

Discernment Study

Week 4: PENTECOSTALISM AND THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

INTRO

- We're looking at Pentecostalism and the Charismatic movement this morning
- But before we begin, since we're at the HALFWAY point in reviewing these Church movements- let's take a minute to quickly REVIEW our goals for this study
- Our aim is NOT to just know the teachings associated with these movements
- We're learning to practice DISCERNMENT and critical thinking skills by EXAMINING those teachings carefully and COMPARING them with the Scriptures
- And ultimately, we're doing this so we can root out any unbiblical thinking in our own theological convictions, and help others to do the same
- That SOUNDS like it should be SIMPLE. We just EXAMINE everything carefully as we're commanded to in **1 Thessalonians 5:19-22**, and then we CLING to what is good, and ABSTAIN from what is evil.
- And it IS that simple. But it's NOT always easy. Because while we would all SAY that spiritual truth is found ONLY in the Scriptures,
- And that we're NOT influenced by anything extra-biblical;
- Difficult issues come up in life, and we have to WRESTLE with hard questions that test our knowledge and understanding of biblical doctrine;
- Or we're faced with desires or EMOTIONS (sometimes even good desires or positive emotions) that tempt us to COMPROMISE our biblical convictions.
- For example, in this morning's topic, we hear about something MIRACULOUS and wonderful reportedly experienced or witnessed by thousands of people, and as we consider it, we're tempted to say to ourselves:
 - Certainly, God has the POWER to do this miracle...
 - And I don't see there was anything EVIL in what happened...
 - And ALL of these people can't be lying or hallucinating

- And that's often as far as we go in EXAMINING modern claims of signs and miracles. But here's the PROBLEM with that process:
 - God has the POWER to do whatever He likes. But **Psalms 89:34** says one thing He does not do is VIOLATE His Word.
 - So, the question isn't: "COULD God do this?" Of course He could. God has unlimited power and knowledge. INSTEAD, we should ask "Is this CONSISTENT with God's character and His Word?" Those are DOCTRINAL questions, and so we go to the Scriptures for our answers.
 - And just because an APPARENT sign or miracle is performed by someone who says they love Christ... and you don't see anything UNGODLY in what they've said or done... it doesn't PROVE that this apparent miracle is of God.
 - **2 Corinthians 11:14** says that Satan disguises himself as an angel of light, and that we should not be SURPRISED if his servants do the same.
 - And as far as what to make of it when the internet is abuzz with reports that THOUSANDS of people have EXPERIENCED something MIRACULOUS...
 - Keep in mind 2 things. 1) There is a STRONG likelihood that these reports are greatly exaggerated. This is, after all, the internet we're talking about ☺ 2) Even if MILLIONS of people believe in something, that doesn't make it true.
 - **Matthew 7:13** says that the way is BROAD that leads to destruction. Literally BILLIONS of people are caught up in spiritual lies. And they are SINCERE in what they believe.
 - Including those people in **verses 21-23** who say to Jesus "Lord did we not PROPHECY in Your name, and in Your name CAST OUT DEMONS, and in Your name perform many MIRACLES?" And yet Jesus says that He never knew them.
- When we HEAR of these visions, dreams, signs, and wonders, we have to BEGIN our process of DISCERNMENT by getting all of the facts, and then looking at that information BIBLICALLY. We can't allow ourselves to be swayed by ANYTHING other than the Scriptures.

- For instance, 10-15 years ago there were THOUSANDS of reports from charismatic churches all over the WORLD about the SILVER fillings in people's mouths turning to GOLD during church services.
- And in fact, my wife and I crossed paths with this movement ourselves. A member of our extended FAMILY visited us during the height of those reports.
- He is a wonderful young guy who had grown up in a VERY Charismatic Church. While he was with us, he related the story of a visiting MIRACLE worker at his church who caused GOLD DUST to fall from the ceiling, and even caused our young family member's SILVER fillings to turn into GOLD.
- Now, my wife used to work for a DENTIST for many years. She KNOWS all about dental work. So she took a LOOK to see for herself. And when she DID, she saw that ALL of the fillings in his mouth were SILVER. NONE were gold.
- His RESPONSE to this news was, "Well, it must have CHANGED BACK."
- And that right there is the PROBLEM with trying to evaluate these SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCES. You have no real EVIDENCE to examine, just someone's STORY. Just their EXPERIENCE.
- Unless you have a BIBLICAL FRAMEWORK for evaluating their experience, you're just left with the choice to either ACCEPT their story as TRUE, or NOT.
- And in our family member's case, he had made up his mind to believe in his EXPERIENCE, even when presented with pretty strong evidence to the contrary.
- So, our goal this morning with regard to Pentecostalism and the Charismatic movement is two-fold. We are going to build a BIBLICAL framework for evaluating modern claims of prophecies, signs, and miracles. And then we're going to ask and answer some basic QUESTIONS.
- And let me say something right up front. NO ONE can DENY the reality of these miraculous gifts that were operating in the First Century Church.
- Clearly, JESUS performed miracles. And clearly the APOSTLES and some of their CLOSE ASSOCIATES also performed miracles. There were also PROPHETS in the early Church who gave REVELATION directly from God.

