

SPEAKING IN TONGUES



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CHAPTER ONE

Tongues-Speaking: What Are Its Implications?

No Christian can ignore the many questions raised by the phenomenal growth of “glossolalia” or “speaking in tongues.” The modern Pentecostal movement had its’ start at the beginning of the 20th century. *The World Christian Encyclopedia, 3rd Edition (2020)* currently counts 644 million Pentecostals/Charismatics worldwide. Their ranks have swelled largely at the expense of the other denominations. Now in recent years the charismatic movement has deeply infiltrated the historic Protestant churches. Even the heavily guarded precincts of Catholicism have not been spared. “Born-again” Catholics who speak in tongues are not uncommon today. Then, of course, there is the “Jesus People” Movement leading to the charismatic fellowships springing up on college campuses across the nation.

All have a common complaint, namely, the stagnation and hollowness of the mainline denominations which have stifled the working of the holy Spirit in the hearts of believers. Hence, there has been a mass exodus from these churches and also an inner revolt against the clergymen as these sincere Christians seek to experience the realities of the Christian life. Bible Students sympathize with this disenchantment over churchianity. In 2 Timothy 3:1-5, the Apostle Paul listed the perilous conditions in the world that mark the end of the Age. Verse 5 describes the masses of professed Christians today, “*Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof,*” to which Paul adds, “*from such turn away.*”

Actually Bible Students were the first in this exodus from churchianity. At the close of the 19th century they heeded the words of Revelation 18:1-4 and left the worldly churches of Babylon. Congregations of Bible Students continue to form throughout the world.

Each congregation of Bible Students is independent and self-regulating, recognizing only the headship of Jesus Christ and the unstifled working of the holy Spirit in their hearts. As a result they experience the meaningful realities of the Christian life at the end of the Age.

There are hazards in fleeing clerical authority. The Christian's wily foe, Satan, stands ready to divert a good thing. There must be a final authority to which each, standing free in Christ, can turn. This authority cannot be an inner experience only, as it would render us vulnerable to Satan. It is disheartening to find some Christians who place their "charismatic experience" above Scripture. We trust these are the exceptions. Thank God, there is an absolute authority, the Bible, which is to govern and regulate every aspect of the Christian life. (2 Tim. 3:16 and 17; 2:15) Because we are concerned, we raise the following Scriptural points relative to speaking with tongues.

New Testament Criteria for Glossolalia

Glossolalia, a Greek word that simply means tongues-speaking or speaking with tongues, was one of the miraculous gifts (Greek: *charisma*) of the spirit prevalent in the Church during the time of the Apostles. Many feel the holy Spirit is again miraculously bestowing the *charisma* of tongues on Christians. Glossolalia today generally takes the form of ecstatic, unintelligible utterances. The question of whether tongues-speaking as used in the Scriptures was ecstatic utterances or foreign languages will be considered in detail subsequently.

Speaking with tongues in the early Church had limited practical value. Therefore, the Apostle Paul saw the need of laying down certain rules governing the use of this gift of the Spirit in the Church. These rules are found in 1 Corinthians 14.

If contemporary glossolalia is a blessing of the Lord, we would naturally expect it to function in accordance with these rules.

In 1 Corinthians 14:5, 27, 28, tongues-speaking is only edifying in the Church if it is interpreted. *“But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the Church.”* Note from the context that Paul includes both speaking and praying in tongues in this rule.

Yet today, most tongues-speaking is not interpreted as enjoined by Paul.

In 1 Corinthians 14:22. *“Tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not.”*

The tendency of glossolalia Christians today is to impress fellow Christian believers with the need of being “Spirit-filled.” Yet the Apostle said this gift was to be used primarily as a sign to unbelievers. The fact that the current usage of tongues largely ignores these two basic New Testament rules tends to cause this version of glossolalia to be suspect in the minds of many sincere Christians.

How Important is Glossolalia?

It is interesting to note how the New Testament ranks the importance of speaking in tongues. In the 12th chapter of 1 Corinthians the Apostle Paul deals with the diversities of the operations of the holy Spirit. Then he lists the gifts of the Spirit according to their value to the Church. (1 Cor. 12:28). And what do we find at the bottom of the list? Speaking with tongues! Yet our charismatic friends seem to have a different sequence of importance today with glossolalia on or near the top.

1 Corinthians 12:29-30 reveals that not all faithful Christians in the apostles' day were to expect to speak in tongues. Yet today many feel glossolalia is the evidence of a Spirit-filled Christian.

The unwarranted premium placed on glossolalia today is reflected in an article which appeared in the February 28, 1975 issue of *Christianity Today*. The article entitled “A Plea to Some Who Speak in Tongues” was written by a pastor who opened the doors of his church to “both those who speak in tongues and

those who do not.” The following quotation contains some of his disappointments:

“Professing to be filled with the Spirit of humility and holiness, these persons expressed the opposite. The subtle but real spiritual conceit became more apparent until the words ‘Spirit-filled’ came to have a regrettable taint. Other pastors with whom I have talked have had similar experiences. There is often a ‘know-it-all’ attitude among those who speak in tongues that exactly contradicts what they profess in testimony. They definitely give the impression that those who do not speak in tongues have not ‘arrived’ spiritually, do not have the sensitivity to interpret the Scriptures, do not have prayer power that can bring results. These persons are insensitive to the concept of Christian discipline. In many of them, habits of worldliness remain while the tongues-speaking flourishes. They are unteachable. Again the spiritual superiority complex rears its ugly head. The tongues-speakers apparently believe that they know it all.”

