

Sunday, February 11, 2018—I Corinthians 13:9-13—The Truth About Tongues

Introduction

- At the time of Paul’s writing prophecy, tongues, and knowledge were legitimate spiritual gifts that had been given to the body of Christ?
- I Corinthians 13:8—all three of these gifts are tied to future indicative statements in verse 8. In other words, what is legitimately working and functioning now will at some point in the future cease/stop working and functioning.
 - “shall fail”—“prophecies” are one day going to “fail” i.e., “to be extinct; to cease; to be entirely wanting; to be no longer produced; to be entirely exhausted; to be wanting; to cease from supply.”
 - This in contrast with “charity” that never fails. Paul is not saying that saying that anything God prophesied will fail to be fulfilled. Rather he is saying that the gift of prophecy will fail to function at a point in time in the future from the Corinthians standpoint.
 - “shall cease”—“tongues” are one day going to “cease” i.e., “fail; to be wanting; to stop; to be at an end.”
 - This does not mean that people will stop speaking in different languages. Rather it means from the Corinthians’ perspective that at a point in further time the gift of tongues will cease functioning.
 - “vanish away”—“knowledge” is one day going to “vanish away” i.e., “to disappear; to pass from a visible to an invisible state; as, vapor vanishes from the sight by being dissipated.”
 - This does not mean that people will stop possessing knowledge and knowing things in the future (Col. 1:9). Rather it means that at a point in future time the gift of knowledge is going to “vanish away.”
- I Corinthians 12:31—what is the more excellent way? The way of “charity” that “never faileth” or the way of the gifts that shall “fail,” “cease,” and “vanish away?” The Corinthians were coveting after the wrong things.
- So, we know from verse 8 that tongues, prophecy, and knowledge will fail, cease, and vanish away. The question is when did or will that occur?
- II Peter 1:16-19—we need to let God’s word be the final authority on this matter not our personal experience.

- I Timothy 1:4, 4:7
- II Timothy 4:4
- Titus 1:14
- II Corinthians 5:7

I Corinthians 13:9

- When Paul wrote I Corinthians the word of God was not yet complete. The revelation of the mystery has not yet been fully disclosed and set forth in writing. Paul was still in the process of receiving revelation from the Lord.
- Prophecy, tongues, and knowledge were revelatory gifts, they were the mouth piece of God, the vehicle through which God imparted his word to the body of Christ until the written word was complete.
- II Corinthians 12:7—Paul received his thorn in the flesh because of the revelations He was continually receiving. So as of the writing of II Corinthians, which was written after I Corinthians the word of God was still in process i.e., Paul was still receiving information from the Lord Jesus Christ.

I Corinthians 13:10

- When are the gifts going to fail, cease, and vanish away? When that which is perfect is come. What is this talking about:
 - The kingdom
 - Christ himself—says when that which is perfect is come not when He which is perfect will come.
 - When the entire body of Christ believes the same thing
- In the context, that which is perfect is the completion of what was in part i.e., knowledge. The only way to complete partial knowledge is with further knowledge.
 - Use illustration of Cliff Huxtable on the Cosby Show
- That which is perfect is a reference to the completion of the word of God.
- Colossians 1:25—it is Paul's writings the fulfilled or completed the word of God.

- Colossians 2:10—“complete” is a translation of the same Greek word rendered “fulfill” in Colossians 1:25
- When Paul put down his pen the Scripture says that the word of God was complete at which time the gifts of prophecy, tongues, and knowledge (commonly known as the sign gifts) were no longer needed.
- In our day the issue of speaking in tongues generates a lot of attention. In many circles a believer’s salvation will be questioned if they don’t speak in tongues. The following points are taken from a publication titled “Order of Baptism” put out by a large Pentecostal assembly here in the Grand Rapids area.
 - The baptism of the Holy Spirit gives us power. (Acts 1:3-8)
 - Believers baptized with the Holy Spirit spoke in tongues (Acts 2:1-4)
 - There are two separate baptisms (Acts 8:14-17; 9:13-18; 19:1-6)
 - Paul prays that we might know his power. (Eph. 1:17-19)
 - Paul tells us to be filled with the Spirit. (Eph. 5:18)
 - According to Jesus, speaking in tongues is typical of a Christian. (Mark 16:17)
 - Jesus promises that when we ask for the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is what we’ll get. (Luke 11:11-13)
 - The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a gift. (Acts 10:44-46)
 - Praying in tongues is a perfect prayer because it is let by the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 8:26-27)
 - We don’t understand what we’re saying, but we are edified. (I Cor. 14:2-5)
 - We chose to pray both ways, for both are important. (I Cor. 14:14-15)
 - Paul calls us to pray in the Spirit; it’s part of our warfare. (Eph. 6:18)
 - We build up our spirit by praying in The Spirit. (Jude 20)
- This entire exposition is dispensationally confused. Tongues were a part or Israel’s program and where to function as a sign to the children of Israel.
- I Corinthians 14:22—is very clear that tongues were given to serve as a sign.
- From the beginning of the life of the nation of Israel God deals with them using signs.
 - Exodus 4:1-9
 - Deuteronomy 28:45-46

- John 4:48
- I Corinthians 1:27—the Jews require a sign.
- Mark 16:15-18—according to Christ, tongues were to function as part of the validation of the 12's offering the kingdom to Israel in early Acts, in the same manner that signs worked for Moses.
- In addition, the coming of the Holy Spirit that was manifest by the Apostles in speaking in tongues was prophesied to the nation of Israel.
- Joel 2:28—this passage is fulfilled in Acts 2:16 when Peter says this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.
- Since tongues were for a sign and Jews require a sign what happens to the sign program when God concludes Israel with the Gentiles in unbelief and temporarily sets his nation aside so that he can form the Body of Christ?
- Galatians 3:27-28—today in the body of Christ, there is no longer a difference between Jews and Gentiles, as a result Israel's sign program is no longer functioning.
- During the early stages of the dispensation of Grace that the gift of tongues was still being given and functioning.
 - Acts 9:15—the Apostles Paul would naturally speak in tongues as he preached to the Jews who required a sign.
 - I Corinthians 12:4-11
 - I Corinthians 12:29-30—it is also equally clear that even during this time when the gift of tongues was functioning not everyone was given the gift of tongues.
- I Corinthians 13:8-13—Paul makes it clear that for the body of Christ tongues was only a temporary situation.

I Corinthians 13:11-12

- Paul is calling the gifts childish. Now that the word of God is complete those who are still infatuated with the gifts (the very things Paul was warning against) are playing with their Thomas the Trains, Legos, and Lincoln Logs.
- Through his completed word, God has fully disclosed himself to humanity. What has hazy, fuzzy, or unclear at the time Paul wrote I Corinthians when the gifts were function has now been fully disclosed and made know through the written word of God.
- Anyone who believes that the gift of tongues is still functioning today must also believe that the word of God is not complete. If tongues are still being given, then someone needs to record all of these special revelations and new words from God people have been receiving and adding them to the Bible.

- If tongues are still being given, then God's word cannot be trusted.
- All of this ends up becoming a fair show in the flesh by which people attempt to demonstrate what God is doing for them that he isn't for someone else. Some of these people want to speak in tongues more than they want to go to heaven.
- The amount of confusion on this issue has damaged innumerable lives.
- We have something far better than tongues we have a completed Bible that capable of working effectually in us who believe.
 - I Thessalonians 2:13
- Let's let our faith rest in a rightly divided understanding of God's word not in our emotion or experiences.
- God the Holy Spirit is not doing it then what is going on?
 - Emotionalism
 - Lying wonder of the enemy
- Learned patters of speech.