

SPIRITUAL GIFTS, Part 3

In continuing our study of the spiritual gifts, there are yet two we have not covered: tongues and interpretation of tongues.

Tongues

This spiritual gift, like the other temporary spiritual gifts, served a specific function. Israel faced the fifth cycle of discipline for their rejection of Messiah and blaspheming the Holy Spirit (Mk 3:22-30). Seven hundred years before Christ, Isaiah foretold the presence of a “foreign language” spoken by armies invading the land of Israel – a sign of national punishment. In Isaiah’s day this would be an unmistakable warning to Jews of spiritual failure and the foreshadowing of another occurrence of tongues after Pentecost. After the ascension of Jesus Christ, foreign languages would once more be heard in the Land – this time as the spiritual gift of *glossolalia*. This miraculous gift that would evangelize the nation of Israel in Gentile languages would not only be the unmistakable sign to the Jewish people of their spiritual failure and imminent judgment, but would also proclaim the Church Age.

Isa 28:11 For by people of strange lips and with a foreign tongue the Lord will speak to this people, ¹² to whom he has said, “This is rest; give rest to the weary; and this is repose”; yet they would not hear. ¹³ And the word of the Lord will be to them precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little, that they may go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

1 Cor 14:21 In the Law it is written, “By people of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners will I speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord.” ²² Thus **tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers...**

Old Testament prophecy encompasses the principle of near and far fulfillment. Isaiah’s messages applied not only to his generation, near fulfillment, but also anticipated future events, far fulfillment, as Paul wrote in his letter to the Corinthians. Therefore, Isaiah’s warning about apostasy was addressed to the Jews of his day as well as their distant progeny at the beginning of the Church Age.

In the twenty-eighth chapter, Isaiah calls the corrupt religious leaders of the nation Israel “the drunkards of Ephriam” (Isa. 28:1, 3, 7). His earthy imagery depicts their disgusting dissipation.

Isaiah 20:7 And even these reel with wine, and stagger with strong drink; the priest and the prophet reel with strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they stagger with strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment. 8 For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean.

These same false prophets and teachers advised Israel to seek demonic counsel (Isa. 8:19). Isaiah indicated that this generation was lost, but the next generation would be the audience for his message.

Isaiah 28:9 Whom will he (God) teach knowledge? and whom will he make to understand the message? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts?

Isaiah’s generation had deaf ears. The only hope of deterring judgment on a nation is Bible doctrine in the soul of believers, in this case, the spiritual growth of the next generation.

Isaiah 28:10 For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little.

Isaiah’s brilliantly constructed redundancy in the Hebrew sarcastically mimics the drunken, repetitious babbling of the degenerate priests, while at the same time describes the method for accurate doctrinal teaching – precept upon precept, line upon line. The objective is the inculcation of Biblical truth. Doctrine in the soul accumulates gradually. A little here, a little there, and like a jigsaw puzzle, it all begins to fall into place.

Isaiah tried to tell Israel this, but they ignored him. Then suddenly in the midst of his exhortation of doctrine, the prophet interrupted his message and announced one of the most astounding events ever to occur in history.

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

The judgement on Israel, both the near and the far, would be announced in a foreign language! The apostate northern kingdom called Israel or Ephraim was taken out under the fifth cycle of discipline in 721 BC by the Assyrian king Sargon II. But Ephraim had accomplished its own destruction internally long before the Assyrians invaded.

Moses had earlier warned Israel that the sound of a foreign language would be the harbinger of disaster.

Deut 28:49 The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation **whose tongue thou shalt not understand**

Jeremiah had also taught Israel about the warning sign for judgment.

Jer 5:15 Behold, I am bringing against you a nation from afar, O house of Israel, declares the Lord. It is an enduring nation; it is an ancient nation, a nation **whose language you do not know, nor can you understand** what they say.

The fall of Ephraim in 721 should have served as a warning to the southern kingdom of Judah. The southern kingdom would go under 135 years later when Nebuchadnezzar and his Caldeans (Babylonians) invaded Israel. Nebuchadnezzar first invaded Israel in 605 BC and deported hundreds of thousands of Jews. The Caldean language would be heard in Jerusalem for twenty years as a warning. Then in 586 BC the final blow came when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the nation, demolished the temple, and led the surviving Jews into slavery.

