding, knowledge, or teaching? The Body of Messiah receives no benefit if nothing of substance is learned. Again we see that the brethren of the Assembly are the ones who must gain by the experience or else it is fruitless.

**14:7-9:** *“And even things without life-giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? So likewise you, except you utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? For you shall speak into the air.”*

Here Paul strikes at the heart of the belief that speaking in tongues means gibberish. He illustrates his point with musical instruments. A pipe or harp is of no value unless it follows the

rules of music and produces a tune with order, harmony, and melody. A bugler who plays just any notes indiscriminately will get no one to respond to his battle call. A voice that doesn't speak a recognized pattern, and that doesn't follow the vocabulary, syntax, grammar, and rules of a language, is discordant and totally baffling to the hearers. To speak nonsense is the same as speaking to the wind, Paul says.

**14:10-11:** *“There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification. Therefore I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaks a barbarian, and he that speaks shall be a barbarian unto me.”*

The *Emphatic Diaglott* translates these verses from the Greek as, “It may be there are so many kinds of languages in the world, and no one is unmeaning; if, then I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be to the speaker a barbarian, and the speaker will be a barbarian to me.”

*The Expositor's Bible Commentary* says of this passage, “Paul's speaking of the languages of the world along with his reference to the ‘foreigner’ (‘barbarian’...) substantiates the conclusion that in his discussion of tongues he has in mind known foreign languages. *Phonai* (‘languages’) can at times mean ‘voices,’ ‘sounds’ (cf. v. 7; Rev. 5:2), but here in connection with *aphonos* (‘without meaning’), it indicates languages that can convey meaning by their systematic distinction of sounds. The ‘meaning’ (*dynamis*, literally ‘power’) of the language refers to its ‘power’ to convey meaning. In v. 12 Paul applies these things to the Corinthians – ‘so it is with you.’ They are, in short, to major in gifts that will strengthen the [Assembly]” (1Cor. 14:10-12, p. 273).

**14:12-17:** *“Even so you, forasmuch as you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that you may excel to the edifying of the assembly. Wherefore let him that speaks in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. Else when you shall bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupies the room of the unlearned say ‘Amen’ at your giving of thanks, seeing he understands now what you say? For you verily give thanks well, but the other is not edified.”*

Again, note the point Paul emphasizes throughout this chapter: What is the purpose in speaking if the speech is not understood? The purpose of spiritual gifts is to benefit the assembly of believers. If a person conveys a message in a foreign language, let him translate for all the others so they, too, can profit.

Anyone who has listened to a speech in a foreign language knows how immediately it becomes boring. Hearing sounds with no meaning is senseless unless something comprehensible can be interpreted from it. Any messages in an organized gathering is to understood and it's meaning a benefit to the hearers.

Even if he prays privately with the human spirit in a tongue, Paul will do so with personal understanding.

**14:18-19:** *“I thank Yahweh, I speak with tongues more than you all: Yet in the assembly I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.”*

Two points need to be made. Paul could speak in more languages than anyone else (“languages” is the proper Greek meaning of “tongues” here). Naturally he would be given that gift because he needed to take the Good News to the scattered Gentiles who spoke various languages and dialects.

Nowhere do we find that Paul spoke in tongues at his conversion, however. And neither did Peter, James, John nor Jude. Nor did Yahshua at His immersion when He received the Holy Spirit. If the gift to speak unintelligibly is essential to the receiving of the Spirit, surely we would see a demonstration of it in these prominent conversions and baptisms. Yet it is nowhere mentioned!

Paul says that when it comes to speaking in the Assembly, five words that make sense are better than ten thousand that don't.

**14:20:** *“Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be children, but in understanding be men.”*

Children hunger for the spectacular, the unusual, even the bizarre. Motion pictures with lots of action appeal to children. They find movies with depth of dialog boring, partly because they don't understand what's going on. The apostle tells us not to be like children when it comes to knowledge of Yahweh and His Word. Hunger for meaning and greater understanding – the meat of the word, Hebrews 5:12-14.

