

cases even without benefit of interpretation or translation, they are a sign to the unbeliever that God is real, alive, and concerned about him.

The gifts of tongues and interpretation may also be a message from God to bless and exhort faithful people. . . .

2. The gift of tongues may also be public prayer to God. . . .

More speaking in tongues would no doubt be recognized as known languages if there were someone present who knew the language and could translate. It is also possible that some speakings in tongues are languages of angels" (I Cor. 13:1). There are about three thousand languages and dialects in the world, so it is not surprising that few languages are recognized in any particular locality; indeed it is surprising that so many are. On the day of Pentecost there were about one hundred and twenty speaking in tongues, but only fourteen languages were recognized (Acts 1:15; 2:1, 4, 10-11), even though "devout Jews" were present from all over the then known world. This is about the percentage of known languages identified today. In praying with people for the blessing of Pentecost and being in numerous charismatic meetings in many parts of the world during the last ten years, we have known people to have spoken in tongues in Latin, Spanish, French, Hebrew, Old Basque, Japanese, Aramaic, Mandarin Chinese, German, Indonesian, Chinese Foochow dialect, N.T. Greek, English (by a non-English speaker), and Polish.

In summary, the gift of tongues and interpretation of tongues is first of all a sign to unbelievers (I Cor. 14:22), when manifested according to scriptural instructions. Secondly, these two gifts have the same benefit as prophecy and therefore are also for the edification of the Church (I Cor. 14:5, 26-27).

Carter (pp. 278-279) writes:

Here begins Paul's first and only reference to tongues in any of his writings (I Cor. 12:10-14:40). In Chapter 12 the subject is mentioned in three verses, namely, 10, 28, and 30. Here, as in I Corinthians 12:10, 28, Paul uses the Greek word GLOSSAI which properly means "languages", to express this gift. It signifies articulate speech for the purpose of communication, or the conveyance of ideas from the speaker to the listener. In I Corinthians 12:30 a less complimentary Greek word is used which may signify mere chatter or babble.

Thus "to another various kinds of tongues" means that the Spirit bestows upon some ("another") the miraculous ability to speak languages foreign to them for the same reason that He bestows the other gifts enumerated in this section: "But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" or for the benefit of the entire church. None of these gifts, not even the gift of languages (tongues) is divinely intended for personal profit. -