

Last Week:

- √ “What Really Happened at Pentecost” was the giving of the Holy Spirit to all believers – GOD IN US
- √ That the “gift of the Holy Spirit” promised in Acts 2:38 is the Holy Spirit Himself, not the gifts of speaking in tongues or any other gift
- √ That the interpretation of this verse largely determines one’s belief as to whether the spiritual “sign” gifts are for today
- √ Definitions of the 4 sign gifts. That miracles, healings, tongues and interpretation of tongues are a supernatural enabling to verify the Word and work of God as a human intermediary
- √ My statement of belief on the matter:

I have come to believe the following: (at the risk of offending those who disagree)

1. The spiritual gift of tongues, as well as the other “sign” gifts of miracles, healings and interpretation of tongues have ceased with the ending of the apostolic age and the completion of the New Testament. Neither the Word of God nor the work of God needs to be verified by attesting miracles as in the Old Testament or apostolic age. God’s completed Word and the sacrificial work of Jesus is all the verification that is needed.

2. Miracles and healings, as determined by God, still exist today – though not as spiritual gifts performed through specific human agents with supernatural gifting. In the same way, speaking in tongues and their interpretation apparently still exists today, though they also are not a “spiritual gift” but a Divine enabling for a specific person or circumstance – not for the edification of the body as a whole.

3. Speaking in tongues, as in the first century, are not for every believer, are not a “second blessing” nor the mark of a “full gospel” and are to be used with very specific guidelines as outlined in 1 Corinthians 14. We must also be leery of counterfeit manifestations of the Spirit. Yet, we are not to forbid to speak in tongues, for we must not “quench” the Spirit. God’s miraculous and manifold ways are ours to appreciate and bring praise to Him.

This week I promised a Biblical defense of my position.

1. To demonstrate that our spiritual beliefs must be substantiated by Scripture
2. To give you a Biblical basis for the cessationist view of sign gifts
3. To challenge those who disagree to search the Scripture, not just experience

Before I begin, I acknowledge that this subject does not directly aid us in our KNOWING Jesus as Savior and Lord, GROWING in our relationship with Him and GOING into our world in His name. But I maintain that a full knowledge of the teachings of Scripture and understanding of God's purposes is essential to a deeper relationship and appreciation of our Savior and God.

Jesus is the one true provision of God for our sin, our salvation and our eternal state with God. To know Him is everything – to fail to know Him in intimate relationship is to miss the purpose of life and have nothing.

And since this message is likely to have little cause laughter, which studies show increases learning – let me tell you this joke to get the “learning juices” flowing.

(JOKE: Catholic priest, Protestant minister & Jewish rabbi each wanting to show which was the best at conversion to their faith, so each tried to convert a bear.)

Note: “TONGUES” as referring to the spiritual gifts of speaking in tongues, is only mentioned in 3 New Testament passages: Mark 16, Acts 2 & 1 Cor. 12-14

A. THE SIGNS OF A TRUE APOSTLE: *Mark 16: 17-18* *“These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”*

1. Note: This passage is part of a lengthy paragraph concluding the gospel of Mark that is not found in the earliest manuscripts, but only in a few later ones. Thus, it was probably added at a later time – after tongues had been experienced at Pentecost – otherwise, this is a unique pre-Pentecost prediction of tongues. More likely it lists together the apostolic sign gifts experienced in the early church.
2. We can conclude that these signs were NOT EXPERIENCED BY ALL who believed (since all do not have all gifts, as taught in 1 Cor. 12) but rather that ALL these gifts were found within the greater body of believers – again, consistent with the teaching of 1 Cor. 12.
3. Miracles (control over the spirit world, not control over the natural world) and healings are the same Spirit enablings that Jesus gave the 12 in Luke 9 and the 70 in Luke 10 This strengthens the case that the sign gifts were given to a few, rather than to many.

Luke 9:1-2 And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and

authority over all the demons, and to heal diseases, and He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God, and to perform healing.

Luke 10:9 [to the 70:] “and heal those in it who are sick, and say to them, ‘the Kingdom of God has come near to you’

Luke 10:17 And the seventy returned with joy, saying “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.” And He said to them, “I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. Behold, I have given you authority to read upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall injure you.”