It is hoped that the extremes mentioned in this article are only characteristic of a minority. However, the article does reflect the unscriptural importance attached to glossolalia today. Disconcerting comments are heard in charismatic circles, such as: non-charismatic Christians are not to be raptured but left to endure the “seven-year tribulation.” Another example is the following quotation from an address given at the Presbyterian Charismatic Conference by George MacLeod, former moderator of the Church of Scotland and member of the House of Lords.

“Only the charismatic communion in all denominations can hear all that God is saying in this age of the Spirit.”

Again, this may be the view of a minority. Nevertheless, these extremes are symptomatic of the charged atmosphere of partisanship in the Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal movements indicating a consensus that only glossolalic Christians are “Spirit-filled.” The unwillingness by charismatics to accept that speaking in tongues was the lowest operation of the Spirit in the Church (1 Cor. 12:28) and that non-glossolalic Christians can be equally

“Spirit-filled” (1 Cor. 12:30) casts serious doubt on today’s practice as being the result of the holy Spirit.

Miraculous Gifts in the Early Church

In 1 Corinthians, chapters 12-14, Paul uses the term “*spiritual gifts*” in describing the miraculous gifts such as tongues and healing. A revealing statement concerning the purpose of these “*spiritual gifts*” is also made by the Apostle Paul in Romans 1:11, “*That I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established.*” Note the phrase “*ye may be established.*” Remember the New Testament was in the process of being written. Evidently the miraculous gifts of the Spirit were necessary at this critical juncture to establish the faith of the Church until the Bible had been completed. Further, the Church of Christ was a new operation in the plan of God and required more tangible manifestations of its validity. The miraculous gifts provided this confirmatory evidence for the Church at its inception. But the gifts became unnecessary (1 Cor. 13:8) after the Church had been established and the canon of the inspired writings had been completed. The Scriptures, the Apostle declares, are sufficient, “*that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*” 2 Tim. 3:17

A distinction must be made between the spiritual gifts and the gift of the holy Spirit promised to all believers in Acts 2:38. The Greek word for gift in Acts 2:38 is *dorea* not *charisma*. *Dorea* is any gratuity, but *charisma*, when related to the holy Spirit, denotes a miraculous power. Therefore, Acts 2:38 cannot be used to prove that all believers down through the age would receive miraculous gifts.

It is interesting to note how the gifts (Greek—*charisma*) were initiated in the Church and how they were to cease. The gifts were conferred only by the apostles, with two notable exceptions. These two exceptions occurred at the time when both the Jewish and Gentiles believers first received the holy Spirit.

Even though there is but one baptism of the holy Spirit (Acts 1:5), it came upon the Church in two steps—both of which were

indelibly marked by the miraculous manifestation of speaking in tongues. The first was on the Day of Pentecost, ten days after Jesus' ascension. The waiting disciples were baptized with the holy Spirit. How did they or anyone else know this nucleus of the Church received the holy Spirit? This significant event was indelibly marked in history by the phenomenon of tongues which accompanied the receiving of the Spirit. As a result, the Jews from many foreign lands, gathered at Jerusalem for the holy days, heard the Gospel preached in their own language or tongue. Acts 2:1-11

The second step in the baptism of the holy Spirit occurred three and a half years later. It was the historic event of the first gentile, Cornelius, and his household coming into the Church. This notable event was also stamped indelibly for history with the miraculous gift of speaking in tongues. (Acts 10:44-47) Acts 11:15 confirms that the Day of Pentecost outpouring of the holy Spirit, accompanied by tongues, only occurred again at the conversion of Cornelius and his family. Acts 1:5 and Acts 11:16-17 are the only Scriptures that mention the baptism of the holy Spirit. They limit this baptism to the Day of Pentecost and the conversion of Cornelius. All other scriptural accounts of gifts reveal that they came not as a baptism from the Lord but rather they could only be conveyed through the Apostles. (Gal. 3:5; Acts 4:19-21, 29-31; Acts 19:1- 6) This is further confirmed by Rom. 1:11. When Paul wrote his letter to the Romans none of the apostles had visited Rome. From Rom. 1:11 we find that the Church at Rome had not yet received spiritual gifts. This was one of the reasons Paul desired to visit them—thus confirming that gifts could not come by prayer alone, but only through the ministry of the apostles.

Simon Magus, though given a miraculous gift by the Apostle Peter, was reprimanded for trying to buy this apostolic power of conferring gifts. Acts 8:17-23

When did the exercising of these gifts cease? They ceased when the twelve apostles died (who alone could convey the gifts) and, then, those to whom they had imparted the gifts died.

CHAPTER TWO



Tongues Shall Cease

1 Corinthians 13:8 contrasts tongues and other gifts with love, and states tongues shall cease but love will never fail. Our charismatic friends say, Yes tongues will cease, when the Church is caught up with Christ. But notice verse 13, *“And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three, but the greatest of these is love.”* Regardless of how we interpret verses 9-12, verse 13 tells us that faith, hope and love abide after something ceases. And the only items that cease in Paul’s presentation are the tongues and gifts of verse 8. After tongues and the other gifts of verse 8 cease, then faith, hope and love abide or continue on. There is a time that faith and hope will exist after tongues and the other gifts cease. How long will faith and hope last? Until the Church is united with Christ in the first resurrection. Then there will be no need. Faith and hope will end in the reality of our being with Christ. Therefore tongues must cease sometime before the Church’s history on earth ends.

1 Corinthians 13 is crucial to our subject and warrants a more detailed consideration. In 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 Paul shows that the exercising of any gift or service for God is worthless unless it is prompted by love. Then in verses 4-8 he lists all the beautiful qualities of love. In verse 8 Paul lists the last quality of love, *“love never faileth,”* and uses it to show the transitoriness of the gifts by contrast.