- And of course IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, Moses performed miracles, ELIJAH and ELISHA performed miracles, and we will see miracles performed again in the FUTURE during the Tribulation period by the 2 witnesses in **Revelation 11:3-11**.
- The issue isn't whether or not the sign gifts are REAL. The question is are those gifts operating in the Church TODAY? And here is the basic biblical framework through which I would suggest we should view claims of signs and miracles TODAY:
 - 1) **People with the ability to perform miracles, signs, and wonders are NOT commonplace in Scripture.** They tend to congregate around the ministries of Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha, Jesus, and the Apostles.
 - My point is that the Bible DOES NOT SUPPORT the view that miracles, signs, and wonders should be common among God's people. So we should not have that expectation either.
 - 2) **Miracles should be UNDENIABLE as actual miracles.** The Pharisees NEVER denied that Jesus was genuinely healing people, they just blasphemed by attributing His power to Satan.
 - And His miracles MADE SENSE. Jesus changed water into WINE for a wedding, and calmed a STORM that was frightening the disciples as demonstrations of His mastery over nature.
 - So if someone claims a miracle TODAY, it should still be UNMISTAKABLE as a miracle. They should be able to raise the dead, cure real disease, heal actual broken bodies, and there should be no question that it is all REAL.
 - And their signs and wonders should MAKE SENSE. A guy in a gaudy purple suit who makes GOLD DUST fall from the ceiling, and who TEMPORARILY changes your silver fillings to GOLD...THAT makes no sense.
 - 3) **There is no biblical basis for insisting that because signs and miracles were a part of the apostles' early ministry, that miracles should still be occurring today.**
 - One of the major arguments of the Charismatic movement is that the activities in the Book of Acts SHOULD be NORMAL in the CHURCH TODAY. But that's not SO, and we can prove that EASILY right now.

- QUESTION: What was one of THE MOST significant features of Church ministry during the APOSTOLIC period?
 - The presence of APOSTLES! That right there demonstrates that the First Century Church was UNIQUE in at least one MAJOR way.
 - It was through THOSE men and their CLOSE ASSOCIATES that most of those miracles were done, and JOHN, the LAST SURVIVING APOSTLE DIED on the island of Patmos at the end of the First Century.
 - And there are NO Apostles today, because no one can meet the qualification of having been an EYEWITNESS to Christ's ministry like The Twelve.
 - And no one can claim to have been specifically CHOSEN by the RISEN Christ like Paul. That's another reason we should be very cautious about accepting testimonies of Jesus APPEARING to people in dreams or visions.
 - It's one thing to say you had a dream ABOUT Jesus. It's quite another to say that the RISEN Christ came and VISITED you, or spoke to you in a dream or vision.
 - **4) Signs, miracles, and wonders should be manifested and practiced in ways CONSISTENT with Scripture.** For example, **1 Corinthians 14:28** says that anyone speaking in tongues in the church must have an interpreter so that the church is edified.
- And using that simple biblical framework: 1) Signs and Miracles are NOT commonplace in redemptive history, 2) Signs and Miracles should be UNDENIABLE, 3) The Book of Acts is NOT NORMATIVE for all Church history, and 4) Signs and Miracles should be done in a way that is CONSISTENT with Scripture...
 - ...We will look at the sign gifts and miracles of the Bible, compare them with the claims of the Charismatic movement, and answer the following 3 questions this morning:
 - 1: What ARE the sign and miraculous gifts?
 - 2: What is the PURPOSE of the sign and miraculous gifts?
 - 3: What is the BAPTISM of the Holy Spirit?

