



Diakrisis (Australia)

'But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern [diakrisis] both good and evil', (Heb.5:14)

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**** Gospel Conference ****

We want to give plenty of notice for a conference being planned in Sydney. God willing the conference will be in October, a date (Saturday) to be set.

Many vital aspects of the Gospel will be outlined, including exposure of the new modern gospels and why we are in danger of losing the true Gospel. More in the next edition of this newsletter.

Editor's Comment

The quest for more... One of the things that has always concerned this author is the extra-biblical in preaching, teaching, in writings and in thinking, *concerning the giving of God's revelation to man*. It used to be orthodox, historical and biblical that God's revelation to man was *closed* and *final* in the *written scriptures*.

The practise of finding extra biblical revelation is now in so many forms and on so many fronts. Many are *subtly* eroding the written scriptures as *all sufficient*.

Allegorism finds second meanings in scripture somewhat hidden in the texts. Although allegories are found in the Bible, particularly in the parables, these are obviously to be interpreted as such, and comparing scripture with scripture usually shows the meaning. (1) The introduction of allegorical interpretations in the early centuries led to many strange *mystical interpretations* by later church fathers.

Symbols and Figures are also a danger when leading to extra-biblical revelation. Any interpretation of figures or symbols in the Bible needs be done by searching other scriptures for the same use or the same language. The classic example of this is the myriad of interpretations for the 'mark of the beast' (Rev.chs.16&19), many of which time have proven to be erroneous. (2)

Eschatology is arguably a difficult study considering the widely differing views. Over the years a numbers of writers steered us towards Christ coming with certain dates. In recent times a rash of prophecy commentators all but prophesy when the 'rapture' will occur (eg. Jack Kinsella in 2008). Some years ago this author heard two prominent current prophecy pastors state that they could see the Great Tribulation being 'no longer than 3 years away'. That 3 years is now up.

Scriptures are sometimes read into current geopolitical events (or visa versa) which have led to similar predictions and guesswork. Reports of imminent war between the US and Iran have played out for decades with some stating a time period in which it would happen. There are now those who without any uncertainty state we are on the verge of the Great Tribulation, a kind of veiled prophesy that we have seen now *for a number of decades*.

Could concentration on such methods of prophecy subtly take one away from the revelation we need for the daily grind in sanctification, and even from the *prophetic scriptures themselves*?

Bible Codes have recently become a popular method of finding *secret* names and messages in scripture. The idea first came from early Jewish methods of looking for patterns in the Torah. In 1994 Eliyahu Rips mathematically studied equidistant letter sequences (ELS) which counted words at a distance looking for patterns or names. His paper was seized on by others and formed the basis for the popular book '*The Bible Code*' by Michael Drosnin (1997). What is not widely known is that prophecies which came from Drosnin's methods soon proved false. In 1997, Rips, the original inventor of the code methods, rejected Drosnin's book

and then a further 1999 scientific paper refuted the idea of codes, also citing the same codes can be found in other secular works.

Still today people persist in these claims. Some even claim that the same codes are only found in the King James Bible (KJV). They fail to see that the KJV, as accurate as it is, is a *translation* from manuscripts with *other languages* and it would be those *manuscripts* where any method of ELS would need to be used.

No doubt there are amazing *patterns with numbers* in the Bible. Dr. Ivan Panin (1855-1942), was the first to discover this in depth (which even led to his conversion). He discovered patterns of numbers with the Greek and Hebrew letters. The number 7 was significant, others being divisible by 7...and more.

However, again, finding secret 'codes' in the Bible is *just another decoy and counterfeit of WHERE and HOW we should be getting our revelation!*

Demonology and the Occult is the study of demons and their works. Recent decades have seen waves of new *deliverance ministries*. Conferences have taught people the characteristics of demons and how to cast them out from Christians and non Christians alike. The biblical accuracy of these ministries is appalling with names of demons the Bible never mentions, and forgetting that Christians cannot be demon *possessed*. Real spiritual warfare is first with the *Adamic nature* and using scripture to fight anything demonic, rather than fight the Devil himself. (3)

Although we understand some will specialise in ministries exposing the occult, the danger for listeners is in any inordinate amount of time consumed with symbols and signs as though they were true and then with a few scriptures (sometimes cherry picked) to show 'links'. It's clever analogy but sometimes with no purpose but to mystify audiences and *educate more in the occult than the scriptures*.

Prophecies and Tongues are a prevalent form of extra biblical revelation. God supposedly speaks new revelations to us as pseudo prophets. He speaks through us in a newly invented 'heavenly language' not understood on earth as any language. It is false revelation, because we are not true prophets, or with the gift of languages as in the scriptures (Acts 2&10). (4) What a counterfeit is this of true revelation!

These forms of revelation amount to the incessant *quest for more*. It is a covetism, being unsatisfied with *what we have in the completed scriptures*. But a fear of God and His Word will be the ever present watchman to warn us away from these extra biblical revelations which ***'speak not according to this word, because there is no light in them'*** (Is.8:20).

Terry Arnold

(1) For examples see our website www.taministries.net in *Articles* section, then *Bible Principles/ Interpretation* and article titled '*How Do You Read/Study the Bible?*'.

(2) See website in '*Resources*' in the booklet section, first chapter of '*A Fresh Look at Revelation*' for guiding principles.

(3) See our website section '*Spiritual Warfare*' and the DVD '*Delivered From The Power of Darkness*'.

(4) See article this edition '*Which Gift - 1st Century or Today?*', P.9.

Vatican's New Doublespeak

The New Teaching



In December last year Pope Francis declared a ‘blessing’ could be given to same sex couples who ‘*desire God’s grace*’. Yet the Roman religion still holds to *marriage as a union reserved for one man and one woman*.

To explain this ‘blessing’ the Vatican distinguishes between ‘sacramental blessings’ and ‘pastoral blessings’.

