

## Term 2 – Equipped by God for the Journey

### Lesson 14

#### Gifts of the Spirit: Part 6

In this final lesson on Gifts of the Spirit we will study the last two gifts. From **1 Corinthians 12:10** *“to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:”* Although these are separate gifts, we will study them together because they operate in a complementary manner within the church. Of the nine gifts mentioned in 1Corinthians 12:8-10, these two gifts are perhaps the most misunderstood and challenging gifts for the church today. Many dismiss them as gifts that were for a time past and not for us today. Perhaps this is because there are no “natural equivalents” to these gifts that can be understood or easily explained by man. Moving in either of these gifts only occurs by the Spirit. As anyone who has received these gifts will attest, this is beyond human understanding. This does not mean that the Lord left us without clear spiritual understanding and direction to operate these gifts. We look to the scriptures for Godly instruction on these gifts.

#### Divers Kinds of Tongues

For any believer, it is reasonable to question the necessity for speaking in a heavenly language (tongues). We believe it is the confirmation of a complete baptism in the Spirit (Holy Ghost). Why would I need to speak in another language as part of my faith in Christ Jesus and why would the Lord speak to His Church in another language? Speaking in tongues sounds like gibberish to those without spiritual understanding. How could such a thing possibly be of any benefit to the body of Christ? The answer is indeed impossible for the natural mind because the answer is spiritually discerned by one born again of the Spirit with revelation of the Word by the Spirit. **1 Corinthians 2:14** *“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”* **John 3:3** *“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”*

#### Spiritual Kingdom and Spiritual Battle

The nature of God’s kingdom and the battle for souls is revealed to us in scripture.

**Isaiah 28:11** *“For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.”*

**Ephesians 6:12** *“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”*

This is the answer to “why tongues?” We know that there are an incredible variety of languages spoken by man on the earth but this is not the extent of languages in all creation. Just as countries or kingdoms have their own languages, so too does the Kingdom of God. Our heavenly Father speaks to us in a spiritual language and we speak to our Heavenly Father (who is Spirit) in a spiritual language that is beyond our natural understanding. The Lord uses His temples (the church) to speak directly to the principalities, powers, rulers of darkness, and spiritual wickedness in high places, speaking as God speaks, not as natural man speaks. It is the most powerful language and is given to the church to speak and understand only by the Holy Ghost. **Acts 2:4** *“And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”*

**1 John 2:20** *“But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.”*

**Acts 19:6** *“And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.”* Tongues are an unknown language to natural man but it is known in the Spirit to accomplish things of the Spirit. It is used to speak mysteries of God to the church by tongues.

**1 Corinthians 14:2** *“For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.”*

Our faith is strengthened by tongues. **Jude 20** *“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost”.* Tongues are not of man’s power but are of the Lord’s power to all those who are subject unto Him. Tongues speak to the spirits and all spirits are subject unto the voice of the Lord. **1 Peter 3:22** *“Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.”*

### **Not Only Spiritual Tongues but Other Languages**

In studying 1Corinthians 12:10 closely, we see the scripture uses “plural” terms: divers, kinds and tongues. This means that the gift is not only one language. What are the other languages of this gift? It is the ability to speak a language of man without having studied that language. This is not spoken of much in the church but we see it clearly in Acts after the day of Pentecost. **Acts 2:1-13** *“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 Ghost, 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. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the 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 God. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.”*

This challenges our natural understanding and might seem impossible. Yet it happened then, and it still happens now in the church. It is not as strange as we might think that God would give this gift to the church. Jesus gave this charge to His disciples and to us in **Acts 1:8** *“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”* **Matthew 28:19** *“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:”* The disciples were sent into foreign lands that had languages that they did not speak or understand. How would they speak the gospel of Jesus to the people? One answer might be that they could use interpreters who were full of the Holy Ghost. But that was not the only way! How much more a witness of the power of God to a people than to have a foreigner come to them who instantly had the power to speak their language? This also is part of the gift of divers tongues given by the Spirit and the church should seek after this gift.

## Interpretation of Tongues

The spiritual language of tongues is given to believers for individual prayer and intercession. For this use, there is no need for anyone but God to understand what is spoken. The gift of tongues is used in the church for the benefit of all. We see this in the church when the Spirit moves through one who has this gift to speak or sing in the spiritual language as given directly by the Lord. When the Lord does this, He does not leave His church without understanding or in confusion. Instead, He ensures that we also hear in our own language what the Spirit has to say. This is the working of the gift of interpretation. Sometimes the gift of interpretation of tongues is given to someone who also has the gift of divers kinds of tongues. Other times, it is given to another member of the body. The Lord is very clear in His Word on how the gift of tongues and the interpretation of the tongues are to function in the church. This is a lengthy scripture but we need to read all of it to bring proper understanding:

**1 Corinthians 14:6-28** *“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? 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 ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.*

*There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification. Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me. Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.*

*Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, 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 thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: Yet in the church 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. Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men. 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, saith the Lord.*

*Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. If therefore the whole church 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 ye are mad? But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth 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 God, and report that God is in you of a truth.*

*How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. 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 church; and let him speak to himself, and to God."*

The Word reminds us in **1 Corinthians 14:33** *"For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."*

**1 Corinthians 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."*

We see that the gift of divers kinds of tongues and the gift of interpretation of tongues are indeed meant for the church today. They are powerful gifts that are necessary to build His church. The gifts have specific purposes and are used in a specific manner. When they are used this way, they bring great victory, blessing and power to the church and salvation to the unbeliever. Tongues is the fulfilment of God's promises to His church. **Isaiah 28:11** *"For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people."*

**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;"*

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



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