- But before we answer those questions, let me give you a quick history of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, just for context.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF PENTECOSTALISM AND THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

- Since the APOSTOLIC period of the Church, there haven't been ANY actual, SUSTAINED, large-scale reports of signs and miracles
- What there has been of it hasn't been very credible, and much of it is associated with Catholic mysticism, or with Protestant revivalism
- But that changed with the 1906 Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles, where the PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT was born. And this movement was birthed out of 3 influences:
 - 1) **The Doctrine of 18th Century Methodism**, which taught that there was a SECOND work of grace, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which occurred sometime AFTER initial conversion.
 - This Baptism of the Holy Spirit would cause a Christian to go from being essentially CARNAL and nominally obedient, to being WHOLLY DEVOTED to the Lord.
 - Some even promoted a doctrine known as "Entire Sanctification", where a Christian would no longer have ANY desire to sin, and could live a life FREE of willful sin.
 - 2) **The Holiness Movement of the latter 19th Century**, that sought to promote holy living among Christians, and also championed fighting against certain social ills.
 - 3) **The Revivalism of Charles Finney**, the early 19th Century evangelist whose methods included creating a high state of EMOTIONAL excitement to MOVE people to make a profession of faith.
 - Many of the revival meetings in the HOLINESS movements borrowed Finney's technique of creating an emotionally CHARGED atmosphere, and so "physical manifestations" like shaking, tremors, healing, and apparent incidences of speaking in tongues was sporadically reported.
 - Then in 1900, Charles Parham, one of these Holiness evangelists, started a Bible school in Topeka, Kansas, with a central doctrine that SPEAKING IN TONGUES was the necessary evidence of having received this "Baptism of the

Holy Spirit”.

- So the idea was, if you don't speak in tongues, you're not fully SPIRITUAL, and therefore anyone who believed this doctrine would NATURALLY want to speak in tongues.
- Six years later, William Seymour, a student of Parham's, took over as pastor of a small church on Azusa street in Los Angeles, and tongues, healings, and visions quickly became COMMONPLACE, and in fact often took the place of preaching;
- The LA Times wrote a story, this new Pentecostal Movement received a great deal of MEDIA ATTENTION, people all over the world came to check it out, and so Pentecostalism was EXPORTED globally.
- Pentecostalism had its share of CRITICS both inside and outside the Church, and it also produced heretical offshoots such as “Jesus Only” or “Oneness” Pentecostalism, which denied the Trinity, and “The Latter Rain” Movement, which included NUMEROUS heresies.
- Then starting around 1960, maybe NOT COINCIDENTALLY, just around the time that liberalized mainline Protestant churches and Catholic Churches were becoming alarmed at the significant DECLINE in church attendance...
- ...and evangelical churches were beginning to experience sharp growth...
- The CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT, began to penetrate the mainline Protestant denominations, as well as the Roman Catholic Church.
- From there, many Neo-Evangelical churches extended a hand to the Charismatic movement, because Neo-Evangelicalism is defined by COOPERATION and CONVERSATION, and tends not to make a significant issue of doctrinal differences;
- And so the Charismatic movement became widely connected with various groups, and from there it spawned numerous SUB-MOVEMENTS: Among them were the Jesus movement, the so-called “name it and claim it” Word-Faith movement, the Prosperity gospel, and the “Third Wave” movement of Vinyard churches.
- So here's what we LEARN from the history of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements.