The “far” fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy would befall Israel in 70 AD, when another generation of apostate Jews would suffer horrible judgment for their obstinacy. So specific and lucid was the prophecy of tongues that the message was unmistakable. In the distant future God would again warn Israel of impending national punishment by the sign of a foreign language, this time not by foreign invaders but from the mouths of Jews and Gentiles speaking in foreign tongues under the spiritual gift of *glossolalia*.

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

Bila'agi saphah is translated “stammering lips.” It means mocking speech of language and emphasizes the harshness of the foreign language on the Hebrew’s ears. Isaiah’s elliptical style added force to the statement. Imagine how shocking it was to the Jews for someone to speak God’s Word to them in Gentile languages.

What actually happened on Pentecost?

On that day something very strange and wonderful happened. In Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost were Jews from all over the world. They were there to satisfy requirements of the law that they keep the holy days, and that meant in Jerusalem. The city was full of these pilgrims and merchant Jews in Jerusalem for Pentecost and on business. What they witnessed shocked them.

Acts 2:1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. **2** And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. **3** And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. **4** And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. **5** And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. **6** Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them **speak in his own language.**

As instructed by Jesus in Acts 1:4, the apostles remained in Jerusalem. As promised, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they began to speak in tongues. The religious Jews in Jerusalem from “every nation” heard them speak in their own languages!

The word translated as “tongues,” *glossolalia*, is made up of two Greek words, *glossa* which means “tongues” or “languages,” and *lalien* which means “to speak.” Literally the word means “speaking foreign languages.”

The word *glossa* appears in the Scriptures no less than fifty times. It is used to refer to the physical organ in James 3:5; once as a reference to flames in Acts 2:3; and once in a metaphorical sense as speech as in the statement “my tongue (speech) was glad (joyous)” in Acts 2:26. Mark has the only use of the word in the four Gospels.

Mark 16:17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues

The adjective “new” is the Greek *kainos* and can only mean new language unknown to them, that is languages they had not learned or used until that time. Russian and German are “new” to me, because I do not speak them, but that doesn’t mean I do not know of their existence. More importantly, Mark 16:10-20 is of a questionable origin. It does not appear in earlier manuscripts, and many assume it to be the addition of some later scribe.

Acts 2:4 uses a different adjective when Luke says, “They began to speak with other languages.” The word “other” is from the Greek *heterosi* which means they spoke in languages different from those they already knew and used. The context substantiates this. Notice the reaction of the hearers:

Acts 2:7 And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? 8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

There is nothing about these adjectives to suggest that this is some spiritual language of the angels. These Jews were hearing the Word of God spoken in the languages of their adopted countries.

In Acts 2:6 the word translated “language” is *dialekto* from which we get our word “dialect.” The two words *glossa* (tongue) and *dialectos* (language) are used synonymously, making it obvious that the disciples were speaking in known languages other than the language native to them. In the next verses we hear the languages identified.

Acts 2: 9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, 10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

Here in the Acts passages we see tongues operating in the correct form as intended by God. They are speaking in “other” languages of the wonderful works of God.

In Revelation 5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 13:7;14:6; and 17:15 *glossa* is translated “tongue” which means one of the languages associated with the various nationalities and races. There is no reason why anyone would translate it otherwise in the context of these verses.

The Pentecostals claim a totally different meaning, and they cite 1 Corinthians chapter 14 where the term “unknown languages” implies that the languages spoken are ecstatic utterances not known in any country on earth. The problem with this conclusion is that the word “unknown” appears in italics in every instance in these verses, which means that “unknown” does not appear in any of the original Greek texts, but was inserted by the translators. There is no textual license that will warrant changing the meaning of the word in 1 Corinthians. In every other place where the word is used it means languages. All the uses of tongues in Paul’s treatment of the subject refers to foreign languages.

1Cor 14:9 So with yourselves, if with your tongue you utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is said? For you will be speaking into the air.

The Greek word *laleo* means “I speak” and is never used for mere sounds or noise. Nor is it used for mere mumbling or muttering or unintelligible gibberish. Tongues-speaking in the New Testament was in the native languages of hearing people.

