

Not All Receive The Gift Of 'All Kinds Of Tongues'



Foundations (Day 150)
by Derek Prince

Yesterday we've read what Paul wrote to the Corinthians about the gift of the Spirit 'all kinds of tongues'. Exactly the same expression is used by Paul still earlier in the same chapter when he enumerates nine gifts or manifestations of the Holy Spirit which may be granted to believers who have been baptised in the Holy Spirit. The list is as follows:

> "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all of these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills." (1 Cor. 12:7-11)

Paul is speaking about gifts of the Spirit which may be exercised by believers subsequent to their receiving the baptism in the Spirit. This is confirmed by what he says in verse 13: "For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body."

Or, more literally, "For in one Spirit we were all baptised into one body." Paul here speaks of the baptism in the Spirit as an experience that has already been received by those to whom he writes. The nine gifts or manifestations of the Spirit which he lists may then be exercised by believers subsequent to, and as a result of their having been baptised in the Holy Spirit.

Paul indicates that though the baptism in the Holy Spirit is for all believers – "in one Spirit we were all baptised into one body" – thereafter the various gifts of the Spirit are divided up among the believers according to the sovereign will of the Spirit Himself. One believer may receive one gift and another believer may receive another gift. Not all believers receive all

the gifts.

Among the nine gifts of the Spirit listed by Paul, the eighth is "different kinds of tongues." The phrase in the original Greek – "kinds of tongues" – is exactly the same as that translated "varieties of tongues" in 1 Corinthians 12:28. In each case Paul is speaking about a specific spiritual gift, not about the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

It is outside the scope of this book to examine the operation of this particular gift[1]. It is sufficient to have established the fact that in 1 Corinthians 12:28, as in verse 10 of the same chapter, Paul is not talking about being baptised in the Holy Spirit but about one of the nine spiritual gifts exercised by some believers (but not by all) following the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

When Paul says, "Do all speak with tongues?" the question he has in mind is not: "Have all at one time spoken in tongues?" – that is, when they were initially baptised in the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:30). On the contrary, he is asking: "Do all believers who have been baptised in the Holy Spirit regularly exercise the gift of 'kinds of tongues'?" To this question the answer – both then and now – is a definite no. In this respect, the experience of modern believers after being baptised in the Spirit is in full accord with the pattern established in the New Testament.

This distinction between the initial gift of the Holy Spirit, attested by the evidence of speaking in tongues, and the subsequent gift of "kinds of tongues" is very carefully preserved by the linguistic usage of the New Testament. The Greek word used for "gift" when it denotes the gift of the Holy Spirit received at the baptism in the Spirit is dorea. The Greek word for "gift" when it denotes any of the nine different gifts or manifestations of the Spirit (including the gift of "kinds of tongues") is charisma. These two words are never interchanged in the New Testament. Charisma is never used to denote the gift of the Holy Spirit received at the baptism in the Spirit. Conversely, dorea is never used to denote any of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit manifested in the lives of the believers who have received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The language, teaching and examples of the New Testament all indicate a clear distinction between these two aspects of spiritual experience.

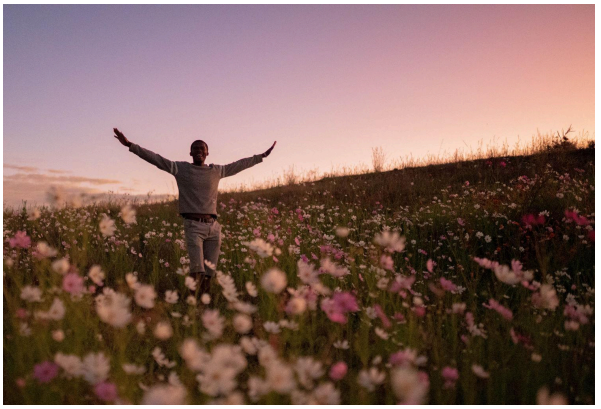
[1] For further teaching on the subject of the gifts of the Spirit, see Derek Prince's book The Gifts of the Spirit.

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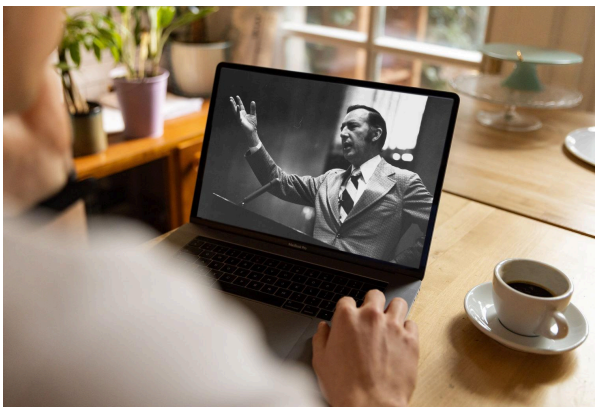
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