The Pope urged Christians to avoid ‘*rigid ideological positions*’ and to be *evolving* to serve the Catholic Church. ‘*It is important to keep searching and growing in our understanding of the truth, overcoming the temptation to stand still and never leave the ‘labyrinth’ of our fears...Fear, rigidity and monotony make for an immobility...but lead us to wander aimlessly within our labyrinths, to the detriment of the service we are called to offer the Church and the whole world*’.

Francis warned against fear-driven adherence to rules...‘*Only those who love can fare forward...In this context that one can understand the possibility of blessing couples in irregular situations and same-sex couples without officially validating their status or changing in any way the Church’s perennial teaching on marriage...This Declaration is also intended as a tribute to the faithful people of God, who worship the Lord with so many gestures of deep trust in his mercy and who, with this confidence, constantly come to seek a blessing from Mother Church*’.

Behind the Scenes



The cardinal behind this teaching is Victor Fernández, head of Vatican’s doctrinal office. His early writings reveal a book (since pulled off by Fernández) which ‘*reveals views on hardcore porn, violent sex, orgies...with explicit reflections on ‘spirituality and sensuality’...In a chapter ‘God in the Couple’s Orgasm’, Fernández claimed ‘a kind of fulfilling orgasm in our relationship with God...God touches the soul-corporeal centre of pleasure*’. Fernández explores the difference between male and female sexuality in porn, noting ‘*a woman is less attracted than a man to watching...violent sexual scenes, orgies, images. This does not mean she feels less aroused by hardcore pornography, but enjoys, values it less. Fernández recounted a mystical encounter told to him by a 16 year old girl who...watched Jesus bathe in the Sea of Galilee before she kissed his entire body while the Virgin Mary looked on approvingly*’ (Christian Post, Dec.26, 2023; Jan.10, 2024).

Roman Catholic Reaction



Catholic leaders have reacted to this blessing of same sex couples. U.S. Archbishop Avian called the Pope a ‘*servant of Satan*’, his hierarchy ‘*false shepherds*’ and that he is turning his church into ‘*the concubine of the New World Order*’.

Assessment

The Vatican and the Pope again speak out of two mouths. They still hold that marriage is a union reserved for one man and one woman. Yet this new declaration somehow distinguishes between ‘sacramental blessings’ and ‘pastoral blessings’, which can be given to ‘*persons who desire God’s grace*’. In other words it is OK to bless same sex partners who have good intentions but still teach a one man one woman marriage? How is this ‘*moving forward*’ or ‘*understanding the truth*’?

It is this same confusion and lack of clarity that has also led most protestant denominations to divide and splinter. The propagation of gender ideology only furthers the division and deception.

The emphasis on sex, often clothed in mystical terms, as shown by the theological advisor to the Pope, is not uncommon in Catholic writings. One wonders how such men bound by their own laws to be unmarried, can bring new teachings on subjects they are simply ignorant of, and which the scriptures are precise.

This is all just another example of the division and confusion that comes when the clear scriptures are either forgotten or manipulated to adapt to a new ideology or cultural fashion. Blessings for same sex couples are relatively new, cultural, but blasphemy to God (see our website section ‘same sex’). There is no other way to put what the Bible warns of - professing Christians who condone such practices will suffer the fierce condemnation of God. The call is always to ‘***Come out of her, my people, that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities***’.

Terry Arnold

Nepali Pastor Jailed For Praying

Pastor Keshab Raj Acharya faces a one-year prison sentence for his religious activities...In a statement, Pastor Keshab expressed his distress but... ‘While facing more jailtime is distressing, I find solace in God, believing that anything is possible through Him’, he said...Pastor Keshab in March 2020 was arrested for inviting a man to his house for prayer, leading to charges of ‘proselytizing’...The Supreme Court’s decision came as a shock, especially as there were no witnesses to substantiate the proselytization allegation....Junu Acharya, Pastor Keshab’s wife, expressed disbelief at the judgment and emphasized her husband’s innocence, stating he did not force anyone to change their religion.

...Pastor Keshab’s ordeal began following a YouTube video where he offered spiritual guidance against COVID-19 in 2020. ‘Misinformation’...led to multiple arrests and charges. Despite the lack of substantial evidence...he was convicted. ...The Christian community in Nepal has faced increasing persecution since 2018, with the criminalization of conversions...

(Anugrah Kumar, *Christian Post*, Jan.28, 2024)

TB Joshua - The Aftermath

TB Joshua, the Nigerian Tele-evangelist and at one time most popular on u-tube, died in 2021. The Pentecostal/Charismatic leader had all the modern teachings, including the prosperity gospel. In a new BBC investigation, accusations are increasing with dozens of accounts (now 25 eye witnesses) of rape, torture and abuse of followers over a period of 20 years, most within his 12 story compound. Many became pregnant and were forced to have abortions. Some have testified that they were recruiters for Joshua to find and pick up virgins.

Joshua was adored and followed by millions world wide with a church of more than 15,000 members who believed his claims of miracles, deliverances and prophecies. Joshua claimed miracles accompanied his birth and were prophesied a century earlier and that he spent 15 months in his mothers womb. He claimed people were healed of AIDS (some died after they stopped taking their medication). Evidence shows he paid people to exaggerate testimonies of their illnesses, some being medicated for this 'faith healing' process. He distributed 'anointed water' prayed over by Joshua, claiming it healed wounds and Ebola. In 2013 four people died in a stampede in one of Joshua's services in which his water was being distributed which drew huge crowds that exceeded the church's capacity. There is no documentation of a single miraculous healing and one might well question whether the demonic was involved in any such healings.

Agomoh Paul, a man who was once Joshua's No.2 in the church for 10 years, said the miracles were part of a well-planned production. '*That guy [was] a genius...Everything...[he did was] planned out*'.

Joshua was also a self-proclaimed prophet who frequently made predictions, even in the outcome of sports events. He falsely prophesied Hillary Clinton would win the 2016 presidential election in the United States. After Donald Trump won, Joshua stated that his 'prophecy' referred to Clinton's win in only the popular vote and any misinterpretation was due to a lack of 'spiritual understanding'.

