

The *Charismata* in Scripture and Christian History: From the Apostles to the Rise of 20th Century Pentecostalism

The Gift of Tongues in the New Testament.

(1) *Xenoglossia* – the supernatural ability to speak in a foreign language unknown to the speaker.

- ▶ **Acts 2:1-18** – Peter’s sermon on the Day of Pentecost.
- ▶ Key verses:
 - “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...”
 - “And with many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, ‘Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.’”

[Note: Those who spoke in tongues were not tutored or “coached” in speaking in tongues. Also note that the gift of the Holy Spirit was not a “second blessing.”]

(2) *Glossolalia* – a spiritual/mystical “prayer language” known only to the Holy Spirit.

- ▶ **Acts 10:43-49** – Peter’s ministry to the Roman centurion Cornelius in Caesarea:
 - “... [E]veryone who *believes* in Jesus Christ [i.e., all who repent, trust in him for their salvation, and commit to following his teachings] receives forgiveness of sins through his *name* [i.e., his power and authority].
- ▶ **Acts 19:1-7** – Paul’s encounter with disciples of John the Baptist in Ephesus.
 - Paul: “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”
 - “They answered, ‘No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit’...”
 - “On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.”
- ▶ **I Cor. 12: 1; 6-11; and 27-31** – “Now about spiritual gifts [*charismata*],... I do not want you to be ignorant....
 - Wisdom... knowledge... faith... healing... miraculous powers... prophecy [“forthtelling,” “foretelling,” or both?].... discernment... speaking in different kinds of tongues... interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines....
 - In the church God has appointed... apostles... prophets... teachers... workers of miracles... healing... helping others... administration... speaking in different kinds of tongues.... “But eagerly desire the greater gifts.”
- ▶ **Rom. 12:6-8** – Gifts of “prophesying... serving... teaching... encouraging ... contributing to the needs of others... leadership... showing mercy.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

- ▶ **Eph. 4:11** – Apostles... prophets... evangelists... pastors and teachers.
- ▶ **I Cor. 13:1-3; 8-12** – Love is the supreme gift.
 - “Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, [i.e., completeness or fulfillment – Christ’s Second Coming?] the imperfect disappears.”
- ▶ **I Cor. 14:1ff** – “Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy [forthtelling the truths of God].
 - “I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words than ten thousand words in a tongue....
 - “Therefore, my brothers, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.”
- Some charismatics have claimed that the gift of tongues was a form of *xenoglossia* that the Holy Spirit imparted to their missionaries in order to reach the “lost” for Christ.
 - ▶ The Irvingite sect of the mid-19th century.
 - ▶ Some Pentecostals in the early 20th century often made the same claims.
 [Ref. William J. Samarin’s *Tongues of Men and Angels: The Religious Language of Pentecostalism*; and Felicitas D. Goodman, “Phonetic Analysis of Glossolalia in Four Cultural Settings.” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (1969).]

The *Charismata* in Church History

The “Normative” Controversy.

- **Continuationists** believe that the “charismatic” gifts should be “normal.”
- **Cessationists** believe that these gifts disappeared after the Apostolic Era and the completion of the New Testament canon.

The First Three Centuries.

- At the close of the Apostolic Age, there appears to have been a decrease in gifts such as prophecy, tongues, healing, and miracles in general.
- However, the historical sources indicate that prophecy, healing, and other miracles apparently continued on to some extent into the second century and beyond.
- However, references to speaking in tongues by the Church Fathers are rare and ambiguous.
- *The Didache* (c. 95): 11-13.
- *The Shepherd of Hermas* (c. 95-115).
- *The Epistle of Barnabas* (c. 80-120): 16.9.
- **Justin Martyr**, *Dialogue With Trypho* (c. 150): 82, 88.
- *Martrydom of Polycarp* (c. 150): 5.2.
- **Irenaeus** : *Against Heresies* (c. 180): 5.6.1 and 2.32.4-5.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

- **Tertullian**, *Against Marcion* (207): Book V, Chapter 8.
 - **Novatian**, *Treatise Concerning the Trinity* (c. 240): 29.
 - **Origen**, *Against Celsus* (c. 250): 7.8.
 - **Eusebius**, (*Ecclesiastical History* c. 325): 17.3.
 - **Hilary of Poitiers** (*On the Trinity*, c. 360): 8.33.
 - **John Chrysostom**, *Homilies on I Corinthians* (c. 385): 29.1.
 - **Theodoret of Cyrus**, *Commentary on I Corinthians* c. 450): 240.43.
 - **Augustine of Hippo**, *Homilies on the Gospel of John* (c. 410): 6.10.
 - ▶ Speaking in tongues (i.e., *xenoglossia*) was a gift for the apostolic church that has “passed away.”
 - ▶ “In the earliest times, ‘the Holy Ghost fell upon them that believed: and they spake with tongues’ which they had not learned ‘as the Spirit gave them utterance.’ These were signs adapted to the time. For it was necessary for there to be that sign of the Holy Spirit in all tongues, to show that the Gospel of God was to run through all tongues over the whole earth. That thing was done for a sign [i.e., for authentication], and it passed away [But now,] by what does one get to know that he has received the Holy Spirit? Let him question his own heart. If he loves his brother, the Spirit of God dwelleth in him.”
- [Note: Augustine affirmed In *The City of God* (c. 425) that God still performs miracles – although they are not normative. He declared that he had witnessed miracles such as people healed by the tears of a bishop and by various relics including those of dead martyrs. [*City of God* 22.8]

Medieval and Modern Times.

- A dormant gift?
- The **Montanist** legacy.
- Prior to the 19th century, no renewal, restoration or reformation movements included speaking in tongues.
- Why did the gift of tongues cease?
 - ▶ Some believe that it was given to early Christians as a sign of the indwelling and power of the Holy Spirit.
 - ▶ Like Augustine, **Thomas Aquinas** (c. 1265) believed *xenoglossia* enabled early missionaries to preach the Gospel worldwide.
 - ▶ Some contend that the institutionalization of Christianity was a factor.
 - A formal liturgy and other rituals eventually suppressed spontaneous ministry in the churches.
- Today, many charismatics concede that the *charismata* ceased early in church history, but that the gifts have been restored as an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in these “Latter Days.”

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....