

THE GIFT OF TONGUES

The Purpose, Nature, Duration, Boundary Rules And History of Biblical and Non-biblical Tongues [Is Physical Healing In The Atonement?] [What About Anointing With Oil And Physical Healing?]

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(Rev. 2:2) *“To the angel^a of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands: ²I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false.*

In the first section we will discuss the biblical purpose of the Spiritual gift of tongues and then look to see if such a purpose is in mind in the modern tongues movement.

I. The Purpose of tongues.

The question of whether miraculous speaking in tongues in modern day is genuine will be decided largely by whether or not its Scripturally revealed purpose is being fulfilled in the day in which we live.

A. Can we assume that the existence of a particular phenomenon in the apostolic church must automatically exist today?

1. We know that the gift of an apostle is not for today (Eph. 4:7-12) *“⁷But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. ⁸Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. ⁹(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) ¹¹And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; ¹²For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”.....(I Cor. 12:28-31) ²⁸And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. ²⁹Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? ³⁰Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? ³¹But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.”*
2. Protestant theology generally has clearly recognized the cessation of the apostolic gift in the first century and therefore denies the Roman Catholic teaching of Apostolic Succession. By this admission, Protestant theology is committed to the principle of temporary gift.
3. For this reason it is perfectly legitimate to inquire as to whether there may not be other first-century gifts which were likewise temporary.

a Or messenger; also in verses 8, 12 and 18

4. The apostolic office ceased because the purpose for which apostles were originally given has been fulfilled. (Eph. 2:20) speaks of the church as being constructed on the “foundation of the apostles and prophets. Thus, the apostolic office belongs to the foundational aspect of the church.
 5. To the apostles and prophets was committed the responsibility of the laying the all-important groundwork upon which in succeeding ages the superstructure might be reared until the whole sublime and holy temple had been completed.
 6. Having laid the groundwork, and the Scriptures being committed to the church, the apostles passed permanently off the spiritual scene. The building, however, has continued to rise through the centuries and will not be complete until the return of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. But the special gift of an apostle is no longer given for the simple reason that the purpose for it no longer exists.
- B. The same question should naturally apply to the question of the continuance or cessation of the gift of tongues. If the Biblically revealed purpose of this gift be an age-long purpose, it is proper to look for tongues as an age-long spiritual manifestation....If, on the other hand, the Biblically revealed purpose of the gift be temporary, we shall have reason for regarding the gift itself as temporary and will be forced to view modern claims to its possession as actually lacking in basic biblical credibility.
1. In I Cor. 14:20-22 we have the only direct and specific Scriptural statement regarding the purpose of the gift of tongues... *“²⁰Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men. ...²¹In 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. ²²Wherefore 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.”*
 2. Paul’s occasion for these words is the well-known problem of the disorders attending the exercise of spiritual gifts in the assembly at Corinth.
 3. The Corinthians were guilty of overrating the spiritual significance of the gift as well as misusing it. Appropriately the apostle places it last in his own list of *charismata*...(I Cor. 12:28) *“²⁸And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.”*
 4. Then Paul makes it plain by a series of questions that by no means was it to be expected that all should speak with tongues any more than that all should be apostles (I Cor. 12:29-30) *“²⁹Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? ³⁰Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? ³¹But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.”*
 5. Then, after setting forth the surpassing excellence of love over any and every spiritual gift (I Cor. 13), he proceeds in chapter 14 to extol the principle of edification (a thing quite naturally desired for others where love is operating) as the paramount object to

be sought in the assembly exercise of gifts....(14:26) *“Let all things be done unto edifying. This is the guiding thought.*

6. Accordingly, VSS 1-19 of Chapter 14 are primarily occupied with the unprofitableness of speaking in tongues not known to others in the assembly for the simple reason that edification cannot result from utterances which cannot be understood. Note that the Bible does not speak of closet tongues. The man in vs. 2 believes he is communicating with God during a public service as Paul makes special note of the fact that no one understands him.
 7. Paul would rather speak five words in the assembly that could minister edification than ten thousand in an unknown tongue (14:19), as the man in vs. 2 was doing. This prepares us for the special point dealt with beginning at verse 20 *“²⁰Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.”*
- C. Paul prefaces himself by cautioning against any childishness in thinking about these matters. Paul is hinting that to exalt the gift, while overlooking the purpose for which God gave it, is to betray an immaturity which is inappropriate to spiritual adulthood (The Greek word for “men” in verse 20 is “mature.”)
1. The conspicuous lack of serious and careful consideration of this pivotal section among present-day advocates of tongues, therefore, does not speak well for the maturity of understanding.
- D. Then follows in verse 21 an O.T. quotation from which the apostle draws a deliberate conclusion in (V.22) *“²¹In 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. ²²Wherefore 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.”*
1. The word “wherefore” makes plain that the statement to follow is the result of a legitimate deduction from the Scripture just presented...*“So that,”* says Paul, *“the tongues are for a sign...”*
 2. Paul discovered the true intent of this miraculous phenomenon in the O.T. passage just quoted. The O.T. predicted the N.T. gift of tongues.
 3. The use of the definite article in the Greek (*the* tongues) does not appear in the AV of this verse but must not be overlooked. The definite article confirms that Paul finds this particular phenomenon to be the thing referred to by the Scripture he has cited. It is not simply “tongues” in general to which Isaiah of old refers, but *“the tongues”* of which the apostle has been speaking throughout.
 4. Taken at face value, therefore, the O.T. (specifically Isa. 28:11-12) is here alleged by Paul to have prophesied the gift of tongues as a god-given sign to the Jewish nation---the expression “this people” can, in its O.T. setting, refer to no other. Isaiah also foretold the unbelieving rejection of Israel.

- E. If someone wishes to argue that this sign is for all unbelievers then two points must be made:
1. First, the expression “this people” refers to an O.T. prophecy about the Jewish nation.
 2. Secondly, if the sign is for all unbelievers then it is difficult indeed to comprehend the thought of the verses 23-25 which follow...For in these verses the apostle plainly teaches that the average unbeliever who enters the assembly, upon hearing them all speak with tongues, will say that the Christians are mad (v. 23).
 3. He goes on to assert that it is prophecy which will bring to such an one the conscious realization of the presence of God in their midst.
 4. But if the gift of tongues be truly a sign to all unbelievers, it is hard to perceive why it should not have been the appropriate gift to exercise on any occasion when an unbeliever might be present.
 5. So, tongues were given as a sign to the Jewish people only, from which it follows that the average heathen visitor to the Corinthian assembly (far more likely to be a Gentile than a Jew) would be exposed to a phenomenon never intended for him in the first place.
 6. On the other hand, the intelligible use of prophecy for the edification of the assembly, perfectly understandable to a Gentile visitor, would be likely to have powerful side effects, searching him, and begetting within him the fear of God.

II. The real nature and use of tongues.

- A. It is wrong to suppose that biblical tongues consisted of anything other than known languages.
1. But what about the expression “tongues of men and angels” (I Cor. 13:1)?
 2. Note that the first three verses of this chapter have a pronounced hyperbolic character. While angels no doubt have languages of their own, the apostle no more implies that he expects the readers to use them than that he expects them to give their bodies to be burned.
 3. Some scholars cite the fact that the priests of Cebele would go into an altered state of mind, along with their followers, as they clanged a gong, jumped up and down, and chattered in jibberish, which they wanted their followers to believe were tongues of angels.
- B. The word *unknown* frequently coupled with the word *tongue* in the Authorized Version is italicized to indicate that there is nothing in the original to correspond to it . Thus, it was inserted by the translators.
1. The Greek word for “tongue” meant no more in such a setting to the Greek reader than does our English word “language.”

2. **To the Jews, for whom the gift was intended, tongues were never to be heard as incoherent, incomprehensible, babbling.**
 3. **It is evident that on the day of Pentecost, for example, to the great Jerusalem multitude all that was being said was perfectly intelligible—without an interpreter—for these Jews exclaimed: “*And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?...we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God*” (Acts 2:8-11).**
- B. If all the evidence of Scripture is carefully put together, certain conclusions concerning the gift of tongues will become apparent:**
1. **From the very first this gift consisted of languages known and spoken by Jews of the dispersion, so many of whom were present in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:8-11).**
 2. **The prominence of the gift in the Corinthian assembly is easily accounted for by the fact that Corinth was at this time a thriving commercial center where there was also an appreciable Jewish element (Acts 18:1-17).**
 - a. **Obviously, due to the natural Jewish aptitude in commercial affairs, Corinth would be just such a city as would exhibit a polyglot Jewish community many of whom might be resident only for a time in connection with specific ventures.**
 - b. **There seems to be a predictable Jewish practice of planning a year’s residence in some city to “buy and sell and get gain” (James 4:13).**
 - c. **If , then, as is natural to suppose the affairs of commerce in Corinth resulted in Jews of various linguistic backgrounds flowing in out of the city, no surprise is occasioned by the fact that many languages—unknown to the average Greek Corinthian who might visit the assembly—were supernaturally present there that they might be properly utilized in the confirming the gospel to the nation for whom they were a sign.**
 3. **Obviously, as in the case of any other spiritual gift, the possessor of the gift of tongues could utilize this gift at will.**
 - a. **Accordingly, in addition to its primary function in witness to Jewish visitors or inhabitants at Corinth, some were employing the gift in prayer (I Cor. 14:14-16) or simply in speaking in the assembly (I Cor. 14:2, 27, 39 etc.)**
 - b. **But herein lies the danger of its abuse for, outside of its proper Jewish context, the average believer in the assembly might not know “the meaning of the voice” and might be unedified when the gift was used (cf. I Cor. 14:6-11).**
 - c. **Indeed, if so used, the gift might be no more than a means of vain display.**
 4. **However, once the apostle places the gift in its proper perspective by reminding the Corinthians of its basic purpose (vv. 20-22), he is then prepared to restrict its use in the**

assembly and to stipulate its nonuse there altogether unless there was an interpreter (I Cor. 14:27-28).

a. An interpreter, then, is the one coming into the congregation who speaks that language.