4. There were likely the “signs of a true apostle” as spoken of in 2 Cor. 12:12

2 Corinthians 12:12 “The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles”

5. Note that the specific miracles mentioned (casting out demons, picking up serpents and drinking deadly poison unharmed) are not found today in the greater body of Christ, or within each local body. This tends to lend strength to the argument that these gifts are no longer in effect today, and ceased when the apostles ceased.

Ephesians 2:20 [the church...] having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone.

6. This verse gives us the category designation of “sign” gifts – namely, spiritual gifts that are a sign (or verifying act) to unbelievers of the word and work of God, and are not designed for the building up of the body (like the speaking and serving gifts)

7. Note also that Peter 4:11-12 does not mention sign gifts, but only speaking and serving gifts as those that are to be used for the benefit of the body. Probably by the time of Peter’s writings the sign gifts had ceased.

B. THE SIGN GIFTS LIMITED: Acts 2 – the story of Pentecost

Verse 3 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

Verse 6 ...they were each one hearing hem speak in his own language

1. The Biblical “law of first mention” states that the first usage of a word or concept tends to dictate that same use in following usages. The “tongues” of Acts 2 are clearly “glossalalia” = known languages, yet not learned by those speaking but understood by those who know the language. Thus, tongues in 1 Corinthians (same word) is this same phenomina.
2. Acts 2:43 says “wonders and signs [were] taking place through the apostles” - not through all. And the apostles died out with the first generation of

believers.

3. There are many conversions recorded in Acts, including the 3000 of Acts 2 where no mention of speaking in tongues is recorded. Therefore it must not be assumed that all who were saved and received the Holy Spirit spoke in tongues.
4. Only 2 other occurrences of speaking in tongues is recorded in Acts – both very specific as being reoccurrences of Pentecost: in 10:44-48 at Caesaria when the Holy Spirit came to the Gentiles and in 19:1-7 at Ephesus when the Holy Spirit came to the Old Testament Jews who had only been baptized for repentance and didn't know of Jesus. The attesting "sign" of tongues was given to verify the special work of God in these two groups.

C. THE PERFECTION OF THE SIGNS (Jesus and the Apostles)

John 4:48 "Unless you people see signs and wonders you simply will not believe.

Romans 16:19 "...in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit I have fully preached the gospel of Christ

1. Performed where people were in greatest need (not in a tent meeting)
2. Performed instantaneously (not progressively)
3. Performed totally (complete exorcism and healing – not partial)
4. Performed for everybody (not for just a select few; no one left needy)
5. Performed often – not occasionally

Acts 2:43 ... and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles

6. Performed for organic disease (leprosy, limbs restored, life restored, blind eyes made to see, deaf ears made to hear) not symptoms relieved, etc.
7. Results were life-lasting (not soon returning)

D. THE FADING OF THE SIGNS

1. Ephaphoditus remained sick (Philippians 2:25-26)
2. Timothy had frequent ailments (1 Timothy 5:23)
3. Trophimus was left sick at Mitetus (2 Timothy 4:20)
4. Paul himself had an unhealed illness (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)

E. THE CEASING OF THE SIGNS: 1 Corinthians (12-14)

13:8 *Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away, if there are tongues, they will cease, if there is knowledge, it will be done away.*

1. Note that prophecy and knowledge "will be done away" = "superceded" by "that which is perfect – which we take to mean the perfection of the coming of Jesus and His eternal Kingdom by the later references in verse 12 to "now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face." HOWEVER, tongues

will “cease” – a different word (Gk: “pano” = stopping of themselves = no longer needed)

2. Since sign gifts are to verify the Word and work of God, it makes sense that when the Canon of Scripture is completed toward the end of the first century it no longer needs attesting – it can attest for itself.
3. There is no Biblical mention of tongues after the writing of 1 Corinthians (an early letter). Plus, history teaches that the subject of tongues is virtually mute until the Pentecostal movement of the 20th century

14:22 *So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe, but to unbelievers; but prophecy is for a sign, not unbelievers, but to those who believe.*

4. Tongues were a verifying SIGN to unbelievers of the Word & work of God. So also as we have seen with the other sign gifts of miracles, healings and interpretation of tongues. This is in contrast to the purpose of “spirituals” taught in 1 Cor. 12 that spiritual gifts are for the edifying of the body of believers (such as prophecy mentioned in this verse)
5. Once the Word of God was complete, the Word verified itself in truth – there was no need for verifying miracles of demon control, healings or tongues, etc.