The immorality and false claims is so typical of the signs and wonders televangelists today. Under investigation, the same will be found of all Charismatic teachers who claim to have the gifts of healing and prophecy.

How many false prophecies does it take to be a false prophet? Week in week out hundreds of thousands of people are being duped by Pentecostal/Charismatic teaching which includes extra biblical revelations, prophecies and stories of healings. One only has to look at the lives of these Pentecostal/Charismatic leaders of old and in modern times to see character that does not match the man of God.

Too many Pentecostal/Charismatic people today make the mistake of calling out the likes of Joshua as false, yet fail to realise that the *same teachings* are common in Pentecostal/Charismatic churches today. *The same measuring rod that is used to measure the false prophets today needs to be the same standard of testing to the teachings of Pentecostalism itself, which if studied will be found to be wholly counterfeit.*

Terry Arnold

(Sources: *Christian Post*; Wikipedia; BBC; and TAM files).

Enough of This 'Drivel'!

'...If there is a prophetic word that God is speaking about the 2024 elections it is simply this: 'Enough already with the Donald Trump prophecies!' There is still egg on our faces because of the 2020 debacle... 'our faces'...because I am a leader in the Pentecostal/Charismatic Church...I worked hard...to call for prophetic accountability...to rebuke the false prophecies about Trump...there is egg on all of our faces. Tragically and inexcusably, there is still denial, deception and duplicity about the failed prophecies, all in the name of the Lord.

...Some of the 'prophets' who blew it most egregiously...prophesying specific dates and timelines that flatly did not pan out - have continued to prophesy about Trump to this day, without correction or apology...I've even heard...that the reason the prophecies did not come to pass was because of people like me who called for accountability and repentance...These 'prophets' continued to proclaim that the election had been stolen and that Trump, not Biden, would be inaugurated...The 'prophets' were likened to Joshua and Caleb, ready to lead the children of Israel into the promised land. People like me were likened to the 10 spies who, full of unbelief, told the Israelites that they could not take the land (Num.13-14). What deception. What drivel. What an insult to the Word of God and the character of God. What a mockery of the Spirit.

...Thankfully, a few prophets acknowledged their error in prophesying a Trump victory, yet by apologizing, they came under far more attack than I did in calling for accountability. That alone illustrated how upside down things had become...What kind of nonsense is this? Yet the excuses continued, 'Donald Trump did win the election, just as we prophesied, but it was stolen from him'. Then why didn't God tell you it would be stolen? This would be like me telling you, 'Tomorrow, the Lord will give you a brand new car - but I failed to tell you that, as it was being delivered to your home, a thief carjacked it and you will never see it'. Sorry, but I don't buy it.

...Speaking directly to the Trump prophets, I remind you that many of you told us that: 1. Trump would serve 8 consecutive years (he did not); 2. that the courts would overturn the election results, even giving us time frames when certain states would turn from blue to red (this did not happen); and 3. that Trump, not Biden, would be inaugurated and that Biden would never serve a day in the White House (none of this happened). And what did some of you say since then? '...Trump is God's president!'. Or, 'I see a vision of Trump sitting enthroned in Heaven, ruling with a golden sceptre'. Or, 'That's not really Joe Biden! That's someone impersonating him. Trump is the real president' ...Repent! This is garbage! This is a stench in God's nostrils! Enough!...'

(Christian Post, 10/1; Dr. Michael Brown)

Editor's comment:

This author in still clinging to the core Pentecostal/Charismatic doctrines, not realising that the 'drivel' and 'nonsense' he speaks of is due to doctrines that espouse extra-biblical revelation and the Bible not being all sufficient!

Ten Years - What Has Changed?

This month marks the 10 year anniversary of when Alex Malarkey, who suffered a serious car accident and while in a coma for two months, had a ‘near death’ experience in which he supposedly went to Heaven.

This was the basis for a *best selling* book ‘*The Boy Who Came Back From Heaven*’. However, in 2015 he wrote ‘*An Open Letter to LifeWay and Other Sellers, Buyers, and Marketers of Heaven Tourism, by the Boy Who Did Not Come Back From Heaven*’ in which he recanted the whole story as a lie. ‘*I said I went to heaven because I thought it would get me attention. When I made the claims that I did, I had never read the Bible...People have profited from lies, and continue to. They should read the Bible, which is enough. The Bible is the only source of truth*’.

This is not the only story of an after death experience that has been shown to be lies. *All such books are fraudulent!* This author has yet to read any of these books and not find something *extra biblical* or a revelation which *contradicts* the scriptures. And rarely does one see any after death experiences concerning Hell. The latter does not fit the cultural desires, or be as popular in sales.

There are are well researched and medical reasons why people experience similar images when near death and the brain is starved of oxygen.

Much of the revelation of Heaven is found in the last book of the Bible and *to go beyond that is to bring a severe judgement*. (See our article ‘*Visions Dreams, Near Death*’ in the ‘Pentecostal/Charismatic’ section of our website).

But has anything changed since Alex’s trip to heaven was exposed as a *lie*? The answer is ‘no!’. Bookstores still sell such books and they are *best sellers*. The Bible has plenty to say about Heaven in more than one book. Yet these scriptures are simply not enough for most people, and so the *quest for more* continues?

Terry Arnold

Another Tragedy From Extra Biblical Revelation

Pastor Eligio Regalado, a Colorado pastor and his wife were charged with selling \$3.2 million in unsecured worthless cryptocurrency to 300+ Christians who had ‘no exit’. Regalado splurged \$1.3 million on a Range Rover, jewelry, luxury handbags, cosmetic dentistry, boat rentals, snowmobile adventures, home renovations...