C. A sign-gift for an unbelieving nation had indeed its proper sphere, but the controlling principle with the church was the building up of the saints.

1. To this end, tongues would have to be harnessed and directed if they were to be employed in the church at all, "Let all things be done unto edifying" (I Cor. 14:25).

D. That the purpose of this gift has ended and that it has therefore been withdrawn, is the conclusion which is forthcoming from Luke 21:20-24 ²⁰*And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. ²¹Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. ²²For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. ²³But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. ²⁴And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."*

1. From this Scripture it is clear that the destruction of Jerusalem (accomplished in A.D. 70) was to signalize the fact that God's attention was being directed to the Gentiles until their times (or seasons) or even, (times of opportunity) should be fulfilled.
2. The age long treading down of the holy city constitutes a visual lesson in history that, so long as it continues, God's purposes with the Jews as a nation are in a state of expectation or waiting and His purposes with the nations are predominant.
3. That the period between the crucifixion of Christ and the prophesied destruction of Jerusalem was so long, is but a tribute to the matchless patience and forbearance of God toward His ancient and erring people.
4. The temporary flourishing of the sign-gift of tongues during this period in accordance with O.T. prophecy as a final gracious effort to rouse the nation to repentance—can only be rightly understood if it is seen as a parting token of Jehovah's love for the earthly seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

CONCLUSION: The failure of much of the modern tongues movement to display any discernible consciousness of the plain Biblical purpose of the gift stands as a powerful argument against the movement's genuineness and validity.

III. The Prophet Joel and the "Latter Rain"

(Acts 2:14-21) ¹⁴*But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: ¹⁵For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. ¹⁶But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; ¹⁷And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon*

all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: ¹⁸And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: ¹⁹And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: ²⁰The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: ²¹And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” [Peter is quoting from Joel 2:28-32]

Introduction: Many charismatics treat the tongues phenomenon in one of two ways: (a) Some say that the gift never ceased but just declined. This position places them in several heretical traditions; (b) Others concede that tongues did cease after the apostolic era, but that contemporary manifestations are a final outpouring of the Spirit and His gifts for the last days.

- A. A key text for charismatics who take the second view is (Joel. 2:28) *“²⁸And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:”*
1. According to Joel 2:19-32, before the final Day of the Lord, God’s Spirit will be poured out in such a way that there will be wonders in the sky, and on the earth—blood, fire, and columns of smoke: (vs. 31) *“³¹The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.”*
 - a. This is obviously a prophecy of the coming millennial kingdom and cannot refer to anything earlier. The context of the Joel passage makes this the only plausible interpretation.
 - b. For example, Joel 2:20 refers to the defeat of “the northern army” that will attack Israel in the end time apocalypse.
 - c. Joel 2:27 speaks of the great revival that will bring Israel back to God. This is another feature of the Great tribulation and is not yet fulfilled.
 - d. Joel 3:2,12,14 describe the judgment of the nations, an event that comes after Armageddon and in connection with the establishment of the earthly, millennial kingdom.
 - e. Later in Joel 3:18, Joel gives a beautiful description of the millennial kingdom: *“¹⁸And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim.”*
 2. Clearly, Joel 2 is a kingdom prophecy, which was not completely fulfilled at Pentecost or on any occasion since. It must refer to an era that is still future.
- B. This still leaves the question of what Peter meant when he quoted Joel 2:28-32 on the day of Pentecost.
1. Some teachers say that Peter was pointing to Pentecost as the fulfillment of Joel 2:28.

- a. **But on the day of Pentecost there were no wonders in the heavens and signs in the earth; no blood and fire and vapors of smoke; the sun did not turn to darkness and the moon to blood and the great and terrible day of the Lord did not come. The prophecy was not fully realized.**
- b. **Pentecost was only a partial fulfillment, or better, a preview of the prophecy's ultimate culmination.**
- c. **The parallel to that is the Transfiguration, in which the Lord's glory was briefly revealed as it will be seen fully throughout the millennial kingdom (Matt. 17:2; Mark 9:2). Jesus prophesied His second coming and its preview on the mount of transfiguration when He said: *"²⁷For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. ²⁸Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."* (Matt. 16:27-28).**

Peter told us that this was fulfilled on the Mt. of Transfiguration (II Pet. 1:16-19)
"For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy: whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts."

The coming of the morning star is the literal second coming of the Light-Giver. We are not going to have a Mt. of Transfiguration experience in this life and should therefore pursue the light of the written Scripture.

- d. **Peter was telling those present at Pentecost that they were getting a preliminary glimpse, a projection of the kind of power that the Spirit would release in the millennial kingdom. How do we know this? Because Peter had just been told by Jesus that it was not for him to know when the Joel prophecy of the restoration of the Kingdom of Israel would occur: (Acts 1:6-9) *"⁶When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? ⁷And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. ⁸But 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. ⁹And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight."***
- e. **The miracles that began on the day of Pentecost are a light on the horizon, heralding the coming earthly kingdom of Jesus Christ.**

- C. Some charismatics spiritualize “the former rain and the latter rain” of (Joel 2:23)...” ²³Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first *month*.” They argue that the former rain refers to Pentecost and apostolic times and the latter rain to the modern charismatic movement.
1. Throughout the O.T., “the former rain” refers to the autumn rains and “the latter rain” to the spring rains. Joel was actually saying that in the millennial kingdom both rains will come as before. His point was that God will make crops grow profusely in the millennial kingdom.
 - a. (Joel 2:24-26) makes this point abundantly clear: “²⁴And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil. ²⁵And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you. ²⁶And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed.”
 - b. The “former and latter rain” have nothing to do with Pentecost, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, or the twentieth century.
 - c. Joel 2:28 can not be used to say that tongues have been poured out a second time. In the first place, Joel did not even mention tongues. In the second place, the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost was not the ultimate fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy.

CONCLUSION: There is no biblical evidence that there will be a reoccurrence on the church of the sign gifts or that believers will work miracles near the end of the Church age.

However, there is much evidence that near the end of the age there will be false prophets who perform miracles, prophesy, and cast out demons (Matt. 7:22-23; 24:11,24; 2 Thess. 2:9-12).

(Matt. 24:4) “⁴And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.”

IV. I Corinthians 13 and the Tongues Question

Introduction: Almost universally I Cor. 13 is divided into three parts—vss 1-3, 4-7, and 8-13. In the first paragraph Paul points to the necessity of love, in the second to the nature of love, and in the third to the endurance of love. It is in vss. 8-13 that the temporary aspect of the gift of tongues is seen. In connection with vs. 8 our discussion will revolve around two questions. When will prophecies and knowledge be done away? Do tongues cease before prophecies and knowledge.

- A. When will prophecies and knowledge be done away? This must be the starting point in our consideration. I wish you to consider the position that they will be done away at the rapture. Two factors indicate that prophecies and knowledge will be done away for the church at the rapture and resurrection of the church.

1. **First, the perfect thing mentioned in verse 10 best finds its meaning in the rapture. Second, vs. 12, which explains verse 10, clearly refers to the coming of Christ for His own. It is then that prophecy and knowledge will be rendered inoperative in the full brightness of Christ's presence.**
2. **It is well at this point to discuss the meaning of prophecies and knowledge.**
 - a. **In this connection it should be observed that the Greek noun *propheteia* has two meanings.**
 - i. **On the one hand, it may be used of the act of prophesying as in Rom. 12:6; I Cor. 12:10; 14:22 and most probably in I Thess. 5:20.**
 - ii. **On the other hand it may look at the content of prophecy as in Matt. 13:14; I Cor. 14:6; and Rev. 1:3. These passages refer to what is prophesied.**
 - b. **There are reasons to believe that it is the content of prophecy that Paul has in mind in vs. 8. Likewise, knowledge in this chapter looks at what was expressed by the one who had the gift of knowledge in the early church.**
 - c. **That *Propheteia* and *gnosiz* refer to the content of prophecy and knowledge rather than to the act of prophesying and speaking knowledge is evident for several reasons.**
 - i. **In I Cor. 12:8 Paul describes the gift of expressing knowledge by the term *word* of knowledge, but in I Cor. 13:8 he employs the simple term *knowledge*. The former looks at the expression of knowledge; the latter refers to that which is known or the knowledge itself.**
 - ii. **Secondly, vs. 9 emphasizes the *content* of prophecy and knowledge more than the act.**
 - iii. **Thirdly, the two are brought together in I Cor. 14:6 where the last term, *doctrine*, and the preceding terms refer to content... “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 Paul is saying is this: the content of knowledge and prophecy that was known in the early church and has been recorded in God's inspired Word will be rendered inoperative when Christ comes for His own.

The knowledge and prophecies in the Word are accurate and certain of fulfillment, but they are partial. The full revelation of Christ's presence will so completely overshadow these that they will be rendered inoperative. We will not be having Bible studies in our glorified bodies in the New Jerusalem.

B. Do tongues cease before prophecies and knowledge are rendered inoperative? I wish you to consider that several important details imply a “yes” answer.