Verse 8 reads: *“Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.”* Paul is referring back to the miraculous gifts of prophecy, tongues, and knowledge in 1 Corinthians 12, and reveals they are only temporary.

Verses 9 and 10—“*For we know in part, and we prophecy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.*” Some Pentecostals apply this phrase “*when that which is perfect is come*” to the return of Jesus to take his Church. But note these two points.

(1) The Greek word for “*that*” is definitely an impersonal pronoun which cannot apply to a personality.

(2) The whole construction of this verse in the Greek defines a growth from the partial or incomplete to perfection or completion and not the return or coming of something which is already perfect. The Greek word here translated “*perfect*” is often translated “*complete*” elsewhere in the New Testament. Our perfection at our resurrection change is referred to by the phrase, “*when that which is perfect is come.*” Even the miraculous gifts of knowledge and prophecy in this life are but partial or incomplete compared to the complete or perfect knowledge and vision of eternity that will be ours when we are joined with Christ.

Verses 9 and 10 show a contrast between this life and eternity. Then in verses 11 and 12, Paul makes a contrast between childhood and maturity in the Church of his day and designated tongues as the mark of childhood.

Verse 11—“*When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.*” Here we may conclude that Paul associates tongues with the childhood stage in the Church. This is confirmed by a parallel statement of Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:19 and 20 where Paul refers to those who speak in the Church in tongues, without interpretation, as children in their thinking. And even though the Church was to pass out of its childhood stage of gifts, maturity now is only a glimpse of the perfection to be had at our resurrection change.

Verse 12—“*For now [even in maturity] we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.*”

Verse 13—“*And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*” After the childhood stage of tongues and other miraculous gifts cease, the developmental qualities of the spirit, faith, hope and love, will sustain the Church until her

resurrection change at the end of the age. These qualities are of a more enduring nature, thereby enabling the Church to withstand the trials and besetments of the age.

Note again that the faith, hope and love of verse 13 endures after something ceases. And the only thing that ceases in 1 Corinthians 13 are tongues and the other gifts as mentioned in verse 8. Therefore, there is a period in which faith and hope will continue after tongues and the other gifts cease.

Some apply verses 9-12 of 1 Corinthians 13 to the completion of the Bible. The thought expressed is that the Church knew in part and prophesied in part (verse 9) until that which is perfect is come; that is, that the Bible is finally complete (verse 10). Then the childhood stage of gifts is over (verse 11). But even having the Bible complete is a partial knowledge compared with the resurrection change (verse 12).

Whatever the merits of this application of 1 Corinthians 13:9-13 this much is certain, gifts are mentioned in the book of Acts and 1 Corinthians. Traces of the gifts are found in the earlier epistles to the Romans, the Galatians, the Ephesians. However, there is no mention of them in the later epistles of 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, 1 and 2 Peter and John's epistles. This is significant. The New Testament writings are being circulated. Doctrinal truths, the abiding graces of faith, hope and love, are what the apostles exhort the Church to rest on rather than the exceptional gifts. The tongues as foretold in 1 Corinthians 13:8 were already in the process of ceasing in the apostles' day, no longer being necessary to help establish the early church.

CHAPTER THREE



Foreign Languages or Ecstatic Utterances?

Most glossolalists agree that the tongue-speaking recorded in Acts 2:6-11 refers to speaking in foreign languages as verses 8-11 clearly state. When the disciples received the holy Spirit at Pentecost, they spoke in foreign tongues. What was the result? Jews, gathered in Jerusalem from many lands, heard the Gospel in their own languages. Tongues-speaking today is not in foreign languages. Rather, it takes the form of ecstatic unintelligible utterances. It is claimed that the speaking in tongues discussed in chapters 12-14 of 1 Corinthians refers not to the foreign languages of Acts 2:6-11, but to ecstatic utterances.

Babel Reversed

Unintelligible ecstatic utterances miss the basic Scriptural logic for the gift of tongues. Tongues-speaking in foreign languages was Babel reversed. Genesis 11:1-9 reveals that as the human race was repopulating after the Noachian flood, they still spoke one language. Instead of migrating throughout the earth, mankind, alienated from God, concentrated together to build the city of Babel with its tower to reach unto heaven. What a monument this would be to man's united ability. But from God's perspective it was a monument of sinful man's unity to perform every evil imagination. (Gen. 11:5; Rom. 1:21) For their own eternal welfare it was better that they be scattered abroad to minimize the leavening effect of sin upon each other. To accomplish this, God

“confound[ed] their [one] language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.” (Gen.11:7) This was the beginning of diversified languages. Becoming foreigners to each other resulted in their migrating throughout the earth. It was detrimental for man to dwell together in his sinful condition.

The picture changed when Jesus died to redeem sinful man. This good news (the word “Gospel” means “good news”) was now ready to be proclaimed to all the world. But there was a language barrier. God by the gift of tongues bridged the language barrier invoked at Babel. Now this message of reconciliation could be proclaimed to all nations. Faithful Christians evangelized the Roman World by means of the gift of tongues, the ability to speak in foreign languages, until there was a sufficient number of Christians to conduct this witness by less miraculous operations of the holy Spirit. This whole scriptural logic of Babel, and Babel bridged for the proclamation of the Gospel, is lost if tongues-speaking is unintelligible syllables.