Eligio claims God said the investment would make them wealthy... ‘...*Kaitlyn and I pocketed \$1.3 million...out of that half a million dollars went to the IRS, a few hundred thousand went to a home remodel that the Lord told us to do*’. Regalado claims they ‘*were simply following God...It all started when the Lord told us... ‘I’m going to do a new thing’ ...He took us into cryptocurrency...The Lord said, ‘give that to them but also give them a 10x’ ...We took God at His word and sold cryptocurrency...What we’re praying for and believing for still is that God is going to do a miracle. God is going to work a miracle in the financial sector*’.

(Extracts from *Christian Post*, Jan.24, 2024)

Which Gift - 1st Century or Today?

The Debate

In theology circles today there is debate on whether the sign gifts ceased in the first century (cessationism) or whether they are still operative today (continuism). These sign gifts include miracles, speaking in ‘tongues’ and healings.

The arguments within this debate often fail to convince, since either side will read scriptures differently, whether to suit their own *tradition* or *experience*. Some quote scriptures that speak of tongues ‘*ceasing*’ (1Cor.13:8); others say this only occurs when the ‘*perfect*’ has come (vs.10). This then requires language studies on Greek words to ascertain what ‘*ceasing*’ and the ‘*perfect*’ is. Some quote history to show the gifts did actually cease after the first century; others cite their experience of the practise of the gifts, believing that these gifts must have been restored in recent centuries. The maze of arguments might well confuse many.

This author is not against the study of each and every argument and would encourage such. But there is another approach to the subject that this author finds most telling and which cuts through much of the maze of views. It simply begins by assuming, even granting, that if the gifts have been restored in the 20th century then they can be *tested to see if they are authentic*. If the gifts practised today are *the same as in the first century*, then we have the gifts in operation today, they have been restored in history, and any cessationist arguments would be obsolete!

The test involves answering the following questions - *what actually were these gifts...What did they look like?* The answer to these questions then demands a final assessment - *are the gifts practised today the same as the first century?* Again, if the answer is positive then we have the gifts continuing today. If the answer is negative then we have a counterfeit.

For brevity we will test two of the sign gifts which are most controversial today - speaking in *tongues* and the gift of *healings*.

First Century ‘Tongues’

What is the gift of speaking ‘tongues’ in scripture? The practise of the gift of tongues is seen in the first of only three instances of someone speaking in tongues - Acts chapters 2,10,19.

Acts chapter 2 specifically describes *known* languages. Firstly, the Greek words used for ‘tongues’ in Acts chapter 2 are ‘*glossais*’ and ‘*dialektos*’. Both are translated as ‘language’ or ‘tongue’. ‘*Glossais*’ is universally recognised as the word for *language*, and ‘*dialektos*’ is where we get the English ‘*dialect*’ from.

Acts 2 verse 4 has the expression ‘*other tongues*’ (‘*heterois glossais*’) referring to a language not the persons own, but literally ‘another of a different kind’ (‘*heterois*’). In verse 6 people were ‘*confounded*’ when they heard the disciples ‘*speaking in their own tongue*’. The Greek word here is ‘*dialektos*’ - *dialects* the speakers did not know but the hearers heard as their *own dialect*. Verse 8 again has people hearing ‘*in our own tongue* (‘*dialektos*’) *wherein we were born*’. (The

word '*dialektos*' is also translated '*tongue*' in Acts 1:19; 21:40; 22:2; 26:14).

There then follows a list of 16 geographical areas representing *dialects*, showing these were *known foreign languages* (the '*Phrygians and Pamphylians*' were Greek dialects; '*Parthians, Medes, Elamites*' Persian dialects, etc.).

The word in verse 4 for '*utterance*' is '*apophtheggomai*' and means to declare or speak. It is used twice elsewhere in the New Testament and translated '*said*' (Acts 2:14) and '*speak forth*' (Acts 26:25). In both cases the context and meaning is undeniably *known languages*. In Acts 2:4 this is certain by the word '*language*'.

Acts 10 then confirms the *same gift* when the apostles acknowledge that the '*tongues*' and the coming of the '*promise*' of the Spirit was the *same as at Acts 2* (vs.45 '*also*'; vs.47 '*as well as we*'). The speaking in tongues was *known languages*, proved when they *understood them* to be '*magnifying God*' (vs.46).

There were no interpreters or interpretation needed in any of the cases of speaking in tongues because the *languages* were clearly *understood* by the hearers.

First Corinthians chapter 14 then further regulates the use of this gift with the same Greek word '*glossais*' and *rebukes* the use of an '*unknown tongue*' that had no understanding or edification for the church if it was not interpreted.

This description of tongues as *real foreign known languages* is attested to by the early church fathers and beyond, such as Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Hegemonius, Gregory of Nazianzen, Ambrosiaster, Chrysostom, Augustine, Leo the Great, and implied by others (such as Tertullian and Origen) in their many writings and commentaries. In several instances these authors already assume tongues to be known languages and use Acts 2 and Isaiah 28:11 in their commentaries on first Corinthians chapters 12-14, showing tongues as *known languages*. They never suggest tongues was anything else but *known human rational languages*.

That speaking in tongues was *known human foreign understood languages* is simply irrefutable from scripture and history!

After the first century the church fathers were also unanimous that this sign gift had *ceased*. But with the new Pentecostal/Charismatic movement of the 20th century, has this gift as described in scripture been restored?...