1. First, there is the change of verbs in vs.8. It is very significant that Paul uses *katargeo* of both prophecies and knowledge when he says they will be done away.
 - a. However he carefully selects the verb *pauo* when he speaks of the cessation of tongues.
 - b. *katargeo* means “to render inoperative, to supersede.”
 - c. In the active voice *pauo* means “to make to cease.” Why this change?
 - i. This change of verbs cannot be accounted for by saying Paul does this to avoid repetition. That Paul did not fear repetition is seen in the fact that he employs *katargeo* no less than four times in verses 8, 10, and 11.
 - d. The conclusion seems clear. Tongues are viewed as ceasing before Christ comes, while prophecies and knowledge are rendered inoperative by the Lord's return.
2. Secondly, there is the change of voice in the verbs of verse 8.
 - a. It is significant that the verb *katargeo*, which is used of both prophecies and knowledge, is future *passive* in both of its occurrences in verse 8.
 - b. On the other hand, *pauo* is future *middle*.
 - i. In the active voice *pauo* means “to make to cease” (cf. II Pet. 3:10).
 - ii. If Paul had wanted to say tongues will be made to cease by the coming of Christ, he most probably would have used the active voice.
 - iii. In the middle voice the verb simply means “to cease.”
 - c. The conclusion is even clearer than before. While the content of prophecies and knowledge will endure for the Church until the coming of the Lord, tongues will in and of themselves cease in the meantime.
3. Thirdly, we must note the omission of tongues in vss. 9, 12. It is more than mere circumstance that tongues are not mentioned in verse 9 while knowledge and prophecies are.
 - a. In vs. 10 these latter two are said to be rendered useless.
 - b. The implication is clear, tongues will not be in existence to be rendered inoperative when the Lord Jesus comes.
4. Fourthly, vs. 12 also seems to be looking at knowledge and prophecy. Knowing face to face is quite evidently a reference to prophecy as in Numbers 12:6-8 “⁶And he said,

Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.⁷ My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house.⁸ With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" (cf. Ex. 33:11; Deut. 34:10).

Conclusion: Significantly vs. 12 makes no mention of tongues as being in existence when Christ comes. Once again the inference is confirmed. Tongues cease in the church age before the return of Christ. Prophecies and knowledge will be completely surpassed by the presence of Christ Jesus.

Extra note: In First Corinthians Thirteen Paul is discussing spiritual things which abide (remain) and those which will not abide. In 13:13 he notes that *now these three remain: faith, hope and love...* These three things will continue after tongues ceased. However, *hope* and *faith* will cease at the rapture for the church and at death for the individual saint prior to the rapture according to Rom. 8:24, 25; II Cor. 5:7. Now if *hope* and *faith* are no longer needed after the rapture and yet it abides or remains and continues after the cessation of tongues, this means that tongues ceased sometime during the church age after which *hope* and *walking by faith* continued until the rapture.

V. A closer look at the misuse of tongues in I Cor. 14.

- A. I Cor. 14 was obviously written at a time before tongues will have ceased.
 1. In many conversations with those of the charismatic movement, the discussion revolves around the question of who is the most spiritual among us. We need to nail down verses 37, 38 where the Apostle Paul says that those claiming to be spiritually gifted are to be ignored if they ignore his clear inspired commands in this chapter.
- B. In 14:1 Paul exhorts the entire membership to desire spiritual gifts but especially the gift of prophecy. God wishes all saints to share the content of prophecy through teaching and preaching and testifying but he knows that not all will receive direct prophetic revelations from God. When speaking of the Body of Christ he notes that the gift of prophecy is unique (I Cor. 12:10, 29-31). Though not all are prophets in this sense, Paul wants all believers to desire the gift to teach the content of revelation, knowledge and prophecy (14:6, 24).
- C. In 14:2 Paul gives a unique description (not prescription) of a man speaking in a church service in a tongue that no one understands and that was a mystery to the speaker as well. The man doing this is aware that he is not speaking to other men but assumes that God is being addressed (cf. I Cor. 12:7).
 1. In 14:3 the one who shares the content of prophecy will strengthen, encourage, and comfort others in the church. That's why Paul used the word *especially* in vs. 1.
 2. Returning to Paul's description (not prescription) in vs. 2, the man doing this is edifying himself [he thinks] but not anyone else in the service.
 3. In vs. 5 Paul exclaims that the one who shares the content of prophecy is greater that the man described in verse 2 unless the church is being edified with the content

of prophecy in the form of communicated revelation, knowledge, prophecy or instruction (vs. 6).

- D. In 14:9 Paul seems to clarify his description of the man in vs. 2. Unless intelligible words are coming off of one's tongue he is speaking to the air. Speaking to the air and speaking to God are two different concepts.**
- E. In 14:12 Paul addresses those who are eager to have spiritual gifts and exhorts them to excel in gifts that would build up the church.**
- 1. Do you believe in prayer. In vs. 13 Paul calls upon the Corinthians to pray that the experience of vs. 2 would not happen to them--that they would never speak a tongue that was a mystery to themselves as well as others in the room.**
 - a. In 14:14 Paul says that if the description of verse 2 happened to him, it would be an unfruitful [unprofitable] experience. How can an unfruitful experience be self-edifying or build up the church?**
 - 2. Then Paul reminds the Corinthians that he personally was a tongue speaker but with prescribed boundaries. In 14:15 Paul proclaims that he will not pray or sing anything that is not understandable to his mind. This precludes ever experiencing vs. 2.**
 - 3. Paul is one who leads by example. Thus, in vss. 16, 17 he admonishes the Corinthians not to engage in something for the purpose of self-edification rather than the edification of others [cf. 12:7].**
- F. In 14:18, 19 Paul reminds the Corinthians that he spoke in tongues more than all of them but that five intelligible words are preferred over ten thousand words coming from a verse 2 experience.**
- G. In the NT, spiritual maturity and spiritual gifts are two separate concepts. One can be extremely spiritually gifted and extremely unspiritual at the same time. In chapter 1:7 Paul was thankful that they did not lack any spiritual gift. Yet in 3:1-3 he rebukes them for being immature babies, unspiritual, and actually carnal.**
- 1. Now in 14:20 Paul calls the Corinthians to add spiritual maturity to their giftedness by giving them a theological lesson on the purpose of the gift of tongues.**
 - a. He does this in vs. 21 by quoting Isa. 28:11, 12 to show that the OT specifically prophesied the coming of the spiritual gift of tongs and why.**
 - b. The *this people* referred to in this passage can be none other than the Jewish nation.**
 - c. With the Isa. passage in mind, the gift of tongues would be a sign to unbelieving Jews (vs. 22a)—as they precisely were on the day of Pentecost. At the house of Cornelius in Acts 10:45 they were a sign to believing Jews who were in a state of unbelief regarding whether there was a place for uncircumcised Gentiles in God's church.**

2. Prophecy, however, was designed for believers (vs. 22b) and would contain doctrinal instruction as well as a clear presentation of the gospel of grace.
- F. So, if the whole church is assembled and multiple people are speaking in tongues simultaneously, what would be the result of this? Would it be a sign to authenticate the gospel (Heb. 2:3, 4), would it sound like giving thanks to God or would it sound like a duck farm prompting them to conclude that they are out of their minds (14:23).
1. But if an unbeliever hears the content of prophecy [including the clear presentation of the gospel], this will become a sign to the unbeliever that God is among them and can result in a conversion experience (14:24, 25).
 - a. Note that, in the NT, tongues were not a mode to communicate the gospel at Pentecost but rather a sign to authenticate the gospel. The Apostle Peter was not preaching in tongues when he presented the gospel at Pentecost...*Fellow Jews...These men* [men who were speaking in tongues] *are not drunk, as you suppose...*(Acts 2:14, 15). It was Peters presentation of the content of prophecy that resulted in three thousand conversions.
 - b. How can the legitimate use of tongues, as a sign to authenticate the gospel to unbelieving Jews, be a source of strengthening to the whole church?
 - i. Just as the content of prophecy is designed for believers and yet can result in the conversion of unbelievers, tongues, which were designed to be a sign to unbelievers could be a blessing to the saints when they are properly interpreted an praise God or magnify His mighty works.
 - ii. In either case, the one practicing the spiritual gift is seeking the benefit of someone else.
 - c. Why always seek the benefit of someone else?
 - i. Because the Apostle Paul commanded that all should be done for the edification or strengthening of someone else (14:26).
 - ii. Because the Apostle Paul commanded that the Corinthian believers follow the way of love in the desire to use spiritual gifts (14:1).
 - iii. Because the Apostle Paul defined love as *not self-seeking* (13:5).
 - iv. Because the Apostle Paul affirmed that maturity would follow his commands regarding the use of gifts (14:37).
 - v. Because the Apostle Peter exhorted that special gifts be employed in serving one another (I Pet. 4:10).
 - vi. Because Paul (14:4) says that the one experiencing vs. 2 is pursuing self-edification.
 - vii. Because Paul knew that, were he to pursue such a self-serving use of this spiritual gift, it would be unfruitful, unprofitable, and therefore not edifying to his mind at all (14:14).
- G. In 14:27 the Apostle Paul begins to lay down boundaries for the use of the gift of tongues in the church.

1. No more than two or three should practice the gift during a given service and then one at a time.
2. The one speaking in a tongue will know if there is an interpreter in the room and speak silently to himself and to God (14:28). This would not be an audible form of speaking at all. The Bible does not say that the tongue-speaker is under the complete control of the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, he is in complete control of when and where he lets these words come out of his mouth.
 - a. This is what Paul meant when he said: *The spirits of the prophets are subject to the control of the prophets* (14:32).
 - b. Regardless of whether one is prophesying, relating the content of prophecy or speaking in tongues, their tongue is under their own control and is subject to their own spirit.
3. Changing these rules for the use of gifts will result in disorder and this is not the will of God or the Holy Spirit (14:33).
 - a. These rules and boundaries were not just for the Corinthians but for all congregations (14:33).

