Do We Seek the Gift of Tongues from the Holy Spirit? Part 2

By Charles Feinberg

We have now come to the final or the 8th message in the series on truth and error about the Holy Spirit. It’s the part 2 the last part of the subject do we seek the gift of tongues from the Holy Spirit. Message 7 was part 1 on this same subject. Do we seek the gift of tongues from the Holy Spirit? This is by Dr. Charles lee Feinberg, dean emeritus and professor of Semitic languages and Old Testament at Talbot theological seminary. In the previous tape, just by way of review, we touched on certain basic considerations. The fact that we live in a day of faith and not sight. The very important truth that there are 4 great periods of bible miracles, and our age is not one of them. Now we’re not talking about periods when miracles may occur. There are miracles throughout the bible, but 4 special periods where you have an accumulation of them. The mosaic period, Elijah and Elisha’s period. Both in the Old Testament and the new. Christ’s earthly ministry. The era of that ministry. And then the tribulation period mentioned and treated in full in the book of the revelation. We were reminded that every doctrine and practice must be judged on the basis of the place and prominence given to the lord Jesus Christ. And a very very significant item that we have to keep before us all the time is that the canon of scripture, the number of books in the bible is not a matter of addition at this time. We do not have an open canon of scripture. We now have a closed canon of scripture. God has spoken his final word. We took time to look into the origin of languages in genesis 11:1 we saw that was related to sin and opposition to god. And then the reason that strange tongues were introduced into the national life of Israel in Isaiah 28:9-13. That passage is important because it’s quoted in the main passage on tongues in the New Testament. 1 Corinthians 14 along with 1 Corinthians 12. Then we saw that
that introduction of strange languages when Israel was in unbelief was fulfilled in unbelieving
Israel after the ascension of Christ in partial fulfillment of Joel 2:28. You see just as there is a
first coming and a second coming of Christ, so there is a first coming of the Holy Spirit in acts 2
which was preparatory. Which was temporary. It was a pre filament and not a fulfillment. And
then there’s a second coming of the Holy Spirit predicted when all of Joel 2 will be realized. We
turned to the matter of the gift of tongues and their use. Especially looking at 1 Corinthians 12
and 13 and 14. This beautiful combination of 3 chapter like 3 beautiful jewels in a necklace.
Then we look briefly at Ephesians 4:11. A vital passage on gifts but no mention at all of speakers
in tongues. And then we took time out to look at all the passages on tongues. In the New
Testament. We stopped long enough to discuss the reason for the revival of tongues in our day
and time. We indicated it was an overcompensation for lack of emphasis on the Holy Spirit and
his work. And then the purpose of the gift of tongues determines the permanence of the gift. 1
Corinthians 14:20-22. it is stated in unmistakable terms that tongues are a sign for unbelievers.
Prophecy, preaching unto edification exhortation and comfort 1 Corinthians 14:3 is for believers.
Now we come to rules for the use of tongues. 1 Corinthians 14. There are 7 rules god given rules,
not man given rules. But there are here 7 god given rules for the use of the employment, the
application, the use of tongues. And these rules must not be deviated from if we would have
blessing. First of all, there is the rule of maturity. To desire the gift for its own sake is a mark of
immaturity. Notice 1 Corinthians 14 verse 20. Brethren do not be children in your thinking yet in
evil be babes. But in your thinking be mature. The new Scofield reference bible on page 12:47 in
the first footnote has this timely word. And it is valid. I’m quoting undue preoccupation with
tongues indicated spiritual childishness. Find that in verses 19 and 20. However in the church I
desire to speak 5 words with my mind that I may instruct others also rather than 10000 words in
a tongue. Brethren do not be children it’s in that context. Do not be children in your thinking. Yet in evil be babes. But in your thinking be mature. As we say very pointedly and very definitely today, grow up. Mature. Mature. The rule of maturity. To desire this gift above all others and a desire for its own sake is a mark of immaturity. Then there’s the rule of edification. The overriding consideration is right here. It must, that tongue must edify. The use of that language must edify the church. 