20th Century 'Tongues'

The claims of sign gifts is relatively new to the 20th century. The only significant claim beforehand was in the Montanist movement in the 3rd century, which claimed the use of tongues and prophetic messages with new extra biblical revelations. This spread to other parts of Asia even to Africa up to the 5th century. The church fathers unanimously rejected this movement (except for Tertullian who was briefly caught up in the movement). The Montanist movement was founded by a self proclaimed prophet Montanus and two prophetesses, Priscilla and Maximilla who had left their husbands. They at times exhibited ecstatic manifestations. Many of the prophecies did not come true, such as details of wars, the end of the world and where the New Jerusalem would come down. Eventually Montanus hung himself and then Maximilla likewise committed suicide. (1)

Following the Montanist movement there were only very isolated references to

the gift of tongues, mostly in pagan rituals, mystics and monks. The *Jansenists* of the 17th century, a Roman Catholic offshoot, claimed unknown tongues, as did the Quakers (1624-1691), who were similar to the Montanists. The *Shakers* under the leadership of ‘Mother’ Anne Lee of New York featured reports of naked dancing while speaking in unknown tongues. The *Irvingites* were another group who claimed to speak in unknown tongues given by God, but who ended up in apostasy, immorality and unfulfilled prophecies and were reproved by the church at the time as heretics. Unknown tongues were also featured amongst the early *Mormons*. In all these isolated groups all were cases of *unknown or ecstatic speech*. (2)

In the 20th century it was Charles Parham who with the founding of the new Pentecostal movement, featured a major emphasis on ‘speaking in tongues’. This modern tongues movement (as part of the new Pentecostal movement) began in 1900 when Parham had 34 students at a Bible college in Topeka, Kansas, USA. He encouraged his students to experience the same as the apostles experienced in Acts 2. On new years day 1901 after a night of ‘tarrying’, a student, Agnus Ozman, began to speak in what was believed to be the Chinese language. The experience spread to the other students. Parham claimed some of the tongues were ‘Swedish’.

Parham and those who had received the experience mistook their experience for Zenoglossalia (foreign languages). But when linguists were brought in to validate the languages it was clearly shown that the ‘tongues’ were not real languages but *ecstatic utterances* or babble. Some of the group rejected the experience and one wrote: ‘*The whole of them are crazy...I never saw anything like it. They were racing about the room talking and gesticulating and using this strange and senseless language which they claim is the word from the Most High*’. (3)

A student, William Seymour, later took this experience and founded a church at Azusa St, Los Angeles. He called Parham in to advise on the tongues and the manifestations occurring, which were becoming more bizarre. Parham denounced the tongues and the manifestations as counterfeit. However, from Azusa st, missionaries went out with the same experiences to other parts of America and the world. (In 1912 the *Assembly of God* denomination was founded).

The very founder of the modern Pentecostal movement rejected what now occurs in Pentecostal denomination! Most Pentecostal/Charismatic pastors are simply unaware of their own history! Sadly too, much of the history has been rewritten or parts conveniently left out so as to paint a picture of a ‘revival’. (4)

Parham too was already considered heretical in his teachings which he mostly obtained from *extra biblical revelations*. He later founded one of the first ‘healing ministries’. Yet to his death Parham insisted that authentic ‘tongues’ was ‘zenoglossalia’ (known foreign languages)!

The Pentecostal ‘glossalia’ from Azusa St. eventually became known as a ‘*heavenly language*’ since it was not known on planet earth and did not match the historic cases of *known* tongues in the New Testament (Acts 2,10,19). Thus Pentecostals simply altered the definition of tongue speaking.

Today, the use of ‘tongues’ as tested linguistically is simply not known human foreign languages as in scripture. The church fathers also never saw any distinction between public tongues as a gift and ‘private tongues’ as taught today.

Assessment

The contrasts between the first century gift of tongues and the modern tongues today should require an honest response from those who love the truth. The difference, and thus the deception, is *obvious*. Commentators and Bible teachers at the turn of the century, when the modern tongues movement was introduced, had no doubts about the deception and were scathing of this movement.

Whether one is a ‘cessationist’ or a ‘continuist’, who can honestly say that the modern tongues is the same as that of the first century? Why do we continue to accept a counterfeit of the real from the first century?

1st Century Gift of Healings

In discerning the modern gift of healings, *miraculous* healing needs to be distinguished from the *gift* of healings. God is sovereign in any miraculous healing today. But the *gift* of healing is given to a human to be practised with defined characteristics from scripture. Search through the Gospel of Matthew alone and one will find plenty of evidence as to what this gift was and how it was practised.

The first century gift of healings was practised by Christ or those He ordained (Mk.3:14,15). The healings were *abundant*, and ‘*all*’ were healed (Matt. 23:24; 8:16; 10:1,8; 12:15; 14:36...). ‘*Every sickness*’ that came to Jesus or His apostles were immediately and *completely healed* (12:13; 20:34). They were spontaneous events in that no healing meetings were called for, healings taking place in public and whether people had faith or not (Lk.17:11-19; Matt.8:1,14; 12:10; 13:58).

There were no limitations with the healings which were well beyond medical explanations. Many healings were to do with organic diseases which cannot be healed psychosomatically. A functional disease is one in which an organ does not function properly. Functional diseases change the function of the tissue but not its structure and can be affected by the mind. However, an organic disease is one in which the organ is diseased, maimed, or even defunct. Diabetes, Down Syndrome, infections, heart attacks, gallstones, cancers, broken bones and congenital deformities are all included as organic diseases. A functional disease might be a sore arm; an organic disease might be a withered arm or no arm at all.

The church fathers were again unanimous that such miraculous sign gifts had ceased after the first century. But with the new Pentecostal/Charismatic movement of the 20th century, has this gift as described in scripture been restored?...

20th Century Gift of Healings

Healing ministries were largely spawned at the turn of the 20th century in the Pentecostal movement and then further in the charismatic movement mid century.

Today’s claims of ‘healings’ are more to do with functional diseases. Even then only some are claimed to be ‘healed’ and often ‘partially’ with the symptoms returning in a few days. These ‘failures’ are simply not instant, complete and 100% successful as in the true gift of healings in the first century. No one has ever been

raised from the dead (modern healers give funeral parlours and cemetaries a wide birth), or been healed of incurable diseases such as AIDS or Down Syndrome.