H. Regarding the silence of women in the churches (14:34):

1. If this means that women are not allowed to speak at all in a church, then Paul contradicted himself when he assumed that women would be praying and prophesying during congregational meetings (11:5).
 2. It is not likely that God only intended spiritual gifts to be distributed to men.
 3. It is more likely that God does not want the unlearned to dominate the teaching time in the congregational services. Since the culture of that time primarily withheld education from most women, God would not have wanted them to disrupt the order of the services by asking many questions as the meeting progressed. This admonition would also apply to unlearned men in the fuller context of Scripture. That these women were to ask their husbands at home seems to imply that in that culture the men would be learned enough to answer the questions. This does not imply that there were not learned women in NT times but the dominant culture of the times withheld education from women. It is disgraceful for an unlearned person to interrupt a service with questions to the speaker unless it is a format that openly invites people to ask questions. (14:35).
- I. These boundaries and rules that Paul has set forth are the Lord's command and the one who ignores them deserves to be ignored (14:37).**
- J. Knowing that tongues had not yet been stilled (13:8) when chapter 14 was written, Paul exhorted that tongues were to be permitted (14:39).**
1. But the ultimate rule was that *everything* was to be done in a *fitting and orderly way* (14:40).

- a. This way is the *way of love* (14:1) which is not *self-seeking* (13:5) but rather seeks to edify, strengthen and build up others (14:12) and seeks to serve others (I Peter 4:10).
- b. Where does this leave the self-serving experience of verse 2?

An Extra Note: Matt. 6:7 *And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.* In this verse, Christ instructs His disciples to avoid meaningless repetition in prayer. The Greek is *battalogesette* and consists of two parts: *batta* which is not a word but a sound; and *logeo* which means “to speak” [W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (4 vols. in 1; Westwood: Fleming H. Revell, 1966), III, 281]. It has the idea of babbling in unknown syllables. It could be translated: *Don’t say, “batta, batta, batta, batta” when you pray.* Jesus is telling His followers not to use repetition of meaningless sounds as prayer. The question we need to ask is this: Would the Holy Spirit of God cause a believer to utter unknown syllables over and over when the Lord Jesus called this practice pagan and strongly admonished against it?

I. THE TESTIMONY OF THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS

- A. While we know that the gift was in operation during apostolic times, it is significant that the biblical gift is nowhere alluded to in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers.
- B. Why is this silence important to observe?
 - 1. First, some of the Apostolic Fathers wrote from and to churches where the gift had been practiced during the time of the Apostles.
 - a) Clement of Rome wrote an epistle to the church at Corinth. If there was any church where tongues were being practiced it would be here. Yet Clement never mentions the gift, even when speaking of their spiritual heritage (Clement of Rome, *To the Corinthians, I, II*).
 - b) The same problem of disobedience to authority was there, but that of tongues had evidently been solved, perhaps by their ceasing. (*To the Corinthians XLII-XLIV*).
 - c) Ignatius of Antioch wrote to the church of Ephesus where Christians spoke in tongues, but he, also, has nothing to say regarding the gift.
 - (1) Neither did Paul mention the gift in his letter to the Ephesians.
 - (2) The Apostle John commends the Church of Ephesus for its ability to detect the fraud of those falsely claiming the apostolic office.
 - 2. Secondly, the wide geographical coverage of the Apostolic Fathers makes their silence significant.
 - a) Clement wrote from Rome to Corinth.

- b) Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, wrote to those at Philippi.
- c) Ignatius of Antioch wrote to the churches of Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Rome, Smyrna, Philadelphia.
- d) The Epistle of Barnabas was probably written from Alexandria.
- e) The Shepherd of Hermas may have been written from Rome.
- f) Papias was from Hierapolis in Phrygia.
- g) The Didache may have been written from Egypt or possibly from Syria or Palestine.
- h) The Epistle to Diognetus was probably written from Alexandria.

This covers practically every significant area of the Roman Empire. If the gift of Biblical tongues were prominent they would surely have been mentioned in some way.

3. Thirdly, the doctrinal character of the Apostolic Fathers makes their silence significant. Their writings cover practically every major doctrine taught in the New Testament yet there is not discussion of biblical tongues.
4. Fourthly, the purpose of many of the writings make the omission of tongues significant.
 - a) The purpose of the Epistle to Diognetus was to answer his questions about Christianity (*Epistle to Diognetus*, I).
 - (1) The writer shows the folly of idolatry (1-2)
 - (2) The inadequacy of Judaism (3-4)
 - (3) And the superiority of Christianity (5-12). This would have been an excellent opportunity to present the gift of tongues as a proof of the supernatural character of Christianity.
 - b) Clement wrote to correct spiritual errors at Corinth, but he does not speak at all about tongues.
 - c) Irenaeus said regarding Polycarp's letter to the Philippians that those who "choose to do so, and are anxious about their salvation, can learn the character of his faith, and the preaching of the truth." (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, III, 3-4). However, Polycarp nowhere indicates that tongues are a part of the normal character of Christianity; in fact he does not even touch on the subject.

5. From these observations, it is clear that the silence of the Apostolic Fathers cannot be simply dismissed as being of no consequence.

C. THE TESTIMONY OF JUSTIN MARTYR: Justin was born around A.D. 100 and was martyred somewhere between A.D. 163 and 167. (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, IV, 163, 7-8).

1. He traveled widely in the Roman Empire and should have come in contact with tongues. He was born in Samaria, converted in Ephesus, and traveled over the empire as a Christian teacher.
2. There is one section in his work *Dialogue with Trypho* which might give rise to the idea that he knew of tongues.
 - a) In arguing that the prophetic gifts of the Jews are now transferred to Christians, he says: “For the prophetic gifts remain with us, even to the present time. And hence you ought to understand that [the gifts] formerly among your nation have been transferred to us.” ((Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, LXXXII).
 - (1) Note how Justin states that the gifts he is speaking of were formerly among the people of Israel.
 - (2) However, the gift of tongues is only used in connection with the church.
 - (3) When Justin does speak of gifts he mentions seven, but the gift of tongues is not included (*Dialogue with Trypho*, XXXIX).
 - (4) In light of these facts it is evident that Justin did not have the gift of tongues in mind.
3. The N.T. teaches that tongues were given as a sign to unbelieving Jews to confirm the message of the church. Since Justin’s *Dialogue with Trypho* was to show the superiority of Christianity over Judaism it would have been an excellent opportunity to point to the gift of tongues as proof of his thesis.
4. When he writes his *Hortatory Address to the Greeks*, he states explicitly that he is going to examine accurately Christianity and heathen religion. By comparing the teachings of the two he states he will demonstrate that Christianity is the true religion (Justin Martyr, *Hortatory address to the Greeks*, I).
 - a) One of the strongest things he could have used would have been the gift of tongues, but he did not even mention them.

D. THE TESTIMONY OF IRENAEUS: “we hear many brethren in the Church...who through the Spirit speak all kinds of languages.” (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, V,6.1). What are we to make of this statement?

1. **First lets look at what we know of his background.**
 - a) **As a boy growing up in Smyrna he heard Polycarp and was greatly influenced by him.**
 - b) **Some time around A.D. 177 Irenaeus traveled from Asia Minor to Lyons in Gaul where he became a presbyter under Pothinus who was also trained by Polycarp.**
 - c) **During this time he witnessed the severe persecution at Lyons and saw his faithful friend, Pothinus, brutally murdered. (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, V,1).**
 - d) **While still a presbyter, he was sent to Rome with a letter for the bishop Eleutherus...This was a letter written by a group of Montanists to try to persuade Eleutherus to have a kind attitude toward them (Eusebius, V).**
 - (1) **Montanism was a prophetic movement that broke out in Phrygia around 172. It was rejected by most of Christianity. Two prophetesses worked with him (Prisca and Maximilla). They claimed new revelation from the Holy Spirit giving confident predictions of the return of Christ which failed to come to pass. Their stern asceticism disrupted marriages by forbidding remarriage after being widowed. They would utter their new prophecies in a state of convulsive frenzy. They demanded unhesitating recognition for their new revelation. When Maximilla died c. 189, she left a prophecy that there were to be no further prophets before the end of the age.**
 - e) **It was after the death of Pothinus that Irenaeus became bishop of Lyons where he served until he, too, died a martyr's death.**
2. **Two things in this background should be observed:**
 - a) **First, he came from Asia Minor and then ministered in Lyons.**
 - (1) **It was in Asia Minor and Syria that there were many unhealthy influences upon Christianity, and particularly the influence of Montanus and his perverted view of the Holy Spirit (Eusebius, V, 3).**
 - (2) **This association with the Montanist element did not cease when Irenaeus arrived in Lyons for there was a close connection between the churches of Lyons and those of Asia Minor.**
 - (3) **Also, Alexander from Phrygia and Attalus from Pergamon were among those residing in Lyons (Eusebius, V, 1, 3). It is in this light that Irenaeus' statement regarding tongues should be viewed. From his background he had evidently heard the spiritual excesses of those who were influenced by Montanus.**
 - b) **The second thing to observe about the background of Irenaeus is that he was influenced by Polycarp. If the gift were of great importance, both the teacher and his pupil should have stressed it. They did not.**

3. With these things in mind, let us examine Irenaeus' statement regarding tongues.
 - a) First, observe that Irenaeus does not say he spoke in tongues.
 - b) Second, he does not classify those close to him as having the gift, for he uses the plural "we hear." The old Latin version uses the perfect *audivimus*, "we have heard."
 - c) Thirdly, because of his association with the Montanists, his rather vague statement may rest on some report as to the Montanists of Asia Minor.
 - d) Fourthly, when Irenaeus does discuss the events of Pentecost he gives no hint that the gift was operative during his day.