The showy, shallow display might be okay for the weak and immature, but adults need much more. They need wisdom and understanding that leads to spiritual growth. They need to transform their greater knowledge into action that benefits and leads others to a converted life. Manifesting the love of Yahweh in your life is more important than any of the gifts of the Spirit, no matter which one it is, 1John 5:3.

We need to put away childish things when we mature. But when it comes to malice Paul says to be like children. That is, children forgive and forget easily and quickly and go on to enjoy the company of a playmate who may have wronged them in a short time previously. They don't dwell on the wrong and plot ways to get even, all the while inflaming and prolonging the conflict.

**14:21:** *“In the law it is written, ‘With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this People; and yet for all that will they not hear Me, says Yahweh.’”*

This verse almost seems self-contradictory until we understand it. Paul refers to a prophecy, Isaiah 28:11: *“For with stammering lips and another tongue will He speak to this people.”* The point of the quotation is that if Israel would not hear the prophets, they would not hear even when he spoke to them, in punishment, through the curse of conquering Assyrians. The “other” tongues he refers to are the languages of these foreign nations.

**14:22-26:** *“Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serves not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. If therefore the whole assembly be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that you are mad? But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believes not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all. And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship Elohim, and report that Elohim is in you of a truth. How is it then, brethren? When you come together, every one of you has a psalm, has a doctrine, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.”*

Why should Paul be so concerned with the unlearned visitor to the assembly in this text? Because the gift of languages is a sign for the unbeliever! As explained in verse 21, unbelieving Israel was punished by foreign nations and, by extension, their foreign languages were a curse because of Israel's rebellion.

“Paul turned to the Old Testament to teach a truth. The law (*nomos*) in Jewish usage extended to Scripture in general –for them the Old Testament....Isaiah said that [Elohim] would

speak to His people ‘with stammering lips and another tongue,’ perhaps referring to the judgment of the coming Assyrian invasion. But he added, ‘They would not hear.’ There seems to be further meaning, referring to the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Early [Assembly]. Even though it was accompanied by a miracle of language and some believed, some would not respond” (*The Complete Biblical Library*, Vol. Romans-Corinthians, p. 445).

Yahshua told the Scribes and Pharisees – those who should believe and know the truth – that a wicked and adulterous generation wants to see signs. But the ONLY sign given it would be the three days and three nights that He would be in the tomb, as Jonah was in the belly of the fish, Matthew 12:39-40.

If everyone is speaking in different languages all at the same time when the visitor comes in, he will think they are all crazy, Paul says.

On the other hand, if a visitor comes to the assembly and hears good, solid, Biblical teachings, he will be convinced and convicted. Be certain that what you do in the assembly is done for the benefit of others and not yourself, Paul admonishes.

**14:27-28:** *“And if any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the assembly; and let him speak to himself, and to Elohim.”*

The apostle is concerned that the assembly may get carried away with the gift, and so admonishes the speaker to speak the foreign language in at most three sentences in succession [**Diaglott**]. Then, if no one can interpret for the rest, let the speaker be silent in the assembly. If no understanding can result, he would be wasting his time to continue speaking in another language. This is a far cry from everyone speaking all at one time and in unknown sounds!

We can glean an important fact about a Holy Spirit gift from these two verses. A gift is not something over which one has no control. A believer is not simply a mindless “channel” through which Yahweh speaks or acts.

The Holy Spirit does not dominate a person as a demon might, so that the person loses his faculties. The Spirit works in conjunction with a person’s will, which in the believer’s case is focused on Yahweh. That is why the Spirit is given to those who first repent, are baptized, and obey, Acts 5:32: *“And we are His witnesses of these things: and so is also the Holy Spirit, Whom Elohim has given to them that OBEY Him.”*

The Holy Spirit does not take over one’s mind or body, but works with that mind and heart already conformed to Yahweh’s will, as we will now see further.