We must be honest with ourselves and admit that no one today possesses the gift of healings *as Jesus and the Apostles did*. The modern claims for the gift of healings is shown to be not healing ‘*all*’ (Matt. 23:24; 8:16; 10:1,8; 12:15; 14:36; etc.); and ‘*every sickness*’ (12:13; 20:34;). Diabetes, Down Syndrome, heart attacks, cancers, broken bones and congenital deformities are not being healed *at will* and *without failure*. Neither has anyone ever been raised from the dead.

The one final test for any person having the gift of healings would be Down Syndrome. It cannot be healed psychosomatically. It is a genetic disorder caused by the presence of all or part of a third copy of chromosome 21. Derived from this are physical and mental disabilities. Has any faith healer or any claiming the gifts of healing ever cured any of these people? The answer is a resounding ‘no’. This author knows of three claims of healing Downs Syndrome, but when investigated each was found to be fraudulent or foolishly exaggerated. (5)

Today we hear many stories of faith healings, which when checked forensically are found to be psychosomatic, partial healings, handed down exaggerated stories, misplaced diagnosis, and *many* actually proven to be fraudulent and lies. (6)

Those claiming the use of the gift of healings need to be challenged to do what Jesus and the apostles did...rather than tarry in controlled tent meetings, go into the cancer wards in hospitals and heal amputees, the blind, raise the dead in morgues, heal without failure *all* and *every case* one comes across. This would be the gift which Jesus had and the ‘*signs of an apostle*’ (2Cor.12:12).

Assessment

It must also be stated that some, even conservative continuists, are well aware that the tongues of today are simply not as they were in the first century. To have a continuist theology, they change the definition of ‘tongues’ and ‘prophecy’ so as to accommodate the ecstatic nature of modern tongues and to have a wider view of prophecy today so it does not have to be by prophets and ‘infallible’. But this violates the true gifts as they were defined and described in scripture, and is not a real continuation but a cessation *with a dishonest invention of something else*.

The contrasts between the first century gift of healings and the modern claim of this today should require an honest response from those who love the truth. The difference, and thus the deception, *is obvious*.

Whether one is a ‘cessationist’ or a ‘continuist’, who can honestly say that the modern healing movement is the same as that of the first century? Why do we continue to accept a counterfeit of the real in the first century?

Final Thought

Regardless of the reader’s or the author’s persuasion concerning the continuation of, or the cessation of the ‘sign gifts’ (1Cor.12), there is one other aspect of this debate often missed. Like any ‘sign’, *the sign gifts pointed to*

something. They were to prove the *Messiahship of Christ* and the credentials of his apostles who He ordained to perform '*signs of an apostle*' (2Cor.12:12). '*And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God...*', (Jn.20:30,31); '*...Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you...*', (Acts 2:22).

When John the Baptist asked the disciples for proof of the *Messiahship of Christ*, Jesus said to His disciples: '*Go your way, and tell John what things you have seen and heard; how the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached*' (Lk.7:21-22).

The scripture above should be well noted, as it is referring back to a prophecy in Isaiah 35:4-6 which prophesies that '*the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing...*' Jesus also said this in the temple: '*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised... This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears*' (Lk.4:18-21 quoted from Is.61:1,2). Jesus claimed to be *fulfilling this at that time*.

These signs were a *confirmation* and a *witness* said to be *past* (Heb.2:3,4).

Why do we need these signs again if *the purpose has been fulfilled* and we now have the revelation of Christ as the Messiah completed in the *closed revelation* of scripture? What further *confirmation and revelation* do we need? Why is it that these signs gifts actually *did cease* in history? Even before the close of the book of Acts we see disciples *not healed* (Trophimus 2Tim.4:20; Timothy 1Tim.5:23; Paul 2Cor.12:7-9; Epaphraditus Phil.2:25). Why would the sign gifts need to be brought back? Does not an '*evil and adulterous generation seek after a sign*' (Matt.12:39)? Why would there be a counterfeit of the real?...Could it be to add to and distract from the Gospel of the *healing of the soul*? The Gospel is the good news about our sin problem, not about our gifts or our sicknesses. No sign is needed now except the sign of the prophet Jonah - the Son of man three days and three night in the heart of the earth (Matt.12:39,40) - to save sinners who will believe!

Terry Arnold

- (1) For more detail concerning the Montanist movement see our website article: '*Montanism and Pentecostalism*'.
- (2) This history is detailed in the author's book '*Tongues and the Baptism With The Spirit*'.
- (3) Samuel Riggins in '*Topeka Daily Capital*', 6/1/01.
- (4) For an impartial historic view of the events see '*Fields White Unto Harvest - Charles Parham & the Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism*' by James R. Goff Jr. This is an accurate and well documented account by one who was a descendant of a co-worker of Parham.
- (5) See '*Healing and Downs Syndrome*' - article in TA Ministries website under 'Healing'.
- (6) In the 'Healing' section of TA Ministries website there are articles showing the common exaggerations and fraud associated with modern healing ministries

The 'Foolishness' of the Cross

The message of the cross - the Gospel of Christ crucified, is said by God to be 'foolishness' to the unsaved. Why did God have His message to be as this 'foolishness'? How is it 'foolishness' - physically, culturally and spiritually?

The Scriptures

1 Corinthians 1:18-27 *'For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God...has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe...we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men...God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise...'*

1 Corinthians 2:14 *'But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned'*

The Physical

'The preaching of the cross' here (literally *'the word [logos] of the cross'*) is about the preaching of the *'the cross of Christ'* (vs.17), *'the message of the cross'* (vs.18), *'Christ crucified'* (vs.23), and *'Christ Jesus...our righteousness and sanctification and redemption'* (vs.30).

'The cross' (*'staurós'*) literally means 'to stand'. Physically it was a stake, often with a cross-piece. Criminals were nailed to these for execution, it being an agonising instrument of torture introduced to Jews by the Romans, later abolished by Constantine. Persons crucified were first scourged, then bore their own cross to a place of execution and a 'title' often placed over the criminal, depicting the crime.