- It all BEGAN with the belief that there was a SECOND work of the Holy Spirit, and the move to SEEK OUT this Second Blessing through highly emotional prayer and revival meetings.
- Then came the belief that speaking in tongues was the one true SIGN of this SECOND BLESSING. So anyone who believed this would NATURALLY seek to speak in tongues.
- Then the Azusa Street Revival got GLOBAL press coverage, which exported the Pentecostal Movement to Holiness Groups all over the world.
- And in the space of several decades, the Charismatic movement grew to be in SOME WAY connected with most every major Christian group with the exception of the Fundamentalists, and isolated pockets of Evangelicalism.
- Before we go on to answer our FIRST question, I want to make a distinction, because there are Charismatic believers who do not approve of the EXCESSES within the movement, and who truly LOVE God. In fact, I know some.
- But even so, I think ALL charismatic groups, to one degree or another, are vulnerable to SERIOUS ERROR because of the premium they put on spiritual experiences.
- ALL Charismatics believe that some or all of the sign gifts, miraculous gifts, or even prophetic revelation, are still in operation TODAY.
- And if they are NOT still in operation TODAY, this means that these people are seeking and practicing SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES that are not of God, and accepting NEW REVELATION that is not of God.
- That's potentially very dangerous. It creates an atmosphere where DECEPTION can flourish, because these experiences aren't always being EXAMINED biblically.
- So, let's begin our analysis by answering the first question: **"What are the Sign and Miraculous Gifts?"** And we're going to look at **1 Corinthians 12:7-11**. You can go ahead and turn there now.
- And as we answer this question, we're going to make 2 points:
 - 1) That if someone were going to exercise these gifts of the Spirit, that they would need to exercise them in a way CONSISTENT with the Scriptures.
 - 2) And that on that basis alone, we can demonstrate that many modern-day charismatic signs and miracles are clearly UNBIBLICAL.

- **Read 1 Corinthians 12:7-11.** ⁷“But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of HEALING by the one Spirit, ¹⁰and to another the effecting of MIRACLES, and to another PROPHECY, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another *various* kinds of TONGUES, and to another the INTERPRETATION of tongues. ¹¹But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.”
- We’re going to look at some PARTICULAR gifts here. Healing, miracles, prophecy, tongues, and interpretation of tongues. These are or were REAL gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- To be clear: They are the spiritual ability to physically HEAL, work outside the laws of NATURE, speak NEW REVELATION from God, speak a human language you NEVER LEARNED, and INTERPRET a human language you never learned

Healing

- Here’s what Scripture tells us about each. First, HEALING and MIRACLES.
- The gift of healing is not when we PRAY for God to heal someone, and then God providentially, in the process of time, chooses to answer that prayer by restoring someone’s health.
- The gift of healing is supernatural POWER OVER DISEASE AND INJURY. When someone has the spiritual ability to IMMEDIATELY and TOTALLY heal someone, on the SPOT. It’s to say to a paralyzed man, “Get up and walk”, and he suddenly CAN because he is NO LONGER paralyzed.
- **Read Matthew 15:29-31.** When Jesus healed someone, it was immediate, complete, permanent, and indiscriminate. ²⁹“Departing from there, Jesus went along by the Sea of Galilee, and having gone up on the mountain, He was sitting there. ³⁰And LARGE CROWDS came to Him, bringing with them *those who were lame, crippled, blind, mute, and many others, and they laid them down at His feet; and He healed them.* ³¹So the crowd marveled as they saw the mute speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.”
- And **Acts 5:16** says that the people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together, bringing their sick or afflicted to the Apostles, and

they were ALL being healed.”

- QUESTION: What do you notice about these instances of divine HEALING?
- These people were KNOWN in their communities. Their ailments were WELL KNOWN.
- They were healed in GREAT NUMBERS. There was NO QUESTION a miraculous healing had taken place. And Jesus and the Apostles healed large numbers publicly and INDISCRIMINATELY.
- QUESTION: Do you know of any modern-day faith healers who can heal like that?
- NO. None of them can heal like that. Yet THAT is the biblical standard. Exposes have been done on these people, and invariably, they are either CHARLATANS like Peter Popoff, or they simply “heal” people of ailments where either the ailment OR the healing CAN’T BE PROVEN afterwards.
- And one more thing: If these faith healers DID have this gift of healing, there is ample opportunity to publicly demonstrate it, just as Jesus and the Apostles did. They went OUT AMONG the people and healed them.
- There is a well-known faith healer out of Tampa. All Children’s Hospital in St. Petersburg is just across the bay, and is FILLED with sick children.
- But he won’t go. NONE of them will. Because none of them can really heal like Jesus and the Apostles did.

Miracles

- And as for miracles: An ACTUAL divine miracle is NOT just something that you can’t EXPLAIN, like how you got the very first parking space at Wal-Mart 3 times in a row;
- Or even when you pray for good weather when the weather man predicts RAIN, and you get a sunny day instead. That’s just the goodness and providence of God.
- A miracle is when God does something that CANNOT BE EXPLAINED through NATURAL means, like walking on water, or raising the dead. And the gift of miracles is when these things are done through a person.
- God did miracles through Moses, Elijah, and Elisha, and a few others in the Old Testament. And of course, miracles were done by Jesus, and through the

Apostles.