If the gift of tongues today is ecstatic utterances, what a waste. For, as Harold Lindsell observed in a *Christianity Today* article, “there is no known case in which a missionary received the gift of speaking the language of the group he sought to reach. Missionaries have always had to learn to speak the required languages the hard way.” It would seem logical that the gift of tongues in Acts 2:6-11 and 1 Corinthians 12-14 were the same. However, we are not left to human reasoning in this matter. 1 Corinthians 14:21 provides a proof that tongues as used in 1 Corinthians 14 means foreign languages as in Acts 2:6-11. Indeed, 1 Corinthians 14:21 refers to an Old Testament prophecy on tongues-speaking that was fulfilled in Acts 2:6-11. In connection with saying in 1 Corinthians 14:22 that *“tongues are a sign not to them that believe but to them that believe not,”* Paul says in verse 21, *“In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak to this people; and yet for all that they will not hear me, saith the Lord.”* From where in the Law or Old Testament was Paul quoting? Paul was quoting from Isaiah 28:11 (RSV). It reads, *“By men of strange lips and with an alien tongue the Lord will speak to this people . . . yet they would not hear.”* When were the Jews to be spoken to in an alien or foreign tongue? Isaiah 28:14 states, *“Therefore hear the word of the Lord ye*

scornful men that rule this people which is in Jerusalem.” The day of Pentecost in Acts 2:6-11 is the only Scripturally recorded time that unbelieving Jews in Jerusalem heard the Gospel preached in foreign languages. Thus, 1 Corinthians 14:21 and Acts 2:6-11 both refer to the same incident. Both use “*tongues*” to denote foreign languages. Therefore tongues, as used in 1 Corinthians, chapters 12-14, are a reference to foreign languages and not ecstatic utterances.

As is so often the case in problems of Scriptural interpretation, the Lord provides the key of interpretation within the Scriptural context. Isaiah 28:11 and 14, Acts 2:6-11 and 1 Corinthians 14:21 all refer to the same event and provide the Scriptural proof that the gift of tongues in the early Church was exclusively foreign languages. Further, the Apostle Paul uses 1 Corinthians 14:21-22 to prove that tongues are a sign for unbelievers because tongues, as quoted from Isaiah 28:11 and 14, was to be a great sign to unbelieving Israel. How effective a sign was it? Three thousand unbelieving Jews accepted Christ as a result. Indeed, tongues were Scripturally intended to be a sign, not to believers but to unbelievers. And yet our charismatic friends use tongues as a sign among Christians to denote a “Spirit-filled Christian.”

The Abuse of Tongues at Corinth

It is helpful to understand why Paul had to go into this matter on tongues in 1 Corinthians 14. Corinth was the commercial center of Greece. Much of the commerce between Rome and the East passed through its harbors. Consequently it was a city of many different nationalities. The gift of tongues (foreign languages) was prevalent among the brethren of Corinth to assist them in witnessing the Gospel to so many diverse nationalities. 1 Corinthians 14:19-20 reveals that the brethren at Corinth abused the gift. They were childish in the use of tongues. Like little children with a new toy, they wanted to show off. At their Church Services they exhorted in tongues (verse 23) and they prayed in tongues (verses 14-16) without any interpretation. This edified none (verse 5). Hence Paul’s reprimand, “*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. Brethren, be not children . . .” (1 Cor. 14:19-20) Note the phrase “*that by my voice I might teach others ALSO.*” This implies that when he spoke in an understanding language he taught himself and “*others also.*” Conversely, if he spoke in tongues (foreign languages) he just taught himself. The thought is that even when speaking in tongues, he comprehended what he was saying. This, of course, is not the case with the ecstatic utterances of today where the tongues-speaker does not comprehend what he is saying.

1 Corinthians 14:9-11 provides another proof that Paul is speaking of foreign languages and not ecstatic utterances. In dealing with the problem of tongues, Paul said, “*except ye utter by the tongue words [rational sounds] easy to be understood [a common language], how shall it be known what is spoken? For ye shall speak into the air [in vain]. There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices [articulate speech] in the world, [notice Paul is not talking about so called ‘heavenly languages’ but voices in the world] and none of them is without signification [each national language has its distinct meaning]. Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian [foreigner] and he that speaketh will be a barbarian unto me.*” The Greek word means “foreigner,” not barbarian. Paul is clearly saying that an unknown voice or tongue would sound like a foreign language. Notice the RSV of 1 Corinthians 14:11, “*But if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me.*” The logic of 1 Corinthians 14:9-11 is only meaningful if tongues are foreign languages and not ecstatic utterances.

Tongues-Speakers Comprehend

Contemporary glossolalists do not comprehend their own ecstatic utterances. However, those that possessed the gift of tongues at Corinth did understand what they said as is shown in 1 Corinthians 14:5, “*for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he [the speaker] interpret, that the church may receive edifying.*” In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul deals with the abuse of the gift of tongues; and here, at the beginning of

the chapter, he lays the ground rule for speaking in tongues. It is the tongues-speaker who should interpret and not someone else. Nor is this the rare exception of one person having both the gift of tongues and interpretation. Paul is here setting the basic rule, that those who spoke in tongues in the apostles' day understood what they were saying and should interpret it into the common language of the Church. Some were so proud of their gift that they spoke in tongues and didn't explain. But Paul says, translate yourself.

Verse 27 and 28 expand on the ground rule of verse 5. *“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. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.”* (1 Cor. 14:27- 28) It is in this last sense Paul says, *“He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself.”*

Notice only one was to speak in tongues at a time. This is a little different than what you hear in some charismatic circles today. Also, *“let one interpret”*—either the speaker or someone else. *“But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence.”* This proves the tongues-speaker knew beforehand what language he would speak and whether or not there was an interpreter of that language present.

This raises a question. If, according to verse 5, the tongues-speaker interprets himself, how would you have a situation as stated in verses 27 and 28, where neither the speaker nor anyone else were able to interpret. Remember, Corinth was a center of many nationalities and this situation could easily arise. It is not unusual for one to understand a new language and not speak it. Greek was the common language in the church at Corinth. Say there was an Italian Christian in the church at Corinth and he had the gift of tongues. He could understand Greek but not speak it. He would be able to translate that tongue (foreign language) into his mother tongue, Italian. However, that would be meaningless to the church. Unless someone could translate his gift of tongues into Greek, he should keep silent.