This method of torture and death was first used by the Persians, although some evidence has the Indians and Assyrians also using the practice. The first written account of crucifixion comes from the Persian ruler, Darius, in 519 BCE who crucified 3,000 Babylonian inhabitants who revolted against him. Later the Greek, Alexander the Great, ordered 2,000 citizens of Tyre to be crucified on a beach after his conquest of the city in 332 BCE. The first century historian, Josephus, wrote (in Antiquities 13.14.2) of Alexander Jannaeus (102-76 B.C.) crucifying 800 Pharisees and then their wives and children being murdered at their feet. It is said that this event concerning crucifixion left a lasting impression of horror upon Jewish minds.

When the Romans ascended to power in 763 AD they are said to have borrowed the practise of crucifixion from the Phoenicians. The Roman leader Felix crucified

many criminals. The emperors Nero and Titus were particularly cruel, Nero crucifying Christians in his garden following the burning of Rome in A.D. 64. Titus crucified so many Jews during the siege of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 that there was not enough room for the crosses and the supply of wood was exhausted. Jews were also crucified after death to frighten and demoralise the remaining Jews of the city under siege. Corpses were left to rot or be food for animals and birds.

Clearly it was a frightening method of torture and death which sometimes took days, the crucified dying of loss of blood or asphyxiation when in agony they could no longer raise themselves up to breath. The spectacle of *naked* bodies being tortured and dying was purposed to be demeaning and '*unto the Jews a stumblingblock*' (vs.23). The Greek word here is '*skandalon*', literally the *trigger on a trap*; a 'snare'; an occasion to fall or sin. The '*stumblingblock*' or 'snare' that caused offense to the Jews was '*Christ crucified*' (vs.23).

The Cultural

Crucifixion collided with the culture of the day and was both a *stumbling block* and *foolishness* to any who might hear and understand the Gospel. A person crucified was either a criminal or one to be disdained. What Jew would want to hear about a *crucified* Messiah? To the Jews a person crucified was to be seen as *curse*d by God (Dt.21:23). They were looking for a signs and wonders leader who would authenticate his Messiahship. Even though the Messiah and his apostles for a short time performed the signs, the Jews salvation would not come by that, but by *Christ crucified*.

The Gentiles saw the crucified as a vile punishment for slaves, criminals and the like. They were more interested in philosophical wisdom, not the '*foolishness*' of a crucified person.

The message preached by Christ, the apostles and later Paul would run against every cultural norm and turn many away.

The Spiritual

Why would God make such a spectacle to be His message of the Gospel which went against everything the audience would want to hear? Why purposely put such a *hindrance* in the message of the good news?

God put this 'barrier' in the Gospel so that to believe it would be of God and not of man!

God predestined this very method of sacrifice before the foundation of the world! '*...Both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever your hand and your counsel determined before to be done*' (Acts 4:27,28). The '*determined before*' is the Greek word *proorizo*, translated many times in the New Testament as 'predestinated'. God purposely set this event in time when he 'laid' the stumblingblock and rock of offense to stumble over. Indeed '*Israel...stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stumblingstone and rock of offense: and whosoever*

believeth on him shall not be ashamed' (Rom.9:31-33). '*Christ crucified*' is '*a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word...*' (1Pet.2:8). The '*offense*' is the result of the stumbling.

For the Gentiles it was foolishness - '***unto the Greeks foolishness***'. The word for '*foolishness*' here is '*moria*' - something that is a folly, an absurdity. To the Greeks this doctrine that the blood of the cross can remove sin, was not something within their confines of wisdom or any soundness of mind, but utter '*foolishness*'. '***For the preaching [the word] of the cross is to them that are perishing foolishness***' - the same '*foolishness*' ('*morios*') is described in 1Cor.2:14 - '*But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*' and 1Cor.3:19 - '*For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God...*'

The Warning

To take away the hindrance of the *stumblingblock* or the *foolishness* in the message of the cross, the modern church in its own human wisdom has invented *new measures* with new terminologies to minimise or avoid the *offense* that is imbedded in the Gospel of Christ crucified. Cultural changes and fashions have furthered these methods. The reason why Christ had to suffer is drowned in a swamp of new terms describing what man can *do* instead of what Christ has *done*. '*Accept Jesus into your heart*'; '*make your decision for Christ*'; '*He stands at the door of your heart and knocks*'. Christ is reduced to an impotent saviour awaiting mans decision by his own ability. This new message minimises the *offense* that God put there. It is energised by the human spirit which denies the Holy Spirit's miraculous calling and effectual drawing so that man cannot boast (Eph.2:8,9). It implies man can do something in and of himself to enable God to save. A '*Christ crucified*' was, and is not, a '*seeker-friendly*' message.

Jesus Christ called both Jews and the Gentiles to believe and surrender to the one who would be crushed and afflicted by God. The apostles and then Paul also gave the culture what they needed, not what they wanted to hear. No audience, nor their ability, must ever affect the message. There may be different preparatory introductions to the Gospel depending on the audience, before the Gospel is laid out, but ultimately the offense of a crucified Christ for sin to be judged must be laid out. The preacher must never see himself as the means to convince people of this message, which is always to be left as a *stumblingblock*, an *offense* and *foolishness*, unless the Spirit illuminates, quickens, gives life for eyes to see. The power is in God's hands, for if '*the preaching of the cross*' is to save any it will always be '*the power of God*' (1Cor.1:18)!

To minimise, reduce or hide the offense of the message of the cross is to be in danger of '*perverting the gospel*' and '*preaching another gospel*' which is '*accursed*' (2Cor.11:4; Gal.1:7-9). It is God's will and pleasure that the message retain the *stumblingblock* and *foolishness*, that it be only the power of God to save!

God put this 'barrier' in the Gospel so that to believe it would be of God's Spirit and not of man!