- There were MIRACULOUS evidences of God's judgment, provision, power over nature, death, and disease. But all of these were clear, UNMISTAKABLE miracles, and the INTENT of the miracle was clear.
- No biblical miracle left anyone SCRATCHING THEIR HEAD, like the so-called "miracles" in the Charismatic movement. There you see DENTAL fillings being- apparently- temporarily changed from silver to gold;
- And you get so-called "signs and wonders" like the Holy Ghost BARTENDER, who reportedly "brings down the anointing" and makes people act "drunk in the power of the Spirit"; or like the "Holy LAUGHTER" revival which causes whole crowds to go into hysterical laughter or even make animal noises.

Tongues

- Next, we'll look at the gift of TONGUES. First, we will look at examples of it in the Bible.
- There are actually only three. There is **Acts 2:4-6** on Pentecost, **Acts 10:44-46** when the Holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles, and **Acts 19:1-6** when Paul gave the Gospel to followers of John the Baptist, and then laid hands on them.
- Let's have three people look up those passages and read.
- **Read Acts 2:4-6:** ⁴ "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. ⁵ Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak IN HIS OWN LANGUAGE."
- **Read Acts 10:44-46:** ⁴⁴ "While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. ⁴⁵ All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. ⁴⁶ For they were HEARING THEM SPEAKING WITH TONGUES AND EXALTING GOD."
- **Read Acts 19:1-6:** "It happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus, and found some disciples. ² He said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they *said* to him, "No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." ³ And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" And they said, "Into John's baptism." ⁴ Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of

repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus.”⁵ When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they *began* speaking with tongues and PROPHECYING.”

- QUESTION: Is there anything that stands out to you about this gift?
- Clearly, at Pentecost this gift was the miraculous ability to speak in HUMAN LANGUAGES that these men did not naturally know.
- And when the household of Cornelius spoke in tongues, the believers who came with Peter heard these Gentiles EXALTING GOD. They were speaking in human languages that these Jewish believers could understand.
- The same is true when Paul laid hands on the disciples of John. They spoke in tongues and began PROPHECYING. Prophecy is intelligibly speaking revelation from God that was heard.
- Each instance of tongues is speaking in an unlearned human language. Certainly, Pentecost is. And at the very LEAST, in the other two instances, there is NOTHING in the text that gives ANY indication they were speaking in a so-called “unknown” or angelic tongue.
- With that said, let’s go back to **1 Corinthians** and we’ll see what Paul says about the idea of speaking in an unintelligible tongue.
- Turn to **1 Corinthians 13:1**, when he says “If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have LOVE, I have become a noisy gong.”
- I know that some use this verse to DEFEND the idea that the gift of tongues is the ability to speak in the language of ANGELS. But Paul is NOT introducing a new doctrine of angelic speech here. His point in this WHOLE PASSAGE is that you can do the greatest spiritual deeds, and yet if you do it without LOVE, it is NOTHING.
- He is using HYPERBOLE, exaggerating in order to make a point, in **13:1-3**, NOT introducing a new doctrine of speaking in an angelic language. You can see that hyperbole in the verses that follow: “If I have the gift of prophesy and know ALL mysteries and ALL knowledge and if I have ALL faith, so as to remove MOUNTAINS”.
- And again in verse 3 “And if I give ALL my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be BURNED”.