E. THE TESTIMONY OF TERTULLIANS (his undisputed works dating from c. 196- c. 212: This celebrated theologian of North Africa was another who came under the influence of Montanus. Although he traveled widely and was an outstanding scholar, his references to the gift of tongues are meager.

1. In trying to show that the soul has a kind of corporeality, he describes the soul's attributes, one of which is the ability to possess spiritual gifts.
 - a) To illustrate the point, he cites an example of a Montanist woman who says she has conversed with angels and has had other ecstatic experiences.
 - b) He does not actually mention the gift of tongues here, but he does describe her as having "gifts of revelation which she experiences in the Spirit by ecstatic vision..." (Tertullian, *A treatise on the Soul*,9).
 - c) We must factor in that the Montanists were heretics and that Spirit-filled Christians should seek a deeper relationship with Christ and not angels.
2. Tertullian makes a specific reference to the gift of tongues in his work *Against Marcion* (V, 8). Even here he does not actually say anything about tongues in his time. He is taking Paul's epistles and pointing out the apologetic value found in each letter.
 - a) He takes them epistle by epistle and chapter by chapter. When he comes to the spiritual gifts as mentioned in I Cor. 12-14, he acknowledges that all do not have the same gifts, but that the Spirit has given different gifts to different men. He makes no reference to the use of the gift in his time.
 - b) He calls on Marcion to duplicate these gifts as exhibited by the apostles, but does not say that he has seen or knows of any one who exercises the gift.

- F. THE TESTIMONY OF MONTANUS:** About the only clear statement regarding the manifestation of tongues is found in Eusebius' description of the activity of Montanus. He writes: "So that he was carried away in spirit, and was wrought up into a certain kind of frenzy and irregular ecstasy, raving, and speaking, and uttering strange things and proclaiming what was contrary to the institutions that had prevailed in the church...." (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, V, 16-19).
1. The significance of the testimony of Montanus is seen in several observations.
 - a) First, he was known for his challenge to the authority of Apostolic Tradition and was thus considered a heretic. He did not conform to the Scriptures and even those around him acknowledged this.
 - b) Secondly, his particular heresy was in the realm of Pneumatology and his emphasis on the chrismata.
 - c) Yet even with all this emphasis, the Montanist activity was considered to fall far short of the gifts as exercised by the apostles. (Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History*, V, 17) states "They will never be able to show that any of the Old or any of the New Testament were thus violently agitated and carried away in spirit."
 - d) He claimed that through him the Holy Spirit was inaugurating a new dispensation of divine revelation and demanded unhesitating recognition for the new prophecy.
 - e) When the last of his prophets, Maximilla, died c. 189, she left a prophecy that there were to be no further prophets before the end of the age.
- G. THE TESTIMONY OF ORIGEN:** Recognized as being one of the ablest scholars of his day. He was not only acquainted with the affairs of his day through extensive reading, but he also traveled widely himself and had students from all over the world attending his classes.
1. If the gift were widespread or even practiced at all, certainly Origen should have known something about it and would have mentioned it somewhere in his voluminous writings.
 - a) Yet he has no clear statement regarding the gift and his testimony indicates that the extraordinary gifts were gone.
 2. It is in his answer to Celsus that Origen has something to say about spiritual gifts (Origen, *Against Celsus*, VIII, 8-11).
 - a) Celsus made the charge that the O.T. prophets are like certain ones in Phoenicia and Palestine who go through foolish motions and gestures, then say they have a prophecy. He is quoted by Origen as saying: "To these promises are added strange, fanatical, and quite unintelligible words, of which no rational person can find the meaning: for so dark are they, as to

have no meaning at all; but they give occasion to every fool or impostor to apply them to suit his own purposes.” (*Against Celsus*, VIII, 9).

- b) Origen’s answer to such a charge is quite pertinent to this discussion. He says that though the Holy Spirit gave signs and outward demonstrations of his presence at the beginning of Christ’s ministry and after His ascension, these things have diminished and are no longer widespread. (*Against Celsus*, VIII, 8).
- c) Furthermore he says Celsus is speaking falsely when describing what he had heard: “For no prophet bearing any resemblance to the ancient prophets have appeared in the time of Celsus.” (*Against Celsus*, VIII, 11).

H. THE TESTIMONY OF CHRYSOSTOM: After studying and ministering around the city of Antioch he became the patriarch of Constantinople. There he would be in contact with Christians and churches from all over the empire.

- 1. As he approaches his message on Spiritual gifts in I Corinthians, he confesses that the “whole place is very obscure,” and goes on to add: “but the obscurity is produced by our ignorance of the facts referred to and by their cessation, being such as then used to occur, but now no longer take place.” (Chrysostom, *Homilies on First Corinthians*, XXIX, 1). This statement is from the fourth century. Far from being the normal occurrence in the Christian circles, the gift of tongues is rather unknown.

I. CONCLUSION: After examining the testimony of the early Christian leaders whose ministry represents practically every area of the Roman Empire from approximately A.D. 100 to 400, it appears that the miraculous gifts of the first century died out and were no longer needed to establish Christianity.

- 1. Furthermore, it is very evident that even if the gift were in existence, in spite of all the testimony to the contrary, it was neither widespread nor the normal Christian experience.
- 2. The only clear reference to anything resembling the phenomena is connected with the heretic Montanus and those influenced by his erroneous views of the Spirit.
- 3. In many of their writings, the fathers sought to show the superiority of Christianity or the normal character of Christianity; yet, glossolalia is not cited as an example. The silence of the apostolic fathers must be regarded as most significant.
- 4. **Point:** To need better miracles than the ones recorded in the Scripture in order to believe is like needing to light a candle to see the sun.

II. Testimony of the Middle Ages (590-1517).

This was the period of Roman Catholic domination and doctrinal perversion. It has been aptly called the “Dark Ages” because the light of the Scriptures had seemingly gone out. And yet, even from this period comes echoes of glossolalia.

A. Hildegard was called the great seeress and prophetess, the Sybyl of the Rhine. She was in ill health most of her life. She had many visions, especially during her sickness. Miracles and tongue-speaking have been attributed to her.

- 1. (1098-1179) She was the abbess of the Benedictine convent of Disibodenberg, near Bingen on the Rhine and was the most prominent woman in the church of her day.**
- 2. She received letters from four popes, Eugenius, Anastasius, Adrian, and Alexander III., from the emperors Konrad III. And Frederick Barbarossa, from Bernard and many ecclesiastics in high office as well as from persons of humble position.**
- 3. Her intercessions were invoked by Frederick, by Konrad for his son, and by Bernaard.**
- 4. Persons from far away were moved to seek her aid, as for example the patriarch of Jerusalem who had heard that a “divine force operated in and through her.”**
- 5. Her convent was moved from Disibodenberg to Rupertsberg and she finally became abbess of the convent of Eibingen.**
- 6. It is reported by her contemporaries that scarcely a sick person came to her without being healed.**
- 7. She wrote “Lingua Ignota”: “...the manuscript, in eleven folios, which gives a list of nine hundred words of an unknown language, mostly nouns and only a few adjectives, a Latin, and in a few cases a German, explanation, together with an unknown alphabet of twenty-three letters, printed in Pitra.” “Hildegard,” *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: The Encyclopedia Press, Inc., 1913), VII, 352.**

B. Vincent Ferrer (1350-1419) : A dominican monk, was reported to have seen an apparition of Christ accompanied by St. Dominic and St. Francis. This experience led to a miraculous cure of a death sickness. He carried on an extensive miracle-performing and preaching ministry in Western Europe.

- 1. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (XV, 438) stated: “It would be difficult to understand how he could make himself understood by the many nationalists he evangelized, as he could speak only Limousin, the language of Valencia. Many of his biographers hold that he was endowed with the gift of tongues, an opinion supported by Nicholass Clemangis, a doctor of the University of Paris, who heard him preach.”**
- 2. So, his name is associated with the gift of tongues and with the sect of the Flagellants.**
- 3. He was born in Valencia, joined the Dominican order, and pursued his studies in the universities of Barcelona and Lerida.**
- 4. In 1395, Benedict XIII, called him to be chief penitentiary in Avignon and master of the papal palace.**
- 5. Two years later he returned to Valencia with the title of papal legate.**