Terry Arnold

Testimony by Purity Miriti

‘...The Lord Jesus Christ saved me after I joined the school of theology here in 2022. I was brought up in the ‘prosperity gospel’ where I was taught to be saved is just going forward at the meeting, reciting the ‘sinners prayer’, being committed to the Church, honest in paying tithes and offerings, reading the Bible, bringing sacrifices to break curses, and trying to keep the laws (10 commandments) and being baptized. I tried to fulfil all these in order to inherit eternal life.

I was shocked when I came to the Wisdom Training Centre (WTC) and learned that those are not the characteristics of a true Christian, and definitely I was not saved. I learned that no one is saved by the faith of another person, only by trusting in Jesus, His death as the payment for sins (Rom. 5:8; 2Cor. 5:21), and His righteousness as the guarantee of eternal life. Only believing in Jesus and His finished work on the cross saves from sin.

I did not understand what true salvation means, I thought it was all about blessings, miracles (no suffering). I tried my best to ‘break alters of suffering’ but all in vain. The true Gospel is the good news that God saves sinners like me. I am by nature sinful and separated from God with no hope of remedying that situation. But God by His power provided the means of salvation in the perfect life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel is good news, but to understand how good the news was, I needed to first comprehend the bad news, that as a result of the fall of man in the garden of Eden (Gen.3:6), every part of man (mind, will, emotions) is corrupted by sin, and so we cannot seek God, in fact we have no desire to come to God, we are hostile to Him (Rom.8:7). God has declared that our sins doom us to an eternity in Hell, separated from God. It is in Hell that we must pay for our sins against a holy and righteous God. This is bad news indeed unless there is a remedy.

But in the Gospel, God in His mercy has provided that remedy, a substitute for us is Jesus Christ who came to pay the penalty for our sins by His sacrifice on the cross, and to obey the law of God so that we can have His righteousness. This is the Gospel Paul preached, that Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose again (1Cor. 15:2-4), and that by faith we are united with Him (Rom.6:4-8). Paul tells us to hold firmly to this Gospel, the only one which saves. Salvation is not achieved by our effort, but by the grace of God through the gift of faith (Eph.2:8,9).

By believing this Gospel, I have been saved, not just from Hell, but given a new nature (2Cor.5:17), and a changed heart, new desires and attitudes as the Holy Spirit produces fruit unto good works. These works are not the means of my salvation, but the fruit.

I am very grateful to my Almighty God for helping me know the truth which has set me free. It is my prayer that with the help of God I will stand firm and faithful to this Gospel’.

(Purity became convicted that she had a false assurance when she joined WTC. She has since fallen into very hard times in life, and her faith is being severely tested, yet she has such joy and contentment because she has Christ. The Lord is very merciful! Gospel Missions Agency Church, Mombassa, Kenya)

Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editor)

Hi Terry, we have an opportunity to witness to some JW followers. Do you have some material regarding the JW beliefs we can read? ...

(C.B., Tas.)

Editor's reply:

Our website has articles in the section '*cults*'. One you could use is the *wheel chart* showing the deity of Christ from the Old and New Testaments. I would probably recommend this chart first as the easiest to show them. They will refuse to take it away with them...so I urge people to hound them for their address and then visit them with more material.

We also have a video '*Witness of Jehovah*'.

Below I have added some more ideas I have tested...

Questions to ask Jehovah Witnesses are '*how can I be saved now...at this moment*'; '*Can I be saved without going to the Kingdom Hall?*'; '*What is your salvation plan for this moment if I were to die now?*'. The answers will clearly show a works gospel and a dependence on their *Kingdom Hall*. Press the hypothesis - '*what if I cannot get to a kingdom Hall - how can I be saved?*'...

Other questions are: '*Why did Jesus say He was the 'I am*' (Jn.8:24 - the '*he*' is in italics, not in the Greek; see also Jn.8:58; 13:19; 18:5,6)...'*Why did Jehovah say this too?*' (Ex.3:14); '*Who is the 'Alpha and the Omega*' in Rev.1:8'...'Who *'died and lives*' in vs.18?'...'Who is the *'first and the last*' in Is.44:6; 48:12?' (The wheel chart mentioned above shows this).

More recently, I have majored on their translation [*New World Translation*] and asked them why the Greek '*kurios*' ('Lord') is changed dozens of times to '*Jehovah*' when '*Jehovah*' is nowhere found in *any* Greek manuscripts (these changes are listed on our website in the '*cults*' section). The *New World Translation* is a shocking mistranslation and by men who did not have even basic knowledge of the original languages (court cases concerning Charles Russell and Fred Franz proved this - see court transcript on our website).

Dear Terry, I have been reading the Life and Death of Mr Badman (John Bunyan). To say it's sobering reading is an understatement. A such high view of God I have not seen in today's society, not even most preachers. It flattened me. How desperately wicked these times are, how few trying to live according to God's word. I realise how sinful I am...

(R.S.,NSW)

Editor's comment:

A reading of some Puritan writings will sober the best of Christians to see for themselves the majesty of the grace of God to an undeserved helpless sinner.

Diakrisis TV and Website

A new u-tube video has been added to *Diakrisis TV* titled 'Misinterpreted Scriptures'. This video exposes some of the most commonly misused, misread, and thus misinterpreted Bible verses. The video can be accessed on our website (www.taministries.net) under 'Other Resources'.

Other videos on various topics are available in *Diakrisis TV*. These videos are all short summaries on various hot topics.

There are also a number of new articles now on the website in the various 'articles' sections.

Itinerary 2024

The editor is soon to begin planning another extended trip to various states in the second half of this year. If any churches wish to be included please contact Terry so we can plan accordingly.

Quote

There is faith in what the inspired infallible scriptures have said as 'prophecy' (2Pet.1:19-21); and there is faith in what men now say is prophecies from God. Will men place their faith in the prophecy of the infallible Scriptures or in prophecies of fallible men. The 'faith once delivered' (Jude 3) includes one and condemns the other (Rev.22;18,19; Dt.4:2; 2Tim.2:2-4). (Editor)

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