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Sign Gifts

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Sign Gifts

Some gifts were for the church in general and some were unique gifts that were primarily given to those who had the responsibility of confirming the message of Jesus to the world; this was the purpose of the sign gifts.
# Sign Gifts

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Gift of Tongues or Languages

- **Grammatical Meaning:**
  “kinds, nations or people of tongues or languages” – “dialect, language” (Acts 1:19; 2:6; 2:8; 21:40; 22:2; 26:14)

- Three basic uses (Kittel)
  1. Organ of taste
  2. Speech or language
  3. A way of speaking that needs explanation

- **Biblical Definition:** The ability to speak in foreign dialects without any previous knowledge of this language
Gift of Tongues or Languages

- **Two Contemporary Definitions** of what these tongues are:
  1. The ability to speak in foreign dialects without knowing this language
  2. The ability to speak in ecstatic expressions not related with any known earthly language

- **Characteristics**:
  - Scriptural evidence indicates the person would receive a revelation, then be given the opportunity to express the tongue-sign in a church setting, followed by a required interpretation of the language, which resulted in edification as the revelation was understood by everyone.
  - The “sign” aspect would be understood readily by Jewish observers, since an OT prophecy promised a language sign
Gift of Tongues or Languages

- **Dangers of abuses:**
  - Since 3 chapters were written to correct the abuses, they are serious – primarily due to overemphasis
  - A false sense of “spiritual” when speaking a tongue

- **Ideas concerning gift:**
  - One of three gifts declared to cease or disappear while other gifts continue
  - Declared to be in the 5th category of importance in 1 Cor 12
  - Absolutely no edification value to anyone unless interpreted

- **Misunderstanding:** thinking that tongues are a sign of the enduement of the Spirit’s power
Purposes Given for Gift of Tongues

1. Evidence of the Baptism of the Spirit
2. Fulfillment of the Prophecy of Joel
3. Evangelization
4. Edification of speaker and others
5. Sign to Israel
6. Confirmation of the Apostles and their message of Salvation
What is a “tongue”?

- Babbling in ecstatically in a non-human language or a foreign dialect unknown to speaker?

1. **Classical Greek**:
   - Strange words of a foreign dialect
   - Used of words hard to understand in poetry
   - Other word was used for “tongues of angels”

2. **Pre-Christian Judaism**
   - There were words of mystical languages in Philo, but they are not used in the NT

3. **Secular use in NT times**: always a human language or organ

4. **Septuagint (LXX)**: Occurs 114 times in OT and 41 times in Apocrypha, but never refer to something unintelligible

5. **New Testament**
   - In 1 Cor 13 and 14 used in singular and plural
   - To say that 1 Cor means something distinct from every usage is against every hermeneutic and linguistic rule of understanding
Argument: Tongues are Ecstatic Expressions

1. The accusation of being drunk (Act 2:13) indicates unconscious and uncontrollable

2. “New (_____) tongues” or “languages” in Mark 16:17 are new in “class” or “quality”, not in time.

3. Tongues will “cease” (1 Cor 13:8), Dialects?

4. “No one understands him” (1 Cor 14:2)

5. Why does it need “interpretation?” If it can be understood naturally, it is not needed.

6. “Other tongues” (_____) Acts 2:4, are “different” in class from known dialects

7. The word “speak” (_____) can refer to unintelligible speech
Proofs: “Tongues” are foreign languages

1. Total failure of linguists to recognize any dialects used in “tongues speaking” today.
2. The “dialect” is related to the birthplace of the hearers in Acts 2:4.
3. “Other” tongues (Acts 2:4) is always a different category of same thing
4. The normal use of 30 times, never refers to ecstatic speaking, but the plural always refers to various kinds of dialects.
5. The use of “new tongues” in Mar 16:17, is new to the speaker, not new in time.
6. The use of “kinds of tongues,” (1 Cor 12:10, 28)– a descendant relationship of the same class. Languages are comparable in different groupings.

7. The gift of interpretation, (Jn 1:38, 42; Heb 9:27)– means to “translate, explain.” Where there is no real language, there is nothing to translate.