6. **Able to speak only Spanish, his sermons, though they were not interpreted, are reported to have been understood in France and Italy.**
 7. **He was canonized by Calixtus III., 1455.....The tale is that Ferrer noticed this member of the Borgia family as a young priest in Valencia, and made the prediction that one day he would reach the highest office open to mortal man.**
 8. **On his itineraries Ferrer was also accompanied by bands of Flagellants. He himself joined in the flagellations, and the scourge with which he scourged himself daily, consisting of six thongs, is said still to be preserved in the Carthusian convent of Catalonia.**
 9. **The campaigns of the flagelants were penitential crusades in which the self-mortifications of the monastery were transferred to the open field and the public square and were adapted to impress the impenitent to make earnest in the warfare against the passions of the flesh. The first outbreak of their enthusiasm was in Italy in 1259, which, starting in Perugia, spread to Northern Italy and extended across the Alps to Austria, Prag and Strassburg. Similar outbreaks occurred in 1296, 1333, 1349, 1399 and again during the ministry of Vincent Ferrer**
- C. The flagalant movement in the North---It was here that a spirit of independence of the clergy manifested itself. This is evident from the Flagellant codes of the German and Dutch groups, current at the time of the great pestilence and in after years.**
1. **During the campaigns, which lasted 33 ½ days, they were to ask no alms nor to wash their persons or their clothing, nor cut their beards nor speak to women, nor to lie on feather beds.**
 2. **It was provided that, so long as they lived, they should flagellate themselves every Friday three times during the day and once at night. The associations were called brotherhoods.**
 3. **They revived the use of popular religious song. Singing was a main feature of the earliest Flagellant movement, 1259. In hymns they would beseech the Virgin to prevail upon her son to stop "the hard death and pestilence". Most of these hymns are filled with the thought of death and the woes of humanity, but the appeals to Mary are full of tenderness.**
 4. **The hearers, in describing the impression made upon them by the melodies, mention their sweetness and their rhythm , "moving hearts of stone and bringing tears to the eyes of the most stolid."**
 5. **Altogether, the Flagellant movement during the Black Death, 1349, must be regarded as a genuinely popular religious movement.**
 6. **According to the Pistojan writer, the movement had its origin in a vision seen by a peasant in the Dauphine`**

- a. After a midday meal, the peasant saw Christ as a young man. Christ asked him for bread. The peasant told him there was none left, but Christ bade him look, and behold, he saw three loaves.
 - b. Christ then bade him go and throw the loaves into a spring a short distance off. The peasant went, and was about to obey, when a woman, clad in white and bathed in tears, appeared, telling him to go back to the young man and say that his mother had forbidden it.
 - c. He went, and Christ repeated his command, but at the woman's mandate the peasant again returned to Christ.
 - d. Finally he threw in one of the loaves, when the woman, who was Mary, informed him that her Son was exceedingly angry at the sinfulness of the world and had determined to punish it, even to destruction.
 - e. Each loaf signified 1/3 of mankind and the destruction of 1/3 was fixed, and if the peasant should cast in the other two loaves, all mankind would perish.
 - f. The peasant cast himself on his knees before the weeping Virgin, who then assured him that she had prayed to her Son to withhold judgment, and that it would be withheld, provided that he and others went in processions, flagellating themselves and crying, "mercy" and "peace" and relating the vision he had seen.
7. The peasant was joined by 17 others, and they became the nucleus of a new movement. Miracles were supposed to accompany their marches. Among the miracles was the bleeding of a crucifix.
 8. The pope went so far as to bestow upon them his blessing and showed them the handkerchief of St. Veronica.

CONCLUSION: If the Bible is the Word of God then what must we say of the charasmatic gifts attributed to Hildegard, Vincent Ferrer and the Flagellant movement.

If we say that we are denying the omnipotence of God if we don't believe that He is doing anything He has the power to do, then we have just given an argument for the existence of pink flying elephants for no one doubts that an all-powerful God could create such an animal.

III. The Testimony of the Reformation Period (1517-1648).

This was the period of doctrinal revival. Through the ministries of Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and Knox, the truth of "justification by faith" was re-discovered and presented. There was a change from ritualism to Bible study and simple worship, and yet there was no attempt to recover glossolalia. However, it is reported that some did speak in tongues.

- A. Martin Luther (1483-1546). His defense of the faith against the threats of the papacy and the empire is admired by all.
 1. Thomas Zimmerman, once general superintendent of the Assemblies of God, contended that Luther also spoke in tongues. He cited this statement from Erich Sauer's *history of the Christian Church*:

“Dr. Martin Luther was a prophet, evangelist, speaker in tongues and interpreter, in one person, endowed with all the gifts of the Holy Spirit.” (Thomas Zimmerman, “Plea for the Pentecostalists,” *Christianity Today*, VII [Jan. 4, 1963], 12)

2. **However, no statement from Luther’s own writings is cited as proof for this claim.**
 3. **Sauer may have been referring to Luther’s ability to read and to speak German, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew.**
 4. **Brumback, an advocate of glossolalia, recognized this possibility when he wrote: “We have not been able to determine the author’s conception of the nature of tongues, and therefore we would hesitate to enter this quotation as conclusive evidence.** (Carl Brumback, *What meaneth this?* [Springfield, Mo.: The Gospel Publishing House, 1947], p. 92)
- B. Francis Xavier (1506-1552). Although he was no reformer, he was a significant figure of the reformation period. It is claimed that he performed miracles and spoke in tongues.**
1. **However, as a Roman Catholic missionary to the Orient, he devoted his entire first year to learning the Japanese language. When he was able to express himself, he then began to preach.**
- C. To the persons listed under the Middle Ages and the Reformation could be added the names of Louis Bertrand (1526-1581) and many other Catholic saints.**
1. **However, this is unnecessary because their experiences are similar in character to those listed.**
 2. **There is a definite question as to whether the phenomenon of tongue-speaking did occur in these periods. The claims may also be false.**
 3. **Schaff, an outstanding church historian, concluded: “What may be claimed for St. Bernard, St. Vincent Ferrer, and St. Francis Xavier is not a miraculous heteroglossolalia, but an eloquence so ardent, earnest, and intense, that the rude nations which they addressed in Latin or Spanish imagined they heard them in their mother tongue...Not one of these saints claimed the gift of tongues or other miraculous powers, but only their disciples or later writers.”** (Schaff, I, 240-241. Proof for Schaff’s conclusion will also be found here).
 4. **The tendency of Roman Catholicism to elevate and to venerate their saints must always form the background for any evaluation of their claims to miracles, whether they be healings or tongue-speaking.**
 5. **For this reason, any claim to glossolalia from Catholic sources must be regarded as suspect.**

IV. The Post-Reformation period (1648-1900)

This is the period of Protestant advance, from the Reformation to the Twentieth Century. During this time, “Christianity” spread throughout the world, including America. This period was also marked by

the development of cults and sects which sprang up spontaneously or were the result of church splits or dissatisfaction. In many groups, speaking in tongues became an integral part of their worship services.

- A. *Cevenal Prophets*. During the latter part of the seventeenth and early part of the eighteenth centuries, great persecution broke out against the French Huguenots in the southeastern part of France. In the midst of this tribulation, ecstatic experiences including prophesying and tongue-speaking broke out among the people. Morton T. Kelsey described the outbreak:

“The first occurrence of tongues grew out of the prophetic utterance of a ten-year old, Isabeau Vincent, who had fled from the mistreatment of her father and had seen the king’s soldiers bayonet women and children worshipping together in their own church. In an ecstatic experience she called for repentance....

Soon children all over the Cevennes were seized by the spirit and prophesied. Children as young as three were known to have exhorted the people in religious discourses. Adults, too, were seized by the spirit and found themselves speaking words of French they did not understand.” (Morton T Kelsey, *Tongue Speaking*, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1964, pp. 52,53)

1. Their physical actions were quite excessive. They fell backwards with the body extended at full length upon the ground. Their bodies went through many contortions including the heaving of the chest and the inflation of the stomach. When their physical actions ceased, they began to prophesy, exhorting the people to repentance and denouncing the Roman Catholic Church. (Robert Chandler Dalton, *Tongues Like As Of Fire*, Springfield, Mo.: The Gospel Publishing House, 1945, p. 19).

- B. *Jansenists*. Started by Cornelius Jansen, were a reform element within the Roman Catholic Church in the seventeenth century. Experience, not reason, was their guide.

1. They were opposed to the teaching of Justification by faith.
2. They believed that the relationship of a person to God was only possible in and through the Catholic Church.
3. Glossolalia has been attributed to this group which was later condemned by Rome.

- C. *Quakers*. Started in England during the seventeenth century by George Fox (1624-1691).

1. His aim was to promote the revival of primitive Christianity.
2. He stated that the “Inner Light” was in every man. There was no need for an ordained ministry. They sat in silence in their services until God revealed Himself directly to someone.
3. The Bible was regarded as inspired by God, but it was only a secondary rule, subordinate to the Holy Spirit and to the “Inner Light.”
4. Experience therefore sat in judgment upon the Bible, rather than vice versa.
5. It is reported that speaking in tongues took place among Quakers.

- D. *Irvingites*. Edward Irving (1792-1834) was a Scotch Presbyterian who was greatly interested in eschatology. This interest was caused partially by the French Revolution which had provoked in England a strong interest in apocalyptic thought and was increased through Bible studies in the home of Henry Drummond. He was also noted for his heretical belief in the sinful substance of the body of Christ.

1. Speaking in tongues broke out among his parishioners in their homes and later in his church services.
 2. The Irvingites distinguished between the Pentecostal glossolalia in foreign languages and the Corinthian glossolalia in ecstatic, unknown languages. They only practiced the latter.
 3. A later development of the Irvingites was the Catholic Apostolic Church. It restored the position of the twelve apostles and degenerated into a distorted Catholicism, embracing such rites as transubstantiation, extreme unction, candles, incense, and holy water.
- E. *Mormons*. Established by Joseph Smith (1805-1844), denies salvation by the grace of God, the Trinity, the absolute authority of the Scriptures, and the reality of hell.
1. However, the seventh article of faith of the Latter-day Saints states that they “believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, etc.”
- F. *Various Revivals*. The phenomenon of speaking in tongues has been reported to have taken place among the Readers in Sweeden (1841-1843), during the Irish revivals (1859), and among the Methodists.
1. The nineteenth century has produced isolated testimonies of those who spoke in tongues without recognizing the significance of the event.
 2. Some have claimed that both Moody and Finney, the great evangelists, spoke in tongues when they received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. However, such evidence for this claim is poor. There is no record that Finney or Moody engaged in tongue-speaking.
 3. Tongue meetings may have started as the result of their meetings without their sanction or knowledge, but this does not mean that they actively promoted the phenomenon.
- G. *Summary*. The Post-Reformation period was a time of confusion. Glossolalia appeared, but in the strangest places. Children as young as three years allegedly spoke in tongues. The physical convulsions are hardly in harmony with the Biblical standard of self-control. Glossolalia was totally unrelated to orthodox beliefs. Roman Catholics, Mormons, and false sects (Quakers, Irvingites, Shakers) all reported glossolalia as part of their church life..