Acts 2:12 But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. ¹⁵ For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. ¹⁶ But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ “ ‘And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; ¹⁸ even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. ¹⁹ And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; ²⁰ the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. ²¹ And

it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

Peter refuted the intoxication charge in verse 15 and then gives them a warning, one that these religious Jews should immediately recognize.

Acts 2:16 But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:
¹⁷ “ ‘And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams;
¹⁸ even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.

In Peter’s words, “This is what was spoken by the Prophet Joel,” does not mean, “This is *like* that,” as some suggest. It means Pentecost fulfilled what Joel had described. However, the prophecies of Joel quoted in Acts 2:19–20 were not fulfilled. The implication is that the remainder would be fulfilled if Israel would repent. Joel’s prophecy was of the Second Advent and it viewed that event from both sides. It saw the discipline, the end times, the Tribulation, a divine judgment upon Israel and the world that was before it, and the events after in the Kingdom. Peter explained that this was a manifestation of spiritual gifts by the pouring out of the Spirit of God upon His servants. He then presented the Gospel by which believing Jews might escape the judgment.

Acts 2:36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”
³⁷ Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” ³⁸ And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

At the feast of Pentecost, these religious but unbelieving Jews from all over the known world were in Jerusalem. These Jews were in effect foreigners in Israel and most spoke no Hebrew or Aramaic but spoke the languages of their adopted countries. What they heard in the streets of Jerusalem was the Gospel spoken by Galileans in languages they could understand and were amazed by it. It also served the purpose of the far

fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy warning Israel of the pending judgment as expressed by Paul in 1 Corinthians.

1 Cor 14:21 In the law it is written, By men of strange tongues and by the lips of strangers will I speak unto this people; and not even thus will they hear me, saith the Lord. **22 Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to the unbelieving...**

Paul states that "tongues are for a sign," and they are directed to the unbeliever and not the believer. Tongues were a warning to unbelieving Israel of pending divine judgment and their last chance to see the truth of Jesus as the Messiah. The true gift of tongues "is for a sign ... to unbelievers." To exercise the gift when unbelievers are not present would be exercising the gift above the purpose for which it was given.

Tongues Abused

As you might imagine the gift of tongues came under abuse, and guess where? The church in Corinth. The Corinthians elevated tongues to a position within the church far above what was scriptural, placing it above all other gifts, including the edification gifts. It had become an impediment to their spiritual growth. Tongues had become a point of contention, and this fledgling church's unity was being ripped apart by it. So divisive was the controversy that Paul devoted three chapters in First Corinthians (12-14) to clarifying the purpose of the gift of tongues.

A Little Background – In the ancient world Corinth epitomized worldly pleasure and religious excess. Strategically located on an isthmus between two harbors, this Roman colony was the hub of trade between Asia and Europe. It attracted merchants and tradesmen from throughout the Roman Empire, including a thriving Jewish community. For centuries itinerate sailors and retired soldiers brought their worship of pagan gods and goddesses along with the degenerate rites of the phallic cult to Corinth, creating a religious melting pot. As interest in the traditional gods of Greek mythology waned, the masses turned to other emotional and mystical religions to satisfy religious yearnings and gratify sensual desires. The rigorous morality of the Jews was in stark contrast to the licentious paganism so popular in the temples in Corinth. To this day Corinth is synonymous with brazen, unrestrained immorality.

Paul arrived in Corinth in the autumn of AD 49 to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and teach the converts the doctrines necessary for spiritual growth. Initially he went to the synagogue; “to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16); but they soon kicked him out. Paul then turned to the Gentiles and, “many of the Corinthians believed” (Acts 18:8). The emerging congregation was composed mainly of Greeks reared in the midst of heathen mythology, humanistic philosophy, and wanton sexuality.

Among the pagan religions that influenced the believers in Corinth was the worship of Apollo. Several temples to Apollo were in Corinth, as well as the infamous shrine at Delphi, northwest of the City, across the bay. There, the priestess, the oracle of Delphi, spoke in frenzied utterances when possessed by the *pneuma puthonos*, a “spirit of divination.” The *pneuma puthonos* is the equivalent to the *engastrimuthos* or ventriloquist demon. Initially the word *puthon* (python) referred to the snake that guarded the oracle at Delphi. When the god Apollo killed the python, the oracle became the preeminent shrine of Apollo. Here the priestess Pythia would utter her oracles in a mysterious “divine language” while in an ecstatic trance, and her priestess attendants would then translate.