**14:29-33:** *“Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If any thing be revealed to another that sits by, let the first hold his peace. For you may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. And the spirits [spiritual gifts] of the prophets are subject [under the control of] the prophets. For Elohim is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all assemblies of the saints.”*

These points need to be emphasized:

- Everything done in a public meeting must be to the edification and learning of those present.
- Proper order and decorum must be maintained at all times, in reflection of the nature of Yahweh Himself.
- Order is maintained when one is in control of oneself.

**14:34-35:** *“Let your woman keep silence in the assemblies: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also says the law. And if they learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the assembly.”*

All priests were male. Yahshua chose 12 disciples, all male. The writers of the books of the Bible were male. Yahweh had a reason for this.

Women are to be in subjection to their husbands, and not take a leading role in the assembly (Titus 2:5; 1Tim. 2:11-12). But that doesn't mean they can't teach on an individual basis and guide other women (Titus 2:4). Philip the evangelist had four daughters who prophesied, Acts 21:9. Paul says women who pray or prophesy are to have their heads covered, 1Corinthians 11.

These verses continue the principle that the assembly was to have structure and order, and not be a free-for-all as is often the case in charismatic gatherings.

**14:36-40:** *“What? Came the word of Elohim out from you? Or came it unto you only? If any man thinks himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of Yahweh. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant. Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order.”*

Paul anticipates argument from what he has written, and therefore seeks to squelch it at the start. He says that if anyone does not recognize my words as from Yahweh, let him not be recognized in the meeting (**NEB**).

The primary desire should be to teach under inspiration. To further that, the ability to speak in languages may be needed among foreigners and must not be discouraged. And if another language is used it must be interpreted for the rest or it is useless in its primary purpose: a teaching tool.

### **Gifts Aim at One Goal**

The problem that caused Paul to write this chapter, and the two before it, was an over-emphasis of one spiritual gift and its misuse in the Corinthian Assembly.

Yahweh's one Spirit gives all the gifts for one purpose – the edifying and building of the Assembly. Each gift is important in itself toward a particular end. No one particular gift should be seen to overshadow all the others.

Other spiritual gifts given to various individuals include: wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, stamina, discerning of spirits, and interpretation of languages, 1Corinthians 12:8-10.

Spiritual gifts are given and divided severally as Yahweh decides. Each has at least one of the gifts, and not everyone has the same gift. To desire just this one gift of “tongues” is to misunderstand Scriptures. For too many, the ability to speak in tongues is a kind of spiritual litmus test. Only in speaking in tongues do you show that you have the Holy Spirit, they assert.

What this is really saying is that the first work of the Holy Spirit is not enough. Drawing a believer to the truth, guiding him to a changed life through repentance and baptism, and then indwelling a new, regenerate person, is insufficient. The convert for the rest of his days must continually prove that the Holy Spirit is in him by speaking incoherently at public gatherings.

### **Post-baptism Baptism?**

We have shown by the Acts 2 account and from Paul's teaching in 1Corinthians 14 what really happened at Pentecost and why what was spoken through dynamic, Holy Spirit power was not gibberish but real languages.

By this very manifestation Yahweh demonstrated that the Holy Spirit was now available to Gentile converts as well. The overriding reason for the gift of languages was to give “*a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not,*” 1Corinthians 14:22.

The modern tongues movement has perverted this meaning. It has developed an elitist doctrine that implies that those who can “speak in tongues” are on a higher plane of spirituality than the average convert. Implicit in this attitude is that repentance and baptism for the remission of sins into a new covenant and life has little real significance, and that the Holy Spirit received by the laying on of hands at baptism is incomplete. An additional post-baptism “baptism of the Holy Spirit” is necessary, a notion the Bible nowhere suggests or supports.