1 Corinthians 14:26. Oh how important it is. What is the outcome then brethren? What is the upshot of all this? When you assemble each one has a song has a teaching has a revelation. Has a tongue. Has an interpretation. They had many things. They were tremendously gifted, talented, endowed indeed by god. But listen to the command is given here in 7 words in our English language. Let all things A L L let all things be done for edification. That means whether you use a song or a teaching or revelation or a tongue, whatever it is. Use it for edification. Or the interpretation. You have 1 2 3 4 5 gifts. Song, teaching, revelation, tongue interpretation. Let everything be done for edification. Then the rule of number verse 27. If anyone speaks in a tongue it should be by 2 or at the most 3. You can’t have the whole congregation breaking out in different languages at one time. You say well in acts 2, they were all speaking at the same time so some folk thought they were drunk. But that was for a purpose. There weren’t people there from all different areas of the religious and political world that day. And those who were cratons heard the language in their in their tongue. And they heard the truth and message of the gospel in their language. Those who were Arabs and those who were from Mesopotamia. Those the scripture goes all the way down. Godly men from the different nations unto earth. There was a purpose there. But now this is individually in the church. So if anyone speaks in a tongue it should be by 2 or at the most 3 so there isn’t bedlam. unilever come in he think your all mad says Paul. And each in turn and let one interpret. The rule
of number. He doesn’t leave it to him he doesn’t say be sure you just have a few of them or a fair number. No. 2 or at the most 3. Shows there’s a limit there in the number. Then in the fourth place is the rule of decorum and order. That’s 1 Corinthians 14 verse 40. Let all things but let all things be done properly and in an orderly manner. We’re going to see how that has often been shamefully disregarded. And then there’s the rule of interpretation. It’s a vital one. Verses 27 and 28 same 1 Corinthians 14. If anyone speaks in a tongue, it shall be by 2 or at the most 3 and each in turn and let one interpret. There it is. And let one interpret. But if there is no interpreter, then not to go on as if that’s no difference. If there is no interpreter scripture says let him keep silent in the church. The man who claims he’s exercising a gift of language of tongues. If there is no one to interpret, let him keep silent in the church. Let him speak to himself and to god. And then there’s the rule of silence. 1 Corinthians 14:34. And how much havoc has been wrought because this has not been paid attention to. Let the women keep silent in the churches for they’re not permitted to speak. But let them subject themselves, just as the law also says I know there’s some people who take this passage and make it mean that women are to keep quiet in the churches at all times as if they couldn’t say good morning pastor or the lord bless you, I appreciated that message from the word. That’s not what it means at all. It’s in that very connection with the use of tongues. 1 Corinthians 14 verse 34. The rule of silence. And then the rule of prohibition. Notice it 1 Corinthians 14 verse 39, therefore my brethren desire earnestly. Desire earnestly to prophesy, 1 Corinthians 14:3. That’s unto edification, exhortation, and consolation. And do not forbid to speak in tongues. Do not forbid to speak in tongues. Those who had it in that day were to exercise it then, just as those who had it on the day of Pentecost were to exercise it then. Those who had it in the home of Cornelius were to exercise it then. You have these 7 rules for the use of tongues and they cannot be deviated from without definite loss.
You must do God's business in God's way. The rule of maturity verse 20 the verse of edification verse 26, the rule of number verse 27, the rule of decorum and order in verse 40. The rule of interpretation verse 27 and 28. The rule of silence verse 34. The rule of prohibition in verse 39.

Now, you may be amazed that at this point I want to bring up the subject of the nature of tongues. You say after all this time, yes. It’s amazing how some people will speak and write and discuss the whole matter of tongues and never sit down and find out what specifically they’re talking about. What is the characteristic? Oh I’ve heard many debate on baptism between individuals. Just what of baptism? And then when you get to asking the question what do you believe that baptism stands for? What does it mean to you? Why they’re poles apart no wonder they have a different mode. Now, same with tongues. What’s the nature of the tongue. Well it’s amazing. Some who practice it say that the word for tongues in acts and the word for tongue or tongues in 1 Corinthians. Those words are different words. That is absolutely untrue. Even if you’ve never had Greek, you can get a Greek testament from the American bible society or a Christian bookstore. And you can look the word up. The words are not so different from our Latin character that you cannot tell the word glossa ГΛΟΣΣΑ. Glossa from which glossalalia [sp?] comes. The word glossa is used both in acts and 1 Corinthians. Its known languages. Languages like French or German or Hebrew or Greek. Known languages. Not just ecstatic utterances or gibberish. Acts 2:8 and 11 indicate beyond a shadow of a doubt. Listen to what I’m reading in acts 2:8 and 11. How is it that we hear? Each one of us. How is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born. There were actual languages in use just as I’m speaking to you in English. Cretans and Arabs we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of god. Cretans said we understand what they’re saying. Arabs said we hear them in our languages. Another said we hear them in the language of Mesopotamia. And so on. Yes.