Another religion, the Dionysian cult was a strongly emotion-based system of belief that offered emotional experience as proof of salvation. In secret rites the emotions of the devotees were aroused in torchlight ceremonies by the beat of throbbing drums, erotic dancing, and wine. At the height of the ritual, the idolater was mystically united with god (actually a demon), who spoke through him in a secret language. This was considered evidence of being filled with the spirit of god (note lower case).

Another popular mystery religion, the Cybele-Attis cult, had been linked with the Dionysian cult for several centuries before Christ. In this cult the priest would excite the emotions of the votaries with clashing cymbals, banging drums, and loud gongs until the worshipers collapsed in a state of irrational ecstasy, babbling mysterious gibberish.

Though some of the languages used in the mystery religions were produced by the *engastrumathos* demon, the rest were simply the outpouring of emotional frenzy. Devotees of these cults believed that speaking these ecstatic utterances and the associated emotional excitement were proof of a special relationship with the gods. They believed speaking in these “secret languages” produced a more

meaningful spirituality. All their experiences were evaluated by their emotions.

Satan knew of the prophecy in Isaiah and the coming of tongues, and he produced counterfeits of the miracles of the early Church, as demonstrated by these pagan cults, to confuse the Church and especially the unbelievers for whom the message was intended.

Paul Straightens Them Out

The fact that the Corinthians were saved in no way means they were advancing in the spiritual life, quite the contrary. When Paul penned First Corinthians, the church at Corinth was the most confused and carnal congregation in the pre-canon, apostolic era, operating on subjective human viewpoint rather than divine viewpoint from Bible doctrine. There was little of any spiritual value to recommend them. Their list of sins was long and appalling: pride, envy, jealousy, childishness, pettiness, gossip, maligning, adultery, incest, and drunkenness. They turned the Lord's Table into an excuse for gluttony and drunkenness. The congregation was fragmented according to the trends of their sin natures. Some were self-righteous, and others tended towards licentious lifestyle of their former Greek religions. They may have been new creatures in Christ positionally, but experientially they were still the same old sinners clinging to vestiges of heathen mysteries. Paul corrected their misconceptions about spirituality in First Corinthians 3. He explained that spirituality was an absolute status of the believer's soul under the control of the Holy Spirit. Paul calls them "men of the flesh" and "babes in Christ" – carnal and immature believers.

1 Cor. 3:1 But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. ²I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, ³for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way?

The Corinthians were served (fed milk, the Gospel) but have not advanced spiritually (not able to eat the spiritual meat—solid food). They are still babes in Christ. Verse 3 accuses them of being fleshly and behaving in a human way (some translations "after the manner of men" — carnal). The Corinthians are not spiritual. They are not experiencing the manifestations

of the fruit of the Spirit. They are not depending on the Spirit, but are controlled by the flesh, their own sin natures.

The immature and carnal Corinthians overrated the sensational gifts and underrated the less sensational gifts. They spoke in tongues for personal gratification. They elevated *glossolalia* over the edifying gifts. They arrogantly promoted *glossolalia* as a sign of a superior spiritual life, so that worship services had deteriorated into loud and rowdy confusion. Their attitudes and actions were more in keeping with the heathen mystery religions of the pagans than the mystery doctrines of the Church Age.

Paul laid into them as only Paul could do! He began his correction of the Corinthian misuse of *glossolalia* for personal edification by pointing out that all spiritual gifts were for the purpose of edifying the Body of Christ, not for personal recognition.

1 Cor 12:7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

With stinging words Paul instructed and admonished the Corinthians for their one-sided emphasis on certain spiritual gifts. To demonstrate the absurdity of emphasizing *glossolalia*, Paul used an analogy from human anatomy.

1 Cor. 12:15 For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

What Paul was saying was that every spiritual gift was important to the function of the Body of Christ. The sum of the parts equals the whole. Just because the gift was less obvious or less spectacular does not mean that it was not important to the function of the Church.

