

- all—as a receptacle for the demonstration of God’s power.
3. **v. 27 this time.** This may echo God’s “this time” in verse 14.
  4. **v. 28 it is enough.** This is what Jacob had said when his sons reported to him that Joseph was still alive and ruler over the land of Egypt: “and Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die” (Gen. 45:28). The words signalled the entrance of the children of Israel into the land of Egypt; now Pharaoh’s use of the phrase (the next occurrence on record) presages the time when Israel will leave Egypt to go back to the land again.
  5. **v. 28 ye shall stay no longer.** By a happy coincidence, the expression ‘no longer’ uses the same root as the word ‘Joseph’! The root *yasaph* means ‘to add’, but Pharaoh did not want to add to or prolong his experience with Joseph and his descendants any longer!
  6. **v. 29 hands.** The word for ‘hands’ here is *kaph*, ‘palms’, rather than the normal word for ‘hand’, as found in verse 22, for example. The act of spreading out the palms before the Lord would speak both of openness before Him and of the desire to receive blessings from His hand. Our hands are empty without the blessings He bestows; the spread palms acknowledge that blessings are showered down from above.
  7. **v. 29 the earth is the LORD’S.** This principle, in which Pharaoh has to be instructed by this plague, is extremely important. It is quoted in Psalm 24:1 and 1 Corinthians 10:26. The principle is demonstrated by the effect the plagues have on the entire creation. This is brought out, for instance, in verse 22 (every herb) and verse 25 (every tree of the field).
  8. **vv. 31,32 flax, barley, wheat, rie.** The information about the crops which were in ear enables us to date this event to approximately January/February.



## Principles, Preaching and Problems

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# “Do all speak with tongues?” (1)

Malcolm Edwards

**S**IMON PETER was unsure what to make of it all as he reflected on the strange vision he had just received while praying on the rooftop at noon. He was staying with his namesake, Simon the leather tanner, in the coastal town of Joppa, and the vision showed an assortment of unclean animals let down in a sheet. There was also a voice that invited him to kill and eat. Being a devout Jew he had refused to touch what the Law of Moses prohibited, but he was told not to call unclean what God had cleansed. The vision was repeated twice more, convincing Peter that it was the work of the Lord, but he was still uncertain as to what it could all mean.

The answer was at that very moment approaching the house, in the form of three tired travellers. They were servants of Cornelius, a devout Roman centurion who lived in Caesarea, about fifty kilometres (thirty miles) north of

Joppa. Cornelius had also received a message from God, directing him to send men to Joppa to find Peter, who would instruct him about salvation.

When Peter heard their story, the full meaning of his own vision flooded his mind. He now had no inner doubts about God’s willingness to accept Gentiles for salvation, and he gladly accompanied the messengers to Caesarea to meet with Cornelius. But he was still unprepared for what transpired.

Having met the centurion, and after they had exchanged their remarkable stories, Peter lost no time in preaching the gospel to both him and his family. The record of what followed is dramatically presented in Acts 10:

“While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy [Spirit] fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Pe-

ter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy [Spirit]. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy [Spirit] as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days” (vv. 44-48).

What most impressed Peter about this event was its resemblance to the imparting of the Holy Spirit to the apostles on the day of Pentecost, and he stresses this similarity when recounting his experiences to the believers at Jerusalem several days later:

“And as I began to speak, the Holy [Spirit] fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy [Spirit]. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life” (11:15-18).

### Tongues defined

A comparison of these records with the gift of tongues at Pentecost permits us to identify with certainty exactly what the gift of tongues in those days actually was. It was the ability to preach the gospel in foreign languages:

“And they were all filled with the Holy [Spirit], and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language” (2:4-6).

Paul wrote to the Corinthians that tongues were for a sign to unbelievers (1 Cor. 14:22), and this mini-Pentecost was most certainly that. Not only was it an unmistakable proof of God’s full acceptance of Gentiles, but the gift of tongues was an invaluable means of furthering the gospel in Gentile areas outside Judea. This irrefutable definition of the gift of tongues will serve as our foundation stone for the following remarks on this subject.

It should be noted, however, that Peter’s amazement at this most direct method of bestowing these gifts to Cornelius and his group indicates that it was not the normal method of Holy Spirit bestowal: “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy [Spirit] as well as we?” (Acts 10:47). That he was referring to Pentecost is evident from his report to the believers in Jerusalem in 11:15: “And as I began to speak, the Holy [Spirit] fell on them, as on us at the beginning”.

From this it seems obvious that direct bestowal of Spirit gifts was the exception rather than the norm. The normal method seems to have been by the laying on of the hands of the apostles: “Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery” (1 Tim. 4:14).