Not ecstatic utterances. That’s why there is the rule of interpretation. It is a known language. Don’t ever pay any attention to that italicized word in your King James Version. It’s not in the new version anymore because it was never in the Greek. It’s a known language. So it’s not gibberish. Gibberish is not a known language. Unknown language, that word unknown has misled many. Now, someone will say after all is said and done, it is a beautiful beautiful gift and it is a beautiful mark of spirituality. It shows that you have committed yourself to the lord. That you are surrendered to him, that you’re walking close to him, that you have sin in your life. All known sin forsaken and confessed. And you’re on high plane. I see. In other words, tongues are a mark of spirituality. Wherever you see it, that’s an unusual, that’s an unusually spiritual group or individual. Now we do not say that among those who practice it at times there are not some spiritual individuals. But in this practice, are they indicating spirituality? They are spiritual for other reasons than that. 1 Corinthians 3:1. Paul says to the Corinthian believers and I brethren. How do we know they’re believers? Brethren, he doesn’t speak that of unbelievers. And I brethren could not speak to you as to spiritual men. And they were using tongues. It’s in that book. It’s in that book of 1 Corinthians that you have the most extended discretion of the whole subject. And it isn’t because you are spiritual men, I had to speak to you as to men of flesh as to babes in Christ. That’s why there’s that rule of maturity. Go on. Go on in Christ as in Hebrews 6:1. Leave off these early things. That was in the early stages of Christianity. I repeat tongues are not, N O T a mark of spirituality. 1 Corinthians 3:1. Now, the question arises. You say you yourself admit preacher that tongues are found in acts and they were gifts in the time of the Corinthian church. Yes, I verily believe it. With all my heart. Found in acts and in 1 Corinthians. And then we have it now, folks say. Ah, but there’s the question. I don’t follow you there. Do we have it all through the church age as it was in the time when acts and 1 Corinthians were being
written down? When acts and first Corinthians were being pinned by Luke and by the apostle Paul. Are we in that same period of church history? No. now I don’t say that there haven’t been indications of the use of tongues. Oh in the post apostolic period, there were certain ones who are not need to mention their names. But they indicated it. But they were sporadic. It was very sparse. Read it in church history don’t take our word for it. And you will find that it was very minimal to say the most. Or to say the least. Or in more modern times we hear it the earthingite movement and other movements. The movement that has begun in the southern California area and in other parts. But what about that intervening time. Was this gift of tongues a permanent thing or was it a temporary thing? Now does this not strike you very very strange friends? And check on this please do not take my word for it. See if it’s not so. Most of the New Testament writers are silent about tongues. Most of the New Testament writers are silent about tongues. It is found this matter of tongues is indicated only in 2 books at the most 3. If you think that the end of mark is valid and should be in our bibles. Mark 16 we'll allow that for that at the moment. Then in only 3 books and in more extended fashion in only 2 books, acts and 1 Corinthians. Now acts and 1 Corinthians are just as inspired as any other book. but isn’t it remarkable that all of these other new testament writers there are 29, excuse me 27 books there are 39 books in the old testament. 27 books in the New Testament and 25 or 24 do not mention at all. Silent about tongues. And books which don’t mention tongues, interestingly enough, they say a great deal about the Holy Spirit. About the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The person. The work. The function. The office work of the Holy Spirit. John’s gospel. John’s gospel is remarkably full. Chapters 13 to 17 remarkably full about the Holy Spirit. John’s gospel. You know that from this series. We have his deity there, we have his personality and we have his work to the world we have his work to the church. Oh it’s beautiful how much is indicated in john’s gospel. And then
in romans why it is the most extended orderly setting forth presentation, structuring of the
Christian faith that you find anywhere. Romans is basic. Now why, why don’t, why don’t those
books that say a great deal about the Holy Spirit. Men have written doctoral dissertations on the
They mention the Holy Spirit? Isn’t that a tremendous tremendous oversight? Ah but it’s not an
oversight. It is purposeful. The reason is friends that tongues are first last and always a sign to
Israel. 1 Corinthians 1:22 for indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom. It is of the
nature of Israel that they seek for signs. That’s why signs were given to them in mosaic period.