1 Corinthians 14:14-17 shows that the person who is praying and singing in an unknown tongue can and should interpret it into words of understanding. *“For if I pray in an unknown*

tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.”

Notice the phrase “*my spirit*” in verse 14 in which Paul observes if he prayed in an unknown tongue, it was “*my spirit*”—not the holy Spirit mechanically taking over. It was his gift of the Spirit by which he prayed intelligently in a foreign language. But this would create a problem. His understanding of what he was praying would not be fruitful to others, since they would not understand the foreign language. Therefore, what would he do? He would pray and sing with the gift of the Spirit, but he would also interpret it so that others could understand and be edified. This again confirms that the tongues-speaker comprehended what he was saying and that even prayers uttered in tongues were to be interpreted for the benefit of others present.

This consideration of tongues in 1 Corinthians 14 reveals three basic points concerning tongues in the apostles’ day.

1. Tongues were foreign languages.
2. The tongues-speaker understood what he said.
3. All utterances by the gift of tongues in the congregation, including prayers, were to be interpreted.

CHAPTER FOUR



Glossolalia Today

If the gift of tongues was not ecstatic utterances and if the gift of tongues ceased shortly after the death of the Apostles, then how do we account for the phenomenon of tongues in the form of ecstatic utterances today? It is interesting to note that glossolalia is not a phenomenon confined to Christianity. Pagan religions throughout the world are frenzied with tongues. This is reflected in an article in the *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* entitled “An Ethnological Study of Glossolalia” by George J. Jennings, March 1968. Jennings observes that glossolalia is practiced among the following non-Christian religions of the world; the Peyote cult among the North American Indians, the Haida Indians of the Pacific Northwest, Shamans in the Sudan, the Shango cult of the West Coast of Africa, the Shago cult in Trinidad, the Voodoo cult in Haiti, the Aborigines of South America and Australia, the aboriginal peoples of the subarctic regions of North America and Asia, the Shamans in Greenland, the Dyaks of Borneo, the Zor cult of Ethiopia, the Siberian shamans, the Chaco Indians of South America, the Curanderos of the Andes, the Kinka in the African Sudan, the Thonga shamans of Africa, and the Tibetan monks. Certainly we wouldn’t attribute Glossolalia in these heathen religions to the work of the holy Spirit.

Behavioral scientists have conducted extensive research on glossolalia and for the most part concur that supernatural forces are not necessary to explain its existence. This is shown in an article entitled “Behavioral Science Research on the Nature of Glossolalia”

which appears in the September, 1968, issue of the *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation*. This article is perhaps one of the most comprehensive scientific discussions on glossolalia and some of its conclusions are briefly quoted as follows:

“VI. Summary of Behavioral Science Research Data on Glossolalia

1. Glossolalia is an ancient and widespread phenomenon of most societies, occurring most usually in connection with religion.
2. Glossolalia may occur as part of a larger condition of hysterical, dissociative, or trance states, or it may occur completely alone.
3. Glossolalia is not necessarily related to specific personality types.
4. Glossolalia may be deviant behavior due to abnormality of the mind, or it may be normal expected behavior, depending on the social and cultural environment.
5. Glossolalia is a form of partially developed speech in which the thought-speech apparatus of the person is used for a variety of internal mental functions.
6. Glossolalia may be a form of healthy regression in the service of the ego, leading to more creative modes of life.

“VII. Possible Theological Implications

In my discussion in this paper, there is a wealth of reasonable information which gives us an outline of the mental, social, and cultural contexts within which glossolalia can be, and is, produced. Thus we need not invoke either divine or devilish supernatural forces to explain or justify the existence and function of glossolalia.

However, the fact that we have a reasonable scientific framework for explaining and understanding this behavior does not necessarily undercut its importance or value to either an individual or a religious group. Glossolalia can

be useful and valuable as a media of spiritual exercise for an adherent.

Perhaps the most important distinction that should be made is between cause and consequence. Glossolalia is not “caused” by supernatural forces. However, glossolalia may be a “consequence” of involvement in deep and meaningful spiritual worship. Glossolalia does not miraculously change people in a supernatural sense, but participating in glossolalia as a part of a larger social and personal commitment may play an important role in the change of direction in participants’ lives.

“VIII. Summary

Glossolalia is an unusual pattern of aberrant speech. Our view of the current research data provides a new source of information for examining the phenomena of glossolalia. It is a notification of the conscious connection between inner speech and outer speech. The meaning and function of glossolalia is closely tied to its social and cultural context. The historic theological debates concerning glossolalia centered on whether it was of divine or devilish origin. Such debate is irrelevant. Glossolalia, as such, is not a spiritual phenomena, but it may be a result of deep and meaningful spiritual exercise.”

Whether we agree with these conclusions or not, the research referred to in the article reveals that glossolalia today is actually abbreviations of known languages. Note the following quotations:

“5A. Structural Linguistics of Glossolalia

A number of studies on American English-speaking glossolalists have recently been done. These reports vary somewhat in the specific technical conclusions, but in general there is consistency in the conclusions. The differences seem to be due to the fact that glossolalic speech

has different degrees of organization. Some glossolalia is very poorly organized and consists of little more than grunts and barely-formed sounds, while other glossolalia is highly organized into a systematic series of vowels and consonants. Several language studies, including our own, suggest that glossolalists develop their speech from ill-formed structure to 'practiced' and 'polished' glossolalic speech. Thus the quality of glossolalia depends to some extent on the stage of development of glossolalia.