Being filled with the Holy Spirit Scripturally means exercising the many, varied fruits of the Spirit such as love, joy, peace, gentleness, meekness and temperance. See Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 5:18-6:11.

Let’s look at some other ways in which charismatic teachings contradict the Scriptures.

### **Varied Manifestations of the Spirit**

A look at the Book of Acts reveals that there are no grounds for maintaining that the initial sign of a person’s receiving of the Holy Spirit was through an ability to speak in tongues, or even languages.

The Holy Spirit works in a number of different ways. What we find is that the gift of prophesying (teaching) far outweighs speaking in languages, as do the other gifts, 1Corinthians 12:28-31). The gift of tongues is put last.

In this reference, Paul tells us that not everyone has the same gift or gifts. There are many gifts, distributed individually to whomever Yahweh desires. Today’s charisma tics emphasize this one gift, and sometimes healing as well, to the virtual ignoring of others.

When the multitude heard Peter’s message in Acts 2 and asked what they needed to do for salvation, Peter responded, “Repent and be baptized in the Name of Yahshua for the remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit,” verse 38. All 3,000 of them were immediately immersed, and verse 41 says they were added to the Body. Nowhere do we find that these 3,000 people spoke in any form of different language, nor did any sound of wind or fire-like tongues appear. Neither do we find such a thing happening to such prominent people as Stephen, Apollos, Barnabas, Silas, Priscilla and Aquila, Dorcas, or Yahshua the Messiah Himself.

Paul wrote in 1Corinthians 12:13, “*For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body...and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*” These 3,000 all were accepted into the Body of Believers (Acts 2:47) yet we find no one among them speaking in tongues, which says volumes about how supposedly indispensable this phenomenon is.

Promoters of the tongue phenomenon use such terms as baptism of the Spirit, full gospel, latter rain, and second blessing. The terminology itself suggests that the movement is far more interested in an extraordinary experience than in an unshakable foundation in truth based on solid, Biblical teaching and imparting spiritual knowledge.

If the “experience” is everything, we cannot find any evidence that Paul’s companions on the road to Damascus were the least bit converted by the fantastic experience they shared with the apostle.

They exhibited no sign of any change, not even while they must have stood there terrified and speechless over the flash of light that knocked Paul down and that booming, heavenly voice – after which Paul was blinded and converted.

John tells us in 16:13-14 that the work of the Holy Spirit is to teach Yahshua and glorify Him, not simply to put on a display among those who already believe. The modern, charismatic tongues experience is guilty in practice of magnifying the Holy Spirit over the Heavenly Father

and His Son. Doing so is to idolize the Holy Spirit, a flagrant violation of the First Commandment – giving more honor to the gift than to the Giver.

### **Beware of Mind Manipulation**

What is particularly disturbing is the similarity between charismatic meetings and some occult meetings, where adherents gather to pool their energies and beckon spirit powers through mind control. What they get may not be of Yahweh.

The *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* notes, “The glossalalist does indeed behave differently from ordinary language speakers...We may now suggest that glossalalia be defined as an event of vocalization while the speaker is in a state of disassociation termed trance.”

We are warned in 1Peter 5:8 to be sober and vigilant because Satan the devil walks about, seeking whom he may devour. We must never “let our minds go” as we focus on one word or phrase. This is a prime technique of the spiritists, and the method by which the mind is opened to the influence of the Adversary.

Yahweh is not author of confusion (1Cor. 14:33), a situation that seems to prevail at tongues gatherings. Confusion tears down and destroys. A person who causes confusion destroys fellowship, and many groups have broken up over the tongues issue.

The nature of the Holy Spirit is to build up, edify, to guide into truth, and strengthen spirituality. It never instigates disorder – neither collectively nor individually. That is the work of the Adversary.