In the period of Elijah and Elisha. In the time of our earthly ministry. In a time when our lord
ministered here on earth and in the time of the tribulation period for Israel will be there at the
time of Jacob’s trouble. Yes. It’s a sign to Israel. God is not now dealing with Israel nationally.
He’s dealing with them individually. But not nationally. He’s dealing with all other nations
individually not nationally. So god is not giving signs as long as he was dealing with them they
were signs. They were out the gospels and in the early part of acts. But as it goes on and on and
on as with healing as well. They are beginning to taper off. And remember all that is miraculous
is not of god. Just because a thing is supernatural that’s out of the ordinary nature of the world
doesn’t mean it’s of god. It can be of demonic it can be of satanic influence. Notice exodus 7:11
and 22. Now this was miraculous. Would you say it was of god? Then pharaoh also called for the
wise men and the sorcerers and they also the magicians of Egypt. My they are as far from the
things of god as they could be. Did the same with their secret arts. They were using magic. But
the magicians of Egypt did the same with their secret arts. And pharaoh’s heart was hardened. He
didn’t listen to them as the lord had said. And then in exodus 8:7 and the magicians did the same
that Moses and Aaron were doing. The magicians did the same with their secret arts making
frogs come upon the land of Egypt. Yes. Kept going on and on. Oh there was a time when they got in beyond there. The depth but they were doing it along one thing after another. And look in the New Testament Matthew 7:22 and 23. God dealing with Israel. Many will say to me on that day lord. Did we not prophesy in your name? Oh you say then oh that’s valid wait a moment. And in your name cast out demons. Well that could only be of god. Wait a moment. And in your name perform many miracles. Then I will declare to them I never knew you. I never was in vital relationship with you. You never were children of mine. We were never in covenant relationship where you came trusting me saying nothing in my hand I bring simply to thy cross I cling other refuge have I none hangs my helpless soul on you. What did our lord Jesus say? I never knew you. Depart from me you who practice lawlessness. You who practice iniquity. Yes it’s possible for folk to do miracles. That’s going to be the point in second Thessalonians too. And Matthew 24 and 25, there are going to be some that are going to be so endowed of Satan and they’re going to have such power in miracles they’re going to lead astray if possible even the very elect. Watch out. Some folks say well I don’t believe in fortune tellers. They don’t know what they’re talking about. Oh some many times thing that they say do come to pass. Even certain writers today. Ill not mention their names, the one lady especially. Feels that she can predict and all. Some of those things come to pass. But not all that she says does. But things like that do not always issue from god unless god is given the glory and the credit. It doesn’t come from god, it’s got to be not only mentioning him and magnifying him in the true sense but it’s got to be under his specific authority and command. And the history of the church. History of the church has shown tongues were never meant to be permanent. Never meant to be permanent. As scroggie the great bible teacher once said, if it be claim that we may now do all that the apostles did, how is it that no one is writing Holy Scripture now? How is it that we do not have the apostolic office
now? No my friends. I repeat in all love but in all firmness and all truth in all sincerity. The history of the church itself has shown that tongues were never meant to be permanent. We’ve had students at times that have wanted to show that tongues at this time are as permanently for the church. They’re related to the church just in the book of acts. And then they have been given the task to show how it has continued in that same fashion through the history of the church. And they’ve come each time and have had to admit approved that the history of the church has shown that tongues were never meant to be permanent.