The following seem to be reasonable conclusions from these studies. Glossolalia, in English-speaking subjects, is composed of the basic speech elements of English. The major difference consists of a lack of organization of the basic vowels and consonants into the elements necessary for intelligible speech. The elements of speech such as pauses, breaths, intonations, etc., are greatly reduced or changed. Thus glossolalic speech tends to resemble the early speech qualities of young children before they organize all the various parts of the adult language. Further, there is a reduced number of vowels and consonants used. The conclusions of the linguists is that glossolalia has the characteristics of partially formed language, while lacking certain requirements of true language.

Indeed, many of the qualities of glossolalic speech are those found in the speech of young children. A comparison of Devereaux's outline of children's speech and glossolalic speech is striking. On this basis, one may suggest that glossolalic speech appears to be a return to an early way of speaking, in which speaking and sound are used for purposes other than just the communication of thought. This idea gets further support from other data to be cited.

Another line of investigation has focused on the duplication of glossolalia under experimental rather than religious conditions. Al Carlson, at the University of California, recorded two types of glossolalia. One type was recorded by volunteers who were asked to spontaneously speak in unknown language without having ever heard

glossolalia. These speech samples were then rated and the two types of glossolalia could not be distinguished from each other. In fact, the 'contrived' received better ratings as 'good glossolalia' than did the actual glossolalia. Werner Cohn, at the University of British Columbia, took naïve students to Pentecostal churches to hear glossolalia and then asked the students to speak in glossolalia in the laboratory. They were able to successfully do so. Their recordings were then played to glossolalists who described the glossolalia as beautiful examples.

In sum, the data suggest: that glossolalia has a specific language structure based on the language tongue of the speaker; that the linguistic organization is limited; and that the capacity to speak in this type of semi-organized language can be duplicated under experimental conditions. Thus, glossolalia does not appear to be a 'strange language,' but rather the aborted or incomplete formation of familiar language."

This research clearly undercuts the claims of glossolalists that they speak a "heavenly language." In reality they are speaking abbreviations of their national language.

Another interesting article appeared in the *New York Times*, January 21, 1974:

"John P. Kildahl, a clinical psychologist and professor at New York Theological Seminary, said here today that the Pentecostal practice of speaking in tongues constituted 'learned behavior.'

Dr. Kildahl, an ordained Lutheran clergyman and former chief psychologist at the Lutheran Medical Center in Brooklyn, recently published a study of glossolalia undertaken with a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health.

In his address, he said that on the basis of his research and extensive correspondence with charismatic

Christians it appeared that five elements were normally present when someone began speaking in tongues. These are a 'magnetic' relationship with a group leader, a sense of personal distress, an 'intense emotional atmosphere,' a supporting group, and the prior learning of a rationale of its religious significance. In the case of people who begin to speak in tongues when they are alone, he said 'these five conditions have been present in the days or weeks preceding the initial experience.' ”

Kildahl, in his book *The Psychology of Speaking in Tongues*, further explains how glossolalia is initiated:

“How the Experience is Initiated

Typically after an ordinary evening church service, interested members of the congregation are invited to remain in church in order to discuss the gift of tongues. The leader encourages the people to 'receive' this ability going from one another laying his hands on each person's head. 'Say after me what I say, and then go on speaking in the tongue that the Lord will give you.' One might utter a few syllables, speak for two or three minutes, or ten, or for several days and while at home. 'It was the best I ever felt in all my thirty-one years.'

Once possessed of this ability, a person retains it and can speak with fluency whenever he chooses. It does not matter whether he is alone or in a group of fellow glossolalists. He can speak in tongues while driving a car or swimming. He can do it silently in the midst of a party, or aloud before a large audience. The experience brings peace and joy and inner harmony. Glossolalists view it as an answer to prayer, an assurance of divine love and acceptance. It is referred to as a 'direct and personal encounter with the holy Spirit.' ”

How do we explain tongues today? As has been noted, tongues-speaking is also practiced in many heathen religions throughout the world today. Certainly this is not the work of the holy Spirit. Perhaps behavioral scientists are correct in saying that much of tongues-speaking has a natural explanation. However, this much is observable—when a person has experienced tongues, he is absolutely convinced as to the scripturalness of his experience and the correctness of his doctrinal beliefs. Hence the traditional Pentecostal insists on the correctness of the “second blessing.” The theologically liberal Protestant who speaks in tongues feels that his doubt in the inspiration of the Bible is vindicated. Catholic Pentecostals testify that the charismatic experience has deepened their devotion to Mary. A glossolalic experience convinces Mormons that their brand of Christianity is right, etc. Thus, while tongues may not be directly caused by Satan, yet it can be used by him as an effective means of sidetracking sincere Christians. The following scriptures reveal that one of the signs of the end of the world or age would be the working of phenomenal deceptions of Satan in the Church. *“And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”* Matt. 24:2 and 24

“Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.” 2 Thes. 2:9-11

Satan’s involvement in the charismatic wonders cannot be ruled out as part of the deceptive wonders at the end of the age.