Here is how the Scripture says we can know that the Holy Spirit is at work:

*“In each of us the Spirit is seen to be at work for some useful purpose. One, through the Spirit, has the gift of wise speech, while another, by the power of the same Spirit, can put the deepest knowledge into words. Another, by the same Spirit, is granted faith; another, by the one Spirit, gifts of healing, and another, miraculous powers; another has the gift of prophecy, and another the ability to distinguish true spirits from false; yet another has the gift of tongues of various kinds, and another the ability to interpret them. But all these gifts are the activity of the same Spirit, distributing them to each individual at will,”* 1Corinthians 12:7-11, **Revised English Bible**.

Who can argue that deep, life-changing, inner experiences resulting exclusively from serious Bible study and reflection on Yahweh’s Word are not significant? It is Yahweh’s truth from His Word that convicts us.

After studying thousands of samples of glossalalia, one linguistic expert concluded that “speaking in tongues” reflects no known or understood language. “Glossalalia is indeed like language in some ways, but this is only because the speaker wants it to be like language. But glossalalia is fundamentally not language,” William Samarin, professor of anthropology and linguistic, University of Toronto.

Significant is Samarin’s observation that a person’s own linguistic background will influence the sounds he utters while supposedly speaking the “language of the Holy Spirit.” He notes, “A human being simply cannot avoid being influenced by the patterns of language once he has acquired its use,” *Tongues of Man and Angels*.

### **The Best Spiritual Gifts**

The influence of the Pentecostals and others have been so marked that when most people are asked about spiritual gifts, they think of tongues.

Paul says in 1Corinthians 12 that each person in the Body of Messiah has a gift, and not all gifts are the same. The ability to speak in languages is listed last in verse 28. The charismatics would like to place their rendition of tongues at the top of Paul's list. Paul admonishes us, however, to seek the "best" gifts – those gifts that edify the brethren and not self.

In verse 28 Paul asks, "*Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?*" A negative response is implied. The individual gifts are given as Yahweh wills (1Cor. 12:7-11), and no one gift is possessed by everyone, including tongues. This hold true even if one erroneously believes that tongues means ecstatic utterances.

Each gift is used to build the Body of Messiah, and that is done primarily through teaching Yahweh's wonderful plan of salvation and obedience to His way of life. "*That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another,*" verse 25.

That is the great work of the Holy Spirit!

### **How Truth Is Tested**

The Bible teaches us to test our experience against sound Biblical teaching, and not base our teaching and beliefs on personal experiences. Personal experience is not the test of truth, Yahweh's Word is. Yahshua prayed, "*Sanctify them through your truth: your word is truth*" (John 17:17). We are set apart for His purpose through the truth of Yahweh's Word.

Yahweh's Word is final and complete (Ps. 119:89; Isa. 8:20; Rev. 22:18). The Bible is not waiting for a latter-day prophet or prophetess to further its message of effectiveness. The Word is forever settled once and for all in heaven and is profitable for our instruction in all righteousness, 2Timothy 3:16. As Jude 3 reveals, the of truth was once – for all time – delivered (aorist passive participle meaning a finished revelation) to the saints.

Paul prophesied that a time would come when people would no longer rely on sound doctrine, but would "turn their ears from the truth, and shall be turned into fables [*mythous, myths*]."

### **Some Popular Passages Examined**

Those who promote utterances often will point to the following passages in support of their belief. Let's take a look at these.

- **Mark 16:17:** "*And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues.*" (Although many scholars question whether this verse and the last 12 verses of Mark 16 are in the inspired text or were added by translators, we will assume verse 17 is legitimate.)

This passage is often referred to as proof that the gift of tongues is a sign for believers today. At the same time the other "proof" gifts mentioned here and elsewhere are typically overlooked by most charismatic, which include, casting out demons, immunity to venomous serpents, harmlessly drinking deadly poison, cleansing lepers, and raising the dead (Matt. 10:8).

This prophecy of "sign gifts" was fulfilled by Paul and the Apostles in places like Acts 5:16, 6:8, 8:7, 9:40, 16:18, 19:11-16, and 28:5. These miraculous acts were to gain recognition for the Assembly, a portent of the Kingdom.