8. The use of “voice” in 1 Cor 14:7-11– unintelligible noise is evidence of a false and useless tongue.

9. The prophecy of Isaiah 28:11-12 (1 Cor 14:21) refers to literal languages of other nations as sign

10. The association of Luke and Paul: they both are saying the same thing about tongues.
10 Rules to Control Genuine Tongues

1. Not everyone is expected to speak a tongue (1 Cor 12:30)
2. Without interpretation or translation they were prohibited and without value (1 Cor 14:14-15)
3. Must be understood to have any value (1 Cor 14:14-15)
4. Is more important to speak in a known language than in an unknown tongue (1 Cor 14:18-19)
5. No more than 2 or 3 can speak in a meeting (1 Cor 14:27)
10 Rules to Control Genuine Tongues

6. Only one person can interpret in a meeting (1 Cor 14:27)

7. If there is no interpreter, the tongues speaker must remain silent (1 Cor 14:28)

8. Evidence of the Spirit’s control is not the loss of control, but more self-control (1 Cor 14:28)

9. Women/wives are not permitted to speak (1 Cor 14:34-35)

10. Tongues cannot be prohibited assuming the rules are followed and done in order (1 Cor 14:39-40)
In order to receive the Baptism of the Spirit, lift your hands and eyes to heaven and begin to speak words, sounds or simple syllables; do it rapidly, more rapidly, more rapidly and it will occur. You have received the Spirit!

Begin giving praise to the Lord as “Glory,” “Hallelujah,” until it becomes difficult to say, “Glory.” Perhaps you won’t realize it, but the difficulty is the Spirit. He is pushing against your mind. The conflict between your will and the Spirit causes stuttering.

As it is impossible to speak two languages at the same time, so you have to decide that you will not speak a single word in your natural language. When the sounds begin, lift up your voice without inhibitions. Trust in God for the results – This is faith!
How to Speak in a Tongue?

Dennis Bennett, The Spirit and You

You have to discipline yourself to not speak even one word in your own language. You can look to God and open your mouth and breathe deeply and by faith, drink deeply the power of the Spirit. Open your mouth and breathe, constitutes a step of faith that God will honor. If you do this, I can assure you that the Spirit will begin to move you in a little time. If you begin to follow the impulses when they appear, opening and closing your mouth, you will be led by the Spirit without inhibitions, speaking whatever comes; and, without thinking as in a dream, you will receive a clear language.

Satan will try to make you believe that you are making up words or you are imitating someone or perhaps will say, “Now you are getting in the flesh and this is dangerous.” Do not pay any attention to these Satanic suggestions.
“Speaking in tongues is an act of infantile faith...en the same way that a child begins to babble his first words, open your mouth and make sounds...

Whatever sounds that we make, offering the tongue to God in simple faith, it can be the beginning of speaking in tongues...If we do not accept the experience as real (the babbling sounds) we will not be conscience of His reality; that is, whatever sound should be accepted by faith as the gift of tongues.”
Apostles and Tongues

1. The supernatural gifts are “signs” of apostleship (2 Cor 12:12)
2. “Tongues were a sign” to confirm the message spoken by the apostles (Heb 2:3-4)
3. The initial intervention of the apostles before the giving of the Spirit (Acts 8)
4. The miraculous signs were always in the presence of, or with the direct help of, an apostle
   • Those that were not apostles who did miracles were associated with apostles and probably received the imposition of hands (2 Tim 1:6)
5. The Jews could accept the revelations of the NT when it was accompanied with “signs” (1 Cor 1:22)
Gift of Healings

1. **Grammatical meaning**: the ability to cause people to be well again, means of healing, remedy, medicine, medical service, cure diseases. Used metaphorically to refer to restoration spiritually.

2. **Definition**: The ability to produce a complete and immediate physical healing on demand by a direct touch or command (Mar 1:42; Matt 14:36).

3. **Characteristics**:
   - Two uses in the Early Church: 1) To give authority to the message and messenger (Acts 3; Rom 15:19) 2) Human reasons (Acts 28:8).
   - Is an authority, not a power in prayer (Acts 3:2, 6-8).
4. **Observations**

- The sickness can be an instrument of God for a spiritual purpose (2 Cor 12:7-9)
- There is no command to heal. All the valid gifts we are responsible to practice, although not everyone has the gift.
- Little emphasis in the Epistles (apostolic connection in 2 Cor 12:12).
- Elders are to pray for healing in James 5:14-16.
- The gift does not depend on the faith of the recipient, rather on the authority of the gifted healer
- The gift never fails “healing every sickness and every disease” (Matt 9:35)

5. **Danger of abuses:**

- Unsaved are able to heal (Matt 7:22 “wonderful works” or “powerful deeds” could refer to healings)
Gift of Miracles