CHAPTER FIVE



The Spirit-Filled Christian

We are happy to see our charismatic friends separating from the spirit of nominalism in the churches. However, it is disheartening to see their preoccupation with the seeming miraculous robbing them of “*beholding the glory of the Lord*” “*with unveiled face*” which comes by the study of and articulation in the “*Word of God.*”

In connection with the creation of the earth, Genesis 1:2 says that “. . . *the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*” The operation of the holy Spirit in the creation, though powerful, was a mechanical function; whereas, the operation of the holy Spirit in the Christian is not mechanical. Romans 8:11 says, “*But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Jesus from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*” The work of the holy Spirit in our bodies is powerful because it is far more than mechanical. It must contend with our free will. In 2 Corinthians 10:4 and 5 the Apostle describes one aspect of this work. “*For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.*” Also in Galatians 5:16-17 we read, “*Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other.*” The real power of the Spirit is not shown by its taking over a Christian and mechanically causing the speech organs to

utter sounds that are unintelligible even to the speaker. Greater power is shown in the Spirit's ability to appeal to our free will daily and hourly to fully surrender self, self-will, pride, selfish ambition, wrath, strife, selfishness, uncleanness, envy, jealousy, etc. In their place the Spirit works jointly with our wills to develop in us *"the fruit of the Spirit which is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, faith, meekness, temperance."* Gal. 5:22-23

A Spirit-filled Christian doesn't continually exuberate emotional joy. But he will possess the inner joy which is a fruit of the Spirit, though it might at times be alloyed with pain and sorrow. As the Apostle Peter so well stated in 1 Peter 1:6-7, *"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptation: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried by fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."* Jesus, our example, had this inner joy (Hebrews 12:2-3) yet he was called *"a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."* (Isa. 53:3) It is questionable how comfortable this "man of sorrows" would feel in some emotionally pitched charismatic services.

A Spirit-filled Christian is little interested in prayers for miraculous deliverance from pain, sickness, trial, sorrow, persecution. He has grown to realize that the Lord's way generally is not the removal, but strength to bear or endure the experience. As the Apostle Paul observes in 1 Corinthians 10:13, *"There hath no trial taken you but such as is common to man but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tried above that ye are able; but will with the trial also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."* Note well the phrase, *"God will not suffer you to be tried above that ye are able."* Generally it is the immature Christian that needs miraculous deliverance, for he is not able to endure the experience. Whereas, the mature Christian needs only the help of the Lord and he is willing to endure or bear the experience because of the insights of the Spirit he will glean from it. Remember the Lord's answer to Paul's thrice-uttered prayer for the removal of his physical affliction, *"My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."*

Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecution, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." (2 Cor. 12:7-10) Notice it is in infirmity and not in the removal of infirmities that the Christian experiences the real power of Christ. It is in weakness that the Christian, through the Spirit's working power, becomes strong. Were the sky always without a cloud and the ocean without a ripple, the believer would not know so well the God with whom he has to do. As one mature Christian expressed it: "It is when the clouds are the darkest and the tempest the highest that the Lord's presence is most keenly felt through a realization of his tender, personal love. His grace to sustain and his presence to cheer amid life's deepest afflictions becomes memory's most hallowed resting places."

The Spirit-filled Christian is humbly concerned for his brethren. Many Christians lament that their charismatic friends sound like little children with new toys at Christmastime. How they glory and boast in their mechanical wonders. But what did the Apostle Paul glory in? "*If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.*" (2 Cor. 11:30) Paul lists the infirmities he gloried in. "*Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.*" (2 Cor. 11:24-27) Why did Paul glory in infirmity? He gives us the answer in verse 29, "*Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?*" Paul gloried in infirmity because his infirmities enabled him by the Spirit's working to sympathize with his brethren in infirmity. The ripest saints, in whom we find the deepest sympathy, the most patient forbearance, and the most tender helpfulness and consideration, are those who have been through the fires of affliction and have been rightly exercised thereby.

What is a Spirit-filled Christian? The apostles before Pentecost possessed the mechanical operation of the Spirit whereby they

could perform miracles of healing, etc. (Matt. 10:1-8) But certainly they were not then Spirit-filled. It was only after years of growth following Pentecost that the apostles could write the following Spirit-filled observations:

“And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us, God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.” (1 John 4:16-17) The Apostle John was not perfect or complete when he received the holy Spirit. But over a period of time his love was made complete or perfect.

“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.” 2 Pet. 1:5-9

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the holy Spirit which is given unto us.” (Rom. 5:1-5) Notice it is a period of time after we receive Christ (verse 1) that we have the necessary experiences to be filled with the Spirit. It should be readily apparent that the “*fruit of the Spirit*” (the growth of Christian graces) are of greater value than the instantly imparted “*gifts of the Spirit.*”

CHAPTER SIX

Christ's Kingdom

One idea is clear throughout the Bible: God has not been attempting to convert the whole world since the resurrection of Jesus. The Scriptures speak of God dealing with only a few for a specific purpose since Jesus' death. Christ's followers are spoken of as a little flock. *"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's pleasure to give you the kingdom."* (Luke 12:32) God is only calling a few; a representative of every type of the human race is being called into the church of Christ. These will share with Christ when he establishes his kingdom for the blessing of all. Paul says, *"Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?"* — mankind. (1 Cor. 6:2) The Revelator discloses that the followers of Jesus will live and reign with him during his kingdom. During that time the benefits of Jesus' death will be bestowed upon the world of mankind. Rev. 20:4

Jesus' words in Mark 4:11-12 show that God is not presently interested in converting the majority of mankind. *"Unto you it is given to know the mystery [secret] of the kingdom of God; but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them."* This scripture might seem strange to some, but it gives us an insight into what God has been doing between the death of Jesus and his return to set up his kingdom upon the earth. Have you ever wondered why the Bible is difficult to understand? By divine intent it has been written in parables, dark sayings, symbols, so that it would not be easily

understood. Why? So that the majority would not bother and consequently would not be converted. During the Christian Age, the Lord is only converting a few, a *“little flock,” “who by patient continuance in well doing seek for, glory, honor, and immortality.”* (Rom. 2:7) These are elsewhere symbolically referred to as the bride of Christ. After Christ returns, this class of believers will be united with him and then the conversion of the world will begin. Revelation 22:17 prophesied of that time: *“And the Spirit and the bride [the church class] say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”*