Furthermore, the adjective "new" tongues is the Greek *kainas*, which means of a common kind but different in character, and not brand new (which is the Greek *neos*, meaning what was not known before, as would apply to a heavenly language). Tongues is *glossa*, meaning a

recognized, human language but a different language from what a person normally speaks – a **kainas** tongue.

● **Romans 8:26:** “*Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*”

“Cannot be uttered” is a phrase that derives from the Greek *alaletos*. It means unutterable, or as the **Diaglott** translates it, “unspoken groans.” Paul says that the Spirit intercedes for us before Yahweh through communication that we can’t utter. How can this passage support speaking ecstatically in an unknown tongue if the communication cannot be enunciated?

In actuality, His Spirit works with our spirit as we seek Yahweh earnestly in a prayerful attitude. The **NEB** translates the phrase: “but through our inarticulate groans the Spirit [itself] is pleading for us.” Yahweh knows our very thoughts.

● **1Corinthians 12:13:** “*For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*”

Some contend that the baptism discussed here is “by” the Spirit, but baptism “with” the Spirit (in tongues) is something different and it comes later, they believe. (This is often called the doctrine of subsequence.) The Bible nowhere supports this teaching. The words “by one Spirit” (1Cor. 12:13) and the words “with” or “into” the Spirit (Matt. 3:11, Mark 1:8, John 1:33) all come from the single Greek word “*en*.”

There is no difference between being baptized “in,” “into,” “by,” or “with” the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is given to us after immersion through the laying on the hands of the elders (1Tim. 4:14), and it remains a part of us for life unless Yahweh chooses to remove it for cause (Ps. 51:11), or we quench the Spirit ourselves. The convert does not need, nor is given, a separate baptism “with” the Spirit at some later time. Ephesians 4:5 tells us: “...*there is...one Master, one faith, ONE BAPTISM.*”

● **1Corinthians 13:1:** “*Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.*”

Some refer to this verse to show that Paul spoke in unknown, angelic languages. The word “though” here is the Greek *ean* and is a conditional particle. **Strong’s Greek Dictionary** says it means “in case that,” “provided,” or “if.” The **NIV Study Bible** note says of this verse, “Paul uses hyperbole [exaggeration]. Even if he could speak not only the various languages that human beings speak but even the language used by angels – if he did not speak in love it would be nothing but noise.”

Here the Apostle focuses on tongues “because of the exaggerated importance which the Corinthians attached to this gift,” **Word Studies in the New Testament**, p. 794. Paul indeed had the gift to speak in foreign languages, but in Assembly meetings he said that would rather speak words he himself understood, 1Corinthians 14:18-19.

### **Begging the Questions**

The following questions regarding the modern practice of “speaking in tongues” are answered in light of Bible truth:

- Is speaking in tongues the same as baptism of the Holy Spirit?
- Is there a Biblical basis for ecstatic utterances?
- Do all believers need to speak in tongues?
- Is speaking in tongues the only evidence that one has the Holy Spirit?
- Is speaking in tongues necessary for salvation?

- Compared to a compliant heart, does speaking in tongues lead to a closer walk with Yahshua?
- Does speaking in tongues transmit truth not already available in Scripture?

From experience and Biblical exegesis, each of these questions elicits a negative answer.

Another question that strikes at the very problem of the modern tongues phenomenon is this: If “speaking in tongues” as practiced today by 20 percent of Christianity is truly a result of direct contact with the Holy Spirit – which reveals all knowledge and truth – how can the Spirit tolerate such a wide range of conflicting doctrines and erroneous teachings among those through whom it is supposed to be communicating?

After all, those claiming this gift come from such disparate factions as Roman Catholics, Calvinists, liberal and conservative Protestants, and even those who reject the inspiration of Scripture.