- It's important to keep context in mind, and remember why Paul is bringing up this whole matter of spiritual gifts to the Corinthians in the FIRST PLACE. This passage is meant as a CORRECTIVE in using spiritual gifts.
- Some in the church were mimicking their old PAGAN worship practices in the use of the gifts, and this may well have included speaking GIBBERISH in some sort of ecstatic speech during worship.
- And to make the point, let's have a quick look at the beginning of **chapter 12 verses 1-2**, Paul says "Now CONCERNING SPIRITUAL *GIFTS*, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware.²You know that when you were pagans, *you were* led astray to the mute idols, however you were led"
- Now turn to **chapter 14**. Throughout Paul's reference to the gift, he used the PLURAL "tongues". Because there are MANY KINDS of actual languages. When he addresses this issue of "unintelligible" speech, he uses the SINGULAR, "tongue". Because there is only ONE KIND of non-language, NOT MANY.
- **Read 14:1-2:** "Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual *gifts*, but especially that you may prophesy. ²For one who speaks in a TONGUE does not speak to men but to God; FOR NO ONE UNDERSTANDS, but in *his* spirit he speaks mysteries."
- **Read 14:4:** "⁴One who speaks in a TONGUE EDIFIES HIMSELF; but one who prophesies edifies the church."
- So 3 THINGS to notice here. 1) Paul refers to the unintelligible, non-language speech with the singular word "tongue", instead of the plural word "tongues" when he is referring to the legitimate gift.
- 2) Paul says that someone speaking in a TONGUE (singular) EDIFIES ONLY HIMSELF. And again looking at CONTEXT, this WHOLE section from verse 1 through verse 20 in chapter 14 is about the importance of gifts that EDIFY the Church.
- He says that clearly in **verse 12** "Since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek to abound for the edification of the Church". Clearly Paul is saying that speaking in a TONGUE is unedifying, and if you go back to **1 Corinthians 12:7**, you'll remember that the Spirit gives gifts for the COMMON GOOD.
- There is no such thing as a spiritual gift used solely for your own edification
- Knowing that helps you to see Paul's sarcasm in **chapter 14, verses 14-15**

- **Read 14:14-15:** ³ ¹⁴ “For if I pray in a TONGUE, my spirit prays, but my mind is UNFRUITFUL. ¹⁵ What is *the outcome* then? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also.”
- Paul is being CRITICAL of this kind of ecstatic speech here, saying essentially that no one benefits from it. The mind is UNFRUITFUL precisely because it IS gibberish.
- And if you think that you ARE speaking some kind of REAL language, then as he says in verse 13 and verse 27, you better have an INTERPRETER there making the message clear to the Church. Otherwise, as he says in verse 28, you need to keep SILENT in the Church.
- And just to allow Paul to finish his argument, read **verses 18-19:** ¹⁸ “I thank God, I speak in TONGUES more than you all; ¹⁹ however, in the church I desire to speak five words WITH MY MIND so that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a TONGUE.”
- So again, the biblical gifts of tongues is exactly what occurred at Pentecost. Men spoke HUMAN LANGUAGES they had not previously learned. Anyone speaking unintelligible speech is speaking mindless gibberish, not edifying the Church.
- We don’t see this ability to speak in UNLEARNED HUMAN LANGUAGES today. When people say they are “speaking in tongues”, they are actually speaking in a TONGUE. Which is just a repeat of the Corinthian error.
- OK, let’s move on to the gift of prophecy.

Prophecy

- Prophecy can simply be EXHORTATION; speaking the already revealed Word of God. But here we are talking about the gift of giving NEW REVELATION from God.
- **Ephesians 2:19-20:** ¹⁹ “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, ²⁰ having been built on the FOUNDATION of the apostles and PROPHETS, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*,”
- QUESTION: So given that First Century prophets were sometimes giving NEW REVELATION, or giving someone a personal prophetic word, like the prophet Agabus did for Paul in Acts 21 when he FORETOLD Paul’s arrest and delivery to the Gentiles...how do you think they could tell the difference

between a genuine prophet, and a false prophet?

- Deuteronomy 18 gave a very simple test for prophets. If what they said came true, they were the real deal. But if not, they were a false prophet.
- Nowhere in Scripture does God say that the standard for 100% accurate prophecy changed to 70% or 25%, if you claim to have the gift of prophecy, you have to have a perfect record.
- Yet, NO modern-day Charismatic prophet has a perfect record. Nowhere even close.
- So as we examine the biblical sign gifts, we see pretty clearly how they are supposed to operate, and that the Scriptures set a very HIGH BAR. Miracles actually go around the laws of nature and are UNDENIABLE. Like raising the dead.
- Healings actually rid bodies of disease, restore limbs, and open blind eyes.
- Tongues is the ability to speak in a real human language you never learned, or interpret one.
- Prophecy is the ability to perfectly predict the future, and actually speak the Word of God.
- What we see in much of the Charismatic movement is Holy Laughter, silver fillings turned to gold and then back to silver (which by the way, means they were never gold), highly questionable instances of healing, people speaking in gibberish, and wildly inaccurate (and even contradictory) prophecies.

What is the Purpose of the Sign Gifts?