This sequence of the call of the church, the establishment of the kingdom, then the blessing of the remainder of mankind is also corroborated by Acts 15:14-17. *“God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name [the church class]. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, after this I will return and will build the tabernacle of David which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue [remainder] of men might seek after the Lord. . .”*

Note these points: First a small group, *“a people for His name”* are selected. Then the tabernacle of David, which was an Old Testament type or illustration of the Kingdom of Christ, is set up again. The restoration of the nation of Israel in Palestine is an indication that the Kingdom will soon be fully set up. Why is the church first called? Why is the kingdom (tabernacle of David) then set up? *“That the residue [all that remain] of men might seek after the Lord.”*

It is said of Jesus that he *“gave Himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time.”* (1 Tim. 2:6) The *“due time”* for the church class to learn of the ransom is now during the Christian Age, but the *“due time”* for the rest of mankind to understand the ransom is yet future.

Since the vast majority of the human race went down into their graves without hearing or understanding the *“ransom for all,”* the kingdom will require the raising of the dead. And this is just what Jesus tells us in John 5:28. *“Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in the which ALL that are in their graves shall*

hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good to a resurrection of life and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment.” RSV

Note again the same pattern of sequence we have seen in other Scriptures. All will be raised from the dead. First *“they that have done good.”* This refers to the church class. During Christ’s return they will be raised to spiritual life and united with their heavenly Lord. Then will follow the resurrection of the evil class, all the remainder of men.

They will come forth to a *“resurrection of judgment.”* The King James Bible, translated in A. D. 1611, during the “Dark Ages,” grossly mistranslated the word “judgment” with “damnation.” The *American Revised Version* in 1881 used the word “judgment” and no translation since has used the word “damnation.” The Greek word in the text is *krisis* and it actually denotes a crucial testing time. This Greek word is the source of our English word “crisis.” It has the same meaning. A doctor might say “the patient will reach his crisis tomorrow morning.” This does not mean that the patient will die tomorrow morning. Rather the crisis of an illness is that period when the patient will take a turn for better or worse.

The crisis or trial for the church is in this present life, but the crisis or trial time of the remainder of mankind will be at the resurrection in the kingdom.

Billions of mankind before and after Jesus’ earthly ministry died without receiving the light of Jesus. Yet John 1:9 states that Jesus is the light that *“lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”* This truth enlightenment will require an awakening from the dead for most of humanity.

Why is the church class first selected to share with Christ in the kingdom work of blessing mankind? There are a number of reasons given in the scriptures. One can be illustrated by the noble work of Alcoholics Anonymous. An essential step of AA therapy is to assign a former alcoholic to each alcoholic that comes for help. The victim being driven by alcohol will not often accept help, sympathy, or advice from anyone. How can they know his agony, his depression, his desperation, if they have not experienced it? But the alcoholic will accept help from a former alcoholic oftentimes because he knows this person can understand the agony he is

going through. This former alcoholic stands ready at anytime to come to his side with assistance. It requires an experienced person to help an alcoholic.

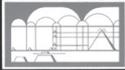
When mankind comes forth from the grave in Christ's Kingdom, they will be informed of their redemption and be made aware that they are now under the reign of Jesus Christ and his church. (1 Cor. 6:2) The church will know just how to enter into their problems! Why? Because they also were once sinners. The majority will gladly receive the instruction, the disciplining, the nurturing necessary to pass their trial for eternal life. And the restored world will gladly accept the invitation "*to take the water of life freely.*" Revelation 22:17



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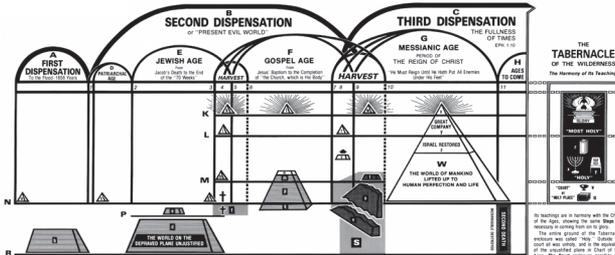


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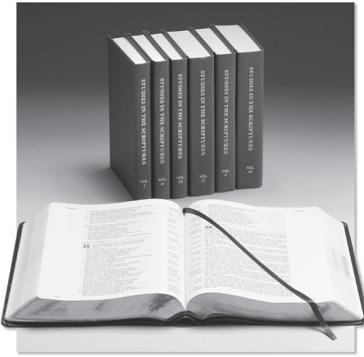
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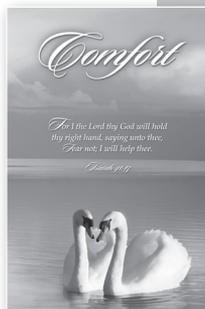
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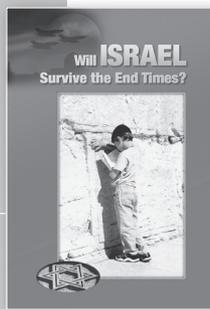
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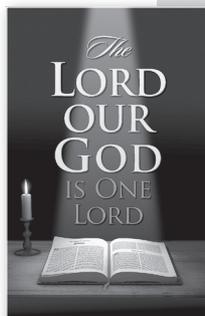
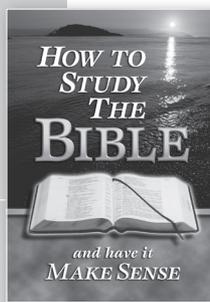
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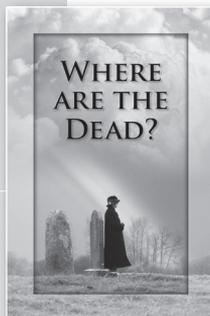
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