Read Jeremiah 23; Ezek. 13:3, 6-7.

V. The Modern Period (1900-).

Pentecostalism itself cannot be dated much earlier than 1900.

- A. Some did live before that time who claimed “Pentecostal Holiness,” and “Pentecostal Fullness,” while others engaged in “Tarrying and Speaking” meetings. However, very few of these things occurred before 1900.
- B. A. Rev. David Awrey of Delaware, Ohio, claimed he had the Spirit of fullness in 1890.
- C. In 1897 a Holiness convention was held in New England composed of “gift people.”

- D. In the year 1900 Charles F. Parham opened the Bethel Bible School in Topeka, Kansas, and this school held that the signs of tongues and healing should be normal for the Church.
1. Then W.J. Seymour became greatly enamored with the message of Pentecost and started the Azusa Street Assembly in Los Angeles in 1906.
 2. This is the birthday for the modern Pentecostal movement.
 3. One of the members of this group, G.B. Cashwell, left Los Angeles and went to North Carolina, and in 1908 preached at the annual meeting of the Church of God in Cleveland, Tennessee, where the leader, H. A. Tomlinson, got the baptism and the Church of God became Pentecostal.
 4. Even the Christian and Missionary Alliance could not escape the influence of it and in 1907 some tongues appeared on the campus at Nyack, but A.B. Simpson refused to commit himself to say that tongues were necessary. However, his hymns have been used by Pentecostals since.
 5. The Assemblies of God have always noted their indebtedness to A.B. Simson. The first General Council of the Assemblies of God was held in 1914 in Hot Springs, Arkansas, and from this has come the largest group of Pentecostals in this country.
- E. It is interesting that histories of tongues movements and Pentecostal groups do not go back much before 1875. (the most recent one is that by Carl Brumback, *Suddenly...from Heaven: A History of the Assemblies of God*).
1. Therefore, it is admitted by all that this is an extremely modern movement. It has not been, it is not, nor can it be based on church history and a stream of witnesses to tongues down through the centuries.
 2. The voice of church history, when read in its total ramifications, would indicate that God has been guiding His people and that he has been teaching them His Word down through the centuries through the Scriptures.
 3. The voice of history also tells us that God has majored on those things which are given priority in His own Word and not on those things which men claim by experiences.
 4. The voice of church history, therefore, does not support the modern tongues movement and would stigmatize it as being an unscriptural and unhistorical phenomenon arising out of the experiences, tempers, moods, tensions, upheavals, upsets, fears, frustrations, longings, desires, and emotional impulses, heaving of the chest, swelling of the stomach, falling backward on the ground so often common in the last century.

The Difference Between Miracles And Apostolic Sign Miracles

If apostolic sign gifts exist and are common today, then how were apostolic sign gifts unique in confirming the truth claims of the apostles and prophets?

(Hebrews 2:3-4) how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

(II Cor. 12:11-12) I have made a fool of myself, but you drove me to it. I ought to have been commended by you, for I am not in the least inferior to the “super-apostles,” even though I am nothing. The things that mark an apostle—signs, wonders and miracles—were done among you with great perseverance.

I. Miracles surrounding the ministries of the original apostles were for the purpose of authenticating the apostolic message, (Mark 16:20) *Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.*

A. If sign gifts to authenticate Devine revelation exist today, then there are not 27 books in the NT but more than 2700.

II. This is not to question whether miracles are possible or even actual today. The question before us is: Does the apostolic gift of miracles to confirm the Word exist today? Do the supernatural powers granted to the apostles exist today?

A. God has performed miracles throughout history. They begin in Genesis and continue throughout Revelation. Miracles happen to manifest God’s greatness (Ex. 7:17) and glory (John 11:40), to deliver God’s children in need (Dan. 3) and to communicate infallible messages from God to His people (Ex. 4:8; Heb. 2:3, 4). Many of the conditions that called for miracles of Devine intervention in the Bible still exist today. So there is no reason to doubt that God could intervene in supernatural ways today in delivering His saints. God works today through both general and special providence without suspending any natural laws. He does this by providential timing and concurrence of events. People get well today who were not expected to recover. Some were the subject of fervent prayer—some were not. Some were born again Christians—some were not. While the apostolic gift of miracles has ceased, the fact of miracles has not vanished. God can and does perform miraculous events anytime he chooses.

1. Remember where the obligation is. The burden of proof for a miracle claim is not upon the hearer of the claim to prove that it didn’t happen. Christ and the apostles always placed the burden of proof on themselves to demonstrate the objectivity of the miracle.

B. Those who argue that apostolic miracles are for today will site tongues, healings and even resurrections from the dead as proof.

1. It is argued that if we do not accept that all the miracles of the past are occurring today, we are denying the miracles of the past.

2. We must respond that miracles of the past had a purpose. We do not expect another six-day creation, another Adam made of mud and Eve made of a rib. We do not expect another universal flood or another Red Sea crossing by the nation of Israel. We do not expect an Elijah to call fire down from heaven to consume sacrifices. We do not expect another virgin birth of an incarnation of God. This in no way denies that God is thoroughly capable of doing these things again. It is simply not within His purposes to do so.

3. Though God does not change, His program, actions and purposes do change. God does not forbid us to eat of a particular tree in a perfect garden (Gen. 2:16-17). We are not

required to offer sacrificial lambs (Ex. 12). We do not have apostles today and thus we do not have the “signs of an apostle” (II Cor. 12:12).

4. Jesus promised that unique Devine Word authenticating miracles would continue after his time, but not after the time of the apostles. It was uniquely to the apostles in the Upper Room that He promised would do greater miracles than he did (John 14:12; 13:5ff.). There was no promise that these kinds of authenticating miracles would exist after this time.

a. And, bye-the-way, the greater miracles were the conversion of souls through the preaching of the gospel.

5. During their lifetimes, the apostles could bestow these sign gifts to others. They constituted authorization to proclaim the infallible truth of Christ received directly from Him. The apostles were the foundation of the church (Eph. 2:20; Acts 2:42). The apostles could convey these gifts to others by the laying on of hands (Acts 8:17-18; II Tim. 1:6) or in the personal presence of an apostle’s proclamation (Acts 10:44; cf. 11:15). Paul’s reference to “the signs of an apostle” (II Cor. 12:12) would make no sense if these gifts were the normal possession of all saints.

C. Today, we must not ascribe theological significance to miracles or the absence of miracles. If we are Christians we must thank and praise God for any intervention to deliver us. Job was not healed for a long time. Paul desired a miraculous healing that God never gave Him (II Cor. 12). Epaphroditus was not healed (Phil. 2:26). Fanny Crosby (1820-1915) was not healed. Joni Eareckson Tada (b. 1950) is not healed.

III. There is no current need for apostolic sign gifts for authenticating revealed messages from God.

A. They were used in the past to confirm new revelation from God (Ex. 4;6; John 3:2; Acts 2:22; Heb. 2:3-4).

1. Today, God’s revelation is complete in written Scripture and the Bible is fully sufficient to provide us with all information needed to do every work that God’s wants done on earth (II Tim. 3:16-18). Though miracles might be needed today, there is no need for miracles to confirm new revelations from God or to prove one’s super-spirituality.

IV. We must not fail to distinguish between the fact of miracles and the apostolic gift of miracles.

A. The apostolic gift of miracles were done in biblical times; were temporary; were done through humans; confirmed new revelation and had apologetic value. Hebrews 2:3-4 refer to these apostolic sign gifts as already past.

1. Jude 3 (written possibly after A.D. 70) describes “the faith that was once for all entrusted [in the past] to the saints.

2. Speaking of the past, Jude exhorted his readers to “remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ” (v. 17).

B. The fact of miracles can exist at anytime; without human hands; does not confirm revelation and has no apologetic value

C. The argument from the later and sudden absence of miracles after their earlier abundance is not to be confused with the fallacy of argument from silence.

1. The Bible is not silent on the nature, purpose, and function of apostolic miracles (Heb. 2:3-4; II Cor. 12:12). This function of confirming apostolic revelation fits with their cessation, since they were not needed after the revelation was once confirmed. The miracle confirmed the message as a new revelation.

V. The unique nature of apostolic miracles included the ability to raise the dead on command (Matt. 10:8); immediately heal naturally incurable diseases (Matt 10:8; Jn. 9:1-7); perform instantly successful exorcisms (Matt. 10:8; Acts 16:16-18), speak languages they had never studied (Acts. 2:1-8), and pass on supernatural gifts to others so that they could assist in their apostolic mission of founding the church (Acts 6:6; cf. 8:5-6; 2 Tim. 1:6). Once, pronouncing a supernatural death sentence on two people who had “lied to the Holy Spirit” (Acts 5:1-11).

A. We find no evidence that anyone currently possesses these kinds of powers.

1. Those claiming to have such supernatural powers make only reports of such or make false predictions, unmistakable evidence that they are not true prophets of God (cf. Deut. 18:22).