- So the next question is, What is the PURPOSE of the biblical sign gifts?
- **Read John 10:25-26:** Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these TESTIFY of Me. ²⁶ But you do not believe BECAUSE you are not of My sheep."
- QUESTION: What do you see there?
- ANSWER: 1) The works He did DEMONSTRATED that He was sent by the Father. 2) Those works WOULD NOT make the non-elect believe, those who were not His sheep. (See Luke 16:19-31 if you need convincing that miracles don't soften hard hearts)

- **Read Matthew 11:2-6:** “Now when John, while imprisoned, heard of the works of Christ, he sent *word* by his disciples ³ and said to Him, “Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?” ⁴ Jesus answered and said to them, “GO AND REPORT TO JOHN WHAT YOU HEAR AND SEE: ⁵ *the* blind receive sight and *the* lame walk, *the* lepers are cleansed and *the* deaf hear, *the* dead are raised up, and *the* poor have the gospel preached to them.”
- Again, you see that the works of Christ DEMONSTRATED that He was the Messiah, sent by the Father.
- And you see that signs and wonders also in demonstrated who was a TRUE APOSTLE of Christ as well.
- **Read 2 Corinthians 12:12:** ¹² “The SIGNS OF A TRUE APOSTLE were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.”
- So in addition to Christ AUTHENTICATING Himself as the Messiah sent by the Father, the Apostles also demonstrated sign gifts to PROVE that they were sent by Christ.
- This was important because these men were writing Scripture
- So during the APOSTOLIC PERIOD of the Church, when these men sent by Christ were bringing these new teachings and writing the New Testament Scriptures, they exercised these MIRACULOUS GIFTS to DEMONSTRATE that they were sent by God.
- And when those men COMPLETED their task of writing the Scriptures, the canon was CLOSED, and they DIDN'T RAISE UP new apostles to replace them, because their work of LAYING THE FOUNDATION of the Church was complete.
- And since the foundation was now LAID, there are no more apostles, and there is NO MORE NEED for those authenticating miraculous gifts. Now we have the Word of God, which is self-authenticating.
- But what about tongues? What is the purpose of that? Because speaking in tongues was a gift that many Christians seem to have, not just Apostles.
- **Read 1 Corinthians 14:20-22:** ²⁰ “Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature. ²¹ In the Law it is written, “By men of strange tongues and by the lips of strangers I will speak to this people, and even so they will not listen to Me,” says the

Lord. ²² So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers;”

- So the purpose of tongues is as A SIGN TO UNBELIEVERS. And that makes sense. Here people are speaking or interpreting real languages they have never learned. That’s clearly MIRACULOUS. A sign worthy of God.
- It was a sign of JUDGMENT to unbelieving Israel, which is why Paul quotes Isaiah in the passage we just read. But it’s also a sign of BLESSING as God’s redemptive plan is now focused on the whole world as He builds His Church.
- And it’s a sign of AUTHORITY, as those who go and proclaim this message to the nations demonstrate through this miracle that they are God’s messengers.
- As for speaking in gibberish, HOW is it miraculous that someone speaks sounds that no one understands? Why would ANYONE call that a miraculous work of God? And how does this gift edify the Church if no one understands?

What about the second work of grace, the baptism of the holy spirit?

- **Read 1 Corinthians 12:13:** ¹³ “For by one Spirit WE WERE ALL baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”
- QUESTION: How do we know which Christians have been baptized in the Holy Spirit?
- ANSWER: All Christians have been baptized into the Holy Spirit. This is a reference to salvation. There is only ONE work of grace, and then a progressive sanctification after that. There is no “Second Blessing”.
- And that also pokes a hole in the Pentecostal idea that the gift tongues is the sign of receiving this Second Blessing, for 3 reasons: 1) There is no scriptural support for a Second Baptism, 2) Paul says that tongues is a sign for unbelievers, not the sign of a Second blessing, and 3) Look at **1 Corinthians 12:29-30:**
- ²⁹ “All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not *workers of miracles*, are they? ³⁰ All do not have gifts of healings, do they? ALL DO NOT speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?”

- Clearly, the gift of tongues was NOT given as evidence of this Second Blessing, because Paul makes clear that not everyone should have the expectation of speaking in tongues.

Conclusion

- There is a lot more we could have gotten into this morning, including going through some of the evidences in Scripture for the eventual ceasing of the gifts.
- But I thought that answering these questions “1) What are the sign gifts?” “2) What is their purpose?” And “3) What is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit?” would give us plenty to chew on for now.
- Next week, we will look at Ecumenism.