1. **Grammatical Meaning:** 
   - "sign, wonder, mark, signal" -- 
   - "inherent power to do supernatural acts" -- 
   - "marvel, wonder, strange beyond natural explanation"

2. **Definition:** The ability to execute supernatural acts that clearly demonstrate the undisputed power of God to be greater than the power of Satan

3. **Characteristics:**
   - Acts 2:22, Jesus was approved or accredited through “miracles” as well as the apostles (2 Cor 12:12-13; Heb 2:3-4)
   - Is the indisputable ability to do miracles (Acts 3:12; 4:30, 33; 8:18) that convince others of the validity of apostolic message
   - Is the power over sickness, nature (storms), physical material (water to wine, multiplication of fishes) and death
   - Accompanied new revelations to authenticate them (Rom 15:18-19)
4. Ideas concerning the gift:

- Through their credibility the church followed the apostles (Acts 2:42)
- Paul exercised this gift when he threw out demons (Acts 19:11-12)
- Why were they abundant in the time of apostles and scarce afterwards?
  - Lack of faith and power throughout the history of the church
  - The will of God
- Do you know someone who has the power to suspend the laws of Nature at will, as Moses? Elijah? Jesus? Paul?
- It appears that Jesus, the Apostles and two others could do miracles in the NT
- The attitude of insisting on miracles in order to believe, does not please God (Jn 4:48; Luke 11:29)
Are Miracles Necessary Today?

1. Miracles were used for specific needs and did not repeat
   - When the signs of Moses confirmed his authority, they disappeared (Ex 4:29-31)
   - When Joshua entered the land of Canaan, the miraculous daily provisions of 40 years ceased (Josh 5:11-12)

2. Miracles were not the NORM for all the period of the Church
   - Jesus (John 20:29) and Paul (2 Cor 5:7) taught that miracles are not always necessary
   - Once something is proven, confirmed, established by two or three witnesses, it does not need to be proven again (Mt 18:16)
   - The word “confirm” occurred 5 times, put the word “faith” occurs 239 times. Today the emphasis is to place your faith on what has irrefutably been “confirmed”
Epics of Miracles in Bible History

Moses
1441—1370 B.C.
500 years

Elijah
870—785 B.C.

Jesus
Apostles
28-90 A.D.
813 years

Each period of miracles lasted approximately 70 years!

The NORM over 1600 years is brief periods when miracles occurred
Signs and Miracles (Heb 2:3-4)

3 How will we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?

1. It was first communicated through the Lord
2. and was confirmed to us by those who heard him,
3. while God confirmed their witness with signs and wonders and various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will. NET 

First: Jesus announced the Salvation

Secondly: “those who heard Him,” i.e. esp. the Apostles

Thirdly, “was confirmed to us” (the author of Hebrews) by Apostles “with signs and wonders and various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit” (as Mark 16:17-20)
# Falsification of Sign Gifts

## Carnal Falsification

1. **Miracles**: natural phenomena or coincidence attributed to intervention of God by the human enthusiasm, psychosomatic or suggestion

2. **Healings**: Real or imagined healing coming from psychological means such as suggestion, psychosomatics or slight of hand

3. **Tongues**: Ecstatic utterance babbling in mother-language phonetics produced by emotional excitement, imagination or faking a language to be accepted

4. **Interpretation**: A fake or imagined speech supposedly related to a tongue-speech to authenticate a supposed miracle language

## Satanic Falsification

1. **Miracles produced by the power of demons as seen in cults and witchcraft, spirit migration, reading minds and future to authenticate a false leader**

2. **Demonic healings as seen in false cults and “white” witch doctors to authenticate false religion or leader**

3. **Supernatural language produced under demonic control to communicate with the spirit world to deceive and convince of false doctrine or promote false prophets – common in pagan religions**

4. **Demonic translation that encourages false teaching or lies or promotes false prophets**
Gifts to be Carefully Evaluated

- **Prophecy**: Are there more revelations of God’s Word beyond the Bible? Is the gift redefined to mean “preaching”?

- **Faith**: All believers have several “faiths” (salvation faith, Fruit of Spirit) and can increase faith by responding in obedience to the revealed Word. Is there a need for more? Does it imply revelation of the future to trust in?

- **Word of Wisdom**: Is the Bible the source of wisdom or continued revelation?

- **Word of Knowledge**: Do we know all we need to know from studying Scriptures to please and obey God, or do we need more revelations?

- **Discernment of Spirits**: Do we need special discernment to determine truth or knowledge of the revealed Word of God to compare with.