Do we really believe that Yahweh’s Holy Spirit, which Yahshua said is the spirit of truth (John 15:26), works indiscriminately through everyone regardless whether they hold and practice false teachings and opposing beliefs? Why doesn’t the Holy Spirit correct all the erroneous beliefs of those who claim to use it to speak in tongues?

Isn’t it more plausible that the unholy spirit is at work here in its continuing efforts to deceive and confuse?

One final point: If speaking in tongues is genuine communication from Yahweh, should it not always be spoken using the true Name of Yahweh and Yahshua?

Yahshua Himself said, “*And I have declared unto them your name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith you have loved me may be in them, and I in them*” (John 17:26). The Holy Spirit teaches the truth of Yahshua and helps us recall it, which includes the proclamation of the sacred Name:

“*But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send IN MY NAME, [it] shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, WHATSOEVER I HAVE SAID UNTO YOU*” (John 14:26). Yahshua came in and declared His Father’s Name. Request the booklet, **Our Savior Spoke the Sacred Name**.

### **Ecstatic Tongues in Ancient Mystery Worship**

The use of ecstatic gibberish in a religious service is an age-old phenomenon. It is a practice rooted in ancient mystery worship.

For example, the ancient Greeks worshiped their wine god Dionysus this way:

“In Hellenistic circles also, followers of the Dionysian cult, or some mystery religion, under powerful emotional pressures of ceremonial rites, often slipped into ecstatic states bordering on frenzy, and expressed themselves in forms intelligible only to the initiated. Through the centuries glossolalia has frequently reappeared among Christian groups, the Montanists, the Camisards, the Irvingites, and many modern sects given to emotional extremes. The psychological aspects are patent.” --*The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 4, p. 672. (The adjective *Dionysian* means, “Of an ecstatic, orgiastic, or irrational nature; frenzied or undisciplined,” **American Heritage Dictionary**.)

Another source writes, “H. Kleinknecht considers ‘speaking in tongues’ at Corinth as ‘a reflection of Pythian prophesying.’ At Delphi the Pythia, or priestess, stammers forth obscure expressions as well as understandable prose when caught up in the ‘spirit’ and moved to ecstasy (Greek *ekstasis*). The physical effects of Pythian ecstasy are ‘screaming hair, panting breath,

violent filling or seizing or snatching away in a Bacchantic frenzy.' In Delphi that which Pythia brings forth is interpreted by priests who are in a state of self-control.

"The physical experience of the *mantis* or 'diviner' is 'ecstasy' so that once caught up in a frenzy he is incapable of assessing what he sees and says. In contrast, Paul shows that the one speaking in tongues is always in control." -- *Speaking in Tongues*, Gerhard F. Hasel, p. 131.

Plato, the pagan Greek philosopher, describes how the Greek viewed displays of ecstasy in worship in this manner:

"Weiss collects allusions to practices like speaking in tongues from Jewish and Greek writers. He stresses that Paul's language plainly distinguishes between the speech of the spirit, which cannot be understood. This second kind of speech is analogous to what the Greeks called 'ecstasy.' Weiss quotes Plato...'The best kind of ecstasy is an inspired seizure and madness which the prophetic kind of person uses...Ecstasy, inspired seizure, and madness occurred when the sun went down.'" ---*Anchor Bible*, 1Corinthians 14.

### **The Facts of the Matter**

A look at each of the circumstances and situations in the New Testament leaves us with these facts concerning the giving of the Holy Spirit:

- Yahweh gives as it pleases Him.
- Immersion in water is necessary.
- Speaking in languages is for the reaching of foreigners, a sign of unbelievers.
- Begging for the Spirit and repeating phrases, words, and sounds is not part of the granting of the Spirit anywhere in Scripture.
- Various gifts are given, not just one, for the edification of others.

Our prayer is that you will be called to the salvation of Yahshua through immersion and the receiving of His Holy Spirit.

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