CONCLUSION and SUMMARY

1. It appears that the sign gifts were specifically given to the first century apostles, not to all
2. It appears that the sign gift of tongues was limited during the book of Acts – at Pentecost and at 2 other specific occurrences that reenacted the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost
3. The signs and wonders of both Jesus and the apostles were instantaneous, total, for all in need and often, healing organic disease
4. The ability to heal and performing of miracles seems to have faded during the first century.
5. The sign gifts seem to have ceased by the completion of the New Testament Canon of Scripture and dying out of the first century apostles.

APPLICATION

1. Miracles and healings still occur today – God is alive – though they occur through the faith and prayer of God’s people and in His Divine timetable, not through specific intermediaries nor by our timetable. We should PRAY for miracles and healing and BELIEVE God at work
2. Tongues appear to have reemerged in God’s church in the last century as a sign of the Spirit’s working in new ways. This is for some, not all. This is a sign for unbelievers, not for the church (1 Cor. 14:22).

3. 1 Cor 14:1 is our final guide for application: PURSUE THESE THREE:
a. love b. the use and receiving of “spirituals” c. the proclamation of God’s Word

Personal Definition:

PP Slide #1

SPIRITUAL GIFT ✓ *A ministry characteristic of the Holy Spirit,
✓ which God has given me in special abundance,
✓ through which I can supernaturally serve the body of Christ, the church*

The 16 Gifts Mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12 put into 3 categories:

Speaking (5)

PP

Slide #2

Prophecy, Teaching, Exhortation, Wisdom, Knowledge

Serving (7)

Faith, Discernment, Helps, Administration, Giving, Leading, Mercy

Sign (4)

Healing, Miracles, Tongues, Interpretation of Tongues

The 5 Speaking Gifts

PP Slide #

PROPHECY	(proclaiming the Word)
KNOWLEDGE	(understanding the Word)
WISDOM	(applying the Word)
TEACHING	(explaining the Word)
EXHORTATION	(ministering the Word)

PROPHECY The supernatural enabling to proclaim God’s truth in a timely, winsome way

KNOWLEDGE The supernatural enabling to understand God’s truth so as to observe and share deep spiritual truths

WISDOM The supernatural enabling to apply God’s truth with practical application to behavior

TEACHING The supernatural enabling to explain God’s truth so as to pass it on to another

EXHORTATION The supernatural enabling to minister God’s truth to another to comfort, strengthen and challenge

The 7 Serving Gifts

PP Slide #

LEADING	(guiding God's work)
ADMINISTRATION	(coordinating God's work)
FAITH	(believing God's work)
DISCERNMENT	(protecting God's work)
GIVING	(funding God's work)
MERCY	(personalizing God's work)
HELPS	(aiding God's work)

LEADING

The supernatural enabling to **guide**, cast vision and motivate the body to harmoniously accomplish God's purposes

ADMINISTRATION

The supernatural enabling to **coordinate** the proper working of the body so as to accomplish its goals through planning, organizing and supervising

FAITH

The supernatural enabling to **believe** God for great things, praying and acting with confidence in God's ability to accomplish His purposes

DISCERNMENT

The supernatural enabling to **protect** God's work by being able to accurately distinguish truth from error and good from evil

GIVING

The supernatural enabling to **fund** God's work by joyfully and generously contributing finances and resources

MERCY

The supernatural enabling to **personalize** God's work by showing compassion and relieving suffering through practical actions that reflect the love of Jesus

HELPS

The supernatural enabling to **aid** God's work by cheerfully accomplishing practical tasks to meet the needs of the body and support the ministry of others

The 4 Sign Gifts - verifying God's Word and work (1 Cor. 12:8-10)

MIRACLES

The supernatural enabling to verify the word and work of God by acting as a human intermediary through whom God regularly performs acts that alter the ordinary course of nature

HEALINGS

The supernatural enabling to verify the word and work of God by acting as a human intermediary through whom God consistently and completely cures human illness or disability in a person

TONGUES

The supernatural enabling to verify the word and work of God by speaking a divinely anointed message in a language one has never learned, and is able to be interpreted by one who knows the language or by one with the spiritual gift of interpretation

INTERPRETATION

The supernatural enabling to verify the word and work of God by being able to accurately translate the message of one who speaks in tongues without having ever learned the language spoken