### Glossolalia

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* defines glossolalia as: “A faculty of abnormal and inarticulate vocal utterance, under stress of religious excitement”. This phenomenon is by no means confined to any one religion, and has been witnessed even in pagan ritual. For example, Plato wrote of the enthusiastic ecstasies of ancient soothsayers. The Roman poet Virgil refers to a prophetess in a similar state of ecstasy, having dishevelled hair and speaking in tongues with a distinct change of her normal voice. This has striking similarities to phenomena reported in spiritualist seances and modern so-called demonic manifestations. Dr Tylor, in his book *Primitive Culture*, refers to native priests of the Sandwich Islands foaming at the mouth, and with distorted features and convulsed limbs, pouring out incoherent utterances on behalf of their god Oro.

It is not surprising therefore that in the Old Testament God warned his people against mediums and chanting wizards: “And when they say to you, ‘Consult the mediums and the wizards who chirp and mutter’, should not a people consult their God?” (Isa. 8:19, RSV). One should be most careful, therefore, not to confuse these trance-induced utterances with the foreign language gifts of the apostolic era. This being established, it is very obvious that so-called speaking in tongues today in the name of Christ is not the same as the speaking in tongues spoken at Pentecost. There is no reliable record of any modern missionary arriving in a foreign country and immediately speaking their language without having previously learnt it.

### What are “unknown tongues”?

It has been claimed by Pentecostals that because the tongues spoken of in 1 Corinthians 14 are described as ‘unknown’, they were not foreign languages as at Pentecost but undiscovered tongues, and verse 27 is quoted as an example: “If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret”. It is certainly true that five times in this particular chapter in the AV tongues are called ‘unknown’, but there is no word for ‘unknown’ in the original Greek text, which is why the modern versions omit it.

Moreover, there is absolutely no evidence that the tongues in 1 Corinthians 14 were any different from the tongues spoken at Pentecost; neither is there the slightest indication that the tongues referred to in this or any other chapter were accompanied by rhythmic singing, drumming, and induced trance, such as is common today in Pentecostal-type churches.

In his book *What about Tongue Speaking?*, A. A. Hoekema shows that Pentecostals even differ amongst themselves on this point: “Pentecostals have told me in private conversations that present day glossolalia could be either the speaking of actual foreign languages, or the speaking of an ecstatic language which has no counterpart among human languages” (pp. 45-46).

Being himself an active missionary to the Gentiles, Paul spoke with foreign tongues on many occasions, yet he let it be known that to do so amongst believers with no interpreter was a useless exercise: “I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue” (vv. 18,19).

Because of the abuse of the gift of tongues by some of the Corinthian believers, Paul placed it at the very bottom of his list of Spirit gifts, recommending prophesying (teaching) as a much better means of edifying the congregation: “I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather

that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying” (v. 5).

There is strong Scriptural evidence that the Pentecostal gifts, having fulfilled their original objective of maturing the infant ecclesia, slowly waned and then failed altogether after the death of the apostles. But before we look at that in Part 2 of this article, we will conclude Part 1 by tracing how so-called speaking in tongues has become popular in parts of Christendom today.

### Glossolalia in church history

Maintaining, as Christadelphians do, that the original Pentecostal gifts of tongues were foreign languages, and that the tongues referred to by Peter and Paul were no different, let us trace the historical change from these kind of tongues to the trance-induced utterances known today as glossolalia.

In the third century, Tertullian reported that members of the Montanist church were claiming to have the gift of tongues in the form of ecstatic utterances. This was now no longer teaching in foreign languages; it was not even teaching at all, but an early manifestation of meaningless glossolalia. Furthermore, Montanus himself proved to be a false prophet, who, in spite of his so-called gifts, wrongly predicted that the end of the world would be in his times.

Since then, glossolalia was reported amongst Roman Catholic friars of the thirteenth century, French Jansenists of the seventeenth century and, nearer to our own times, early Quakers and Wesleyans.

Modern glossolalia is common in Pentecostal and other so-called charismatic churches, and, in spite of its close resemblance to paranormal behaviour far removed from Christianity, these groups stoically contend that it is proof of their possession of the apostolic gifts.

In the second part of the article, God willing, we will show from Scripture itself that these gifts diminished, and eventually failed shortly after the death of the apostles.

(To be concluded)

It is often said that when God likened the seed of Abraham to the stars of heaven for multitude this refers to the spiritual seed, whereas when He likened them to the dust of the earth or the sand of the seashore this refers to natural Israel. However, Moses twice says of Israel before they entered the land that they were like the stars of heaven for multitude (Deut. 1:10; 10:22).—T.B.