B. Apostolic miracles had at least three characteristics not found in powers performed by so-called miracle-workers today.

1. Apostolic miracles were instantaneous. A man with a lifelong infirmity was told to immediately “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk (John 5:8-9). When Peter took a lame man by the hand, his feet and ankles instantly became strong (Acts 3:7). Paul instantly raised the young man Eutychus from the dead (Acts 20:9), as did Peter with Dorcas (Acts 9:40). Even the one two-stage miracle (Mk. 8:22-25) took but a few moments. There were no gradual miracles that came as a sign of an apostle.

2. Apostolic miracles always lasted. There is no record that anyone who received an apostolic healing ever relapsed into his former condition. Otherwise, the authorities would have seized upon such a case to discredit the apostles. Of course, those raised from the dead would eventually die again (Rom. 5:12)

3. Apostolic miracles worked even on incurably ill or even dead persons. Today’s healers do not want to confront anyone born blind or without eyes (John 9) or born quadriplegic /paraplegic (Acts 3) or who had died (John 11). We see no evidence of AIDS victims being healed. Once Jesus healed everyone in the area who was sick (Lk. 4:40; cf. Matt. 10:8), as did Paul (Acts. 19:11-12).

Conclusion: The fact of miracles can be a blessing of God or an act of Satanic forces and are not needed to authenticate any truth claim. Miracles are not a gift possessed to be performed by any individual and have no apologetic value to confirm a new revelation. It follows that divine revelation ceased in the first century, and, consequently, there is no need for miraculous gifts today.

APPENDIX I

**Is Healing In The Atonement of Christ
Pastor J. O. Hosler**

I Peter 2:24

“Who His own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed.”

I. This verse is used to support the claim that there are divine healers today healing people through the atonement of Christ. This is called the “full gospel”.

A. We have to ask the question, what is the meaning of “healed” in this context?

- 1. There is no mention of physical healing in this verse nor in the immediate context.**
- 2. The verse says that when Christ died on the cross, he bore our sins in his own body, not our sickness.**
- 3. Verse 24 says we are to live unto righteousness—not unto health—and that is an important distinction.**

B. “By His stripes you were healed”

- 1. First, the word “stripes” in the Greek is singular rather than plural and could be literally translated “wound”. Thus our spiritual healing comes neither from Jesus’ day-to-day sufferings nor from His sufferings that led to the Cross, but from the ultimate wound (singular)—His crucifixion and death on the cross.**
- 2. “Were healed”—the past tense points right back to the cross, where humanity’s sin-sick soul was healed. The verse does not say, “By His wounds you will be continually healed of your physical ailments.”**

C. When we wrestle with a verse of Scripture we must synthesize our conclusion with the rest of Scripture. If we cannot, we have arrived at a wrong conclusion.

- 1. As we check other parts of Scripture, we learn that our souls have been redeemed but our bodies have not yet fully reached a state of glory. Rom. 8:23 says, “We ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.” This verse tells us that we still live in a body affected by the fall. We are still subject to sickness and other infirmities.**
- 2. The Spirit helps us overcome our infirmities; for example, he prays for us when we do not know how to pray as we ought (Rom. 8:26). But there is no guarantee in Scripture of deliverance from disease in this life.**
- 3. It takes all of the Gospel to save your soul. If the full gospel includes a body void of corruption in this life than we could guarantee that all “professed” Christians who die of sickness or disease were never really Christians after all for they were not recipients of the “full gospel”**

D. It is also important to note that “by whose wound ye were healed” comes from Isaiah 53:5.

- 1. Was Isaiah talking about physical healing? A study of the book of Isaiah shows that the prophet was talking about the spiritual healing that Israel needed so desperately.**
- 2. Isaiah 1: 4-6 says in effect to Israel: “You are diseased with sin, there is rottenness, there is no soundness in your bones; you are polluted with sin.”**

3. When Isa. 53 talks about the suffering servant by whose stripes Israel will be healed, it is talking about spiritual healing, not physical.

E. When Isa. 53:4 says: “Surely he hath borne our griefs” –(or sicknesses) this is not necessarily fulfilled in the atonement on the Cross.

1. Jesus refers to this line in Matthew 8:17 “That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.”
2. Can you see how this prophecy was fulfilled in a time-frame substantially before the cross and the blood atonement.
3. Jesus healed people the same way He spoke the world into existence—by the power of His Word. He didn’t have to die on the cross to be the Creator. Notice verse 16: “When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick.” (Compare Luke 4:36;)
4. (Matthew 8:17) alludes to the fact that in a sense Christ carried our sickness by the sympathy of His heart, while Hebrews 4:15 reveals that Christ can truly sympathize with us because of his own subjection to temptation. He does not get our diseases, but He sympathizes with the pain that we have in them.

F. Ultimately, the atonement will cure all our diseases when it has wrought its final work of glorifying our bodies. Thus there is healing in the atonement, but only in the ultimate aspect of eternal glory in heaven: (Rev. 21:4) “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.” According to Charismatics, these things shall have passed away this side of heaven. See if Paul agrees with this in I Cor. 15:51-58; II Cor. 12:7-10.

APPENDIX II

What About Anointing With Oil

- I. **(James 5:14-15)** James asked a question: **Is any one of you sick?** A great deal of misunderstanding has resulted from these verses.
 - a. Some seem to teach from this passage that full physical health is always just a prayer away.
 - b. Others have found in this passage justification for “extreme unction” (a practice begun in the eighth century).
 - c. Still others have tried to relate the process outlined by James to the modern practice of invoking God (“pray over him”) and using medicine (“anoint him with oil”)—prayer plus a physician.
- II. The heart of the problem lies in just what James meant when he referred to the “sick.” Actually there is no reason to consider “sick” as referring exclusively to physical illness.
 - a. The word *asthenei* literally means “to be weak.” Though it is used in the Gospels for physical maladies, it is generally used in Acts and the Epistles to refer to a weak faith or a weak conscience (cf. Acts 20:35; Rom. 6:19; 14:1; 1 Cor. 8:9-12).
 - b. That it should be considered “weak” in this verse is clear in that another Greek word (*kamnonta*) in James 5:15, translated **sick person**, literally means “to be weary.”
 - i. The only other use in the New Testament (Heb. 12:3) of that word clearly emphasizes this same meaning.
 - c. James was not referring to the bedfast, the diseased, or the ill. Instead he wrote to those who had grown weary, who had become weak both morally and spiritually in the midst of suffering.

- i. These are the ones who **should call** for the help of **the elders of the church**. The early church leaders were instructed (1 Thes. 5:14) to “encourage the timid” and “help the weak” (*asthenon*).
- III. James said that the elders should **pray over him and anoint him with oil**.
- a. It is significant that the word “anoint” is *aleipsantes* (“rub with oil”) not *chrrio* (“ceremonially anoint”).
 - i. The former is the “mundane” word and the latter is “the sacred and religious word” (Richard Chenevix Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, ninth ed. Reprint. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1950, pp. 136-37).
 - ii. “Therefore James is not suggesting a ceremonial or ritual anointing as a means of divine healing; instead, he is referring to the common practice of using oil as a means of bestowing honor, refreshment, and grooming” (Daniel R. Hayden, “Calling the Elders to Pray,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 138. July/September 1981: 264).
 - 1. The woman “poured” (*aleipho*) perfume on Jesus’ feet (Luke 7:38).
 - 2. A host “put oil” (*aleipho*) on the head of his guest (Luke 7:46).
 - 3. A person who is fasting should not be sad and ungroomed, but should “put oil” (*aleipho*) on his head, and wash his face (Matt. 6:17).
 - b. Thus James’ point is that the “weak” (*asthenei*) and “weary” (*kamnonta*) would be refreshed, encouraged, and uplifted by the elders who rubbed oil on the despondents’ heads and prayed for them.
- IV. For the fallen, discouraged, distressed weary believer, restoration is assured and the elders’ **prayer offered in faith will make the sick person** (lit., “weary one”) **well** (i.e., will restore him from discouragement and spiritual defeat), and **the Lord will raise him up**.
- a. That the restoration is spiritual, not physical, is further clarified by the assurance, **if he has sinned, he will be forgiven**.
 - b. Many physically ill Christians have called on elders to pray for them and to anoint them with oil, but a sizable percentage of them have remained sick.
 - i. This fact suggests that the passage may have been mistakenly understood as physical restoration rather than spiritual restoration.
- V. **5:16**. The conclusion is clear: **therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other**. A mutual concern for one another is the way to combat discouragement and downfall.
- a. The cure is in personal confession and prayerful concern.
 - b. The healing (**that you may be healed**) is not bodily healing but healing of the soul (*iathete*; cf. Matt. 13:15; Heb. 12:13; 1 Peter 2:24).
 - c. It is the **powerful and effective . . . prayer of a righteous** person that brings the needed cure from God. This of course relates to the closing two verses of James’ letter (5:19-20).
 - d. If James 5:14-16 refer to physical healing, then those verses seem disjointed with the verses before and after them.

Conclusion: Here is an iron-clad promise... “And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well.” If this is speaking of physical healing, there will be no exceptions. But most professed brethren who seek physical healing by this formula find themselves to be an exception. Either they are not saved (even though the object of their saving faith is in the person and finished work of Christ on the cross), or, James was giving out a false promise. However, if this is a promise of spiritual restoration, the erring brother who confesses his sin will never be an exception to the promise of restoration to fellowship in I Jn. 1:9. Therefore, we conclude that James 5:14-15 is speaking of spiritual restoration of a believer and how church leaders can help to facilitate this and openly display the confessor’s renewal through the grooming application of oil.