1 Cor. 12:17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? ¹⁸ But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹ If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. ²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to

the feet, “I have no need of you.” ²² On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, ²⁴ which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, ²⁵ that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶ If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

The Body of Christ cannot exist with just one spiritual gift, one part of the whole. All are necessary. The Church is a team made up of many specialized gifts working toward the desired end. Verse 25 says there should be no division in the Body of Christ, and that is exactly what Satan is trying to accomplish with this (and other) issues.

1 Cor. 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. ²⁸ And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. ²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰ Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹ But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

Paul ranks the gifts in importance in verse 28, listing tongues last. He does not consider tongues as unimportant or even the least important, but clearly, Paul does rank the edification gifts higher. He also explains that not everyone gets the same gift(s). Not all received the gift of tongues, therefore how can speaking in tongues be a measure of spirituality or even salvation as some Pentecostal churches teach?

In the verse 31 he states that some gifts are indeed more desirable than others. But note! The verb *zeloo*, from which we get our English word “zealous,” means “to be ardently devoted to” or “to earnestly desire.” It is stated in the second person plural and, therefore, addressed the entire assembly of Corinthian believers. The congregation should “earnestly desire” men with communication gifts, so they can grow spiritually. The imperative mood conveys a command, which if obeyed, will rectify their failure to advance spiritually and resolve the schism in the Corinthian

church. In effect, Paul is saying they should covet the more desirable edification gifts, which will benefit the church far more than tongues, which is for the edification of the unbeliever! Because the Corinthians have focused so much attention on the exciting and spectacular gift of tongues, it has stifled their spiritual growth.

What we should draw from this is that the gifts that edify the Church are the most important and thus the more desirable. Edification and advancing in the spiritual life demands thought, not emotion. Emotion cannot learn, it cannot analyze, it cannot solve problems, it cannot think with Bible doctrine, and it cannot produce spiritual growth—it can only respond. Satan loves for the believer to get all wrapped up in his emotions. Such a believer, thinking with his emotions, is a casualty in the angelic conflict, and taken prisoner by Satan.

1 Cor. 12:31 But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

The “more excellent way” is love, the divine love produced by the Holy Spirit in the believer walking by means of the Spirit and, as a result of divine viewpoint, expressed toward others. They were not living in the Divine Dynasphere.

1 Cor. 13:1 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal.

Paul cites two examples of irritating noise makers in the ancient world. The *chalkos*, translated here as a “sounding brass,” consists of two pieces of metal an alloy of copper and tin. The *kumbalon*, translated as a “clanging cymbal,” was a hollow brass instrument that magnified a shrill sound. These two were generally used at festivals, to attract attention to a peddler's wares, or for religious observances. Where have we heard of the “sounding brass and the clanging cymbal” before? The oracles of Delphi cult, the Dionysian cult and the Cybele-Attis cult. Paul is relating the misuse of tongues in the Corinthian church with the pagan cults and practices of their own history.

In the Greek “If I speak” is in the third class condition and implies that the question is hypothetical—maybe I do and maybe I don't. Paul is saying, “If I did speak in (false) tongues of men and angels, but I have not the fruit of

the Spirit, love, my speech would be noise without meaning just like the noise of these pagan rites.”

1 Cor. 13:2 And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

Once more with the third class conditional “if” at the beginning of the verse, Paul sets up another hypothetical situation. Paul’s new supposition further de-emphasizes the significance of the temporary spiritual gifts in the pre-canon era. In effect, he is saying, “Even if I possess the sensational gifts of prophecy, knowledge, and faith, I have nothing without love,” and I believe Paul is referring to the Fruit of the Spirit. If I am not walking in the leading and power of the Spirit (Gal 5:16) then I don’t have love, implying they do not.

How easy it must have been for those who possess the gift of prophecy, knowledge of all things and the faith that moves mountains to become arrogant about such blessings, to come to a point of exalted self-importance. Only the spiritual-filled believer controlled by the Spirit, occupied with the Fruit of the Spirit could minister with these gifts, including tongues, without destroying himself with pride. The carnal Corinthians under the control of the flesh and not the Spirit misused their gifts including tongues.

This study does not end here. Next session we will look at Scriptural evidence for the abolition of these temporary Spiritual Gifts.