

**NORTHEAST HOUSTON COMMUNITY CHURCH**  
**Sermon: Spiritual Gifts, Part 5, Prayer Language or Tongue of Angels**  
**Scripture Text: 1 Corinthians 13:1–3**  
**07/06/2014**

**Quote: In order to identify the fake, you must have knowledge of the true.**

**1 Corinthians 13:1–3 (NKJV) <sup>1</sup> Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup> And though I have *the gift of prophecy*, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup> And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.**

Today we will continue to look at the Spiritual gift of speaking in different/Various kinds of tongues mentioned in *1 Corinthians 12:10*.

There are two entirely different understandings of the term "speaking in tongues". One understanding is to mean speaking in a different "known" language and the other is the speaking in an "unknown" tongue, AKA angel/heavenly tongue or prayer language. The second is tied together in that the language is a special language that only comes from the Holy Spirit and can only be spoken by a believer gifted by the Holy Spirit and not everyone can understand it.

Note that speaking in tongues is also known as glossolalia,  
Definition - glos·so·la·li·a - [glos-uh-ley-lee-uh, glaw-suh-] noun - incomprehensible speech in an imaginary [language](#), sometimes occurring in a trance state, an episode of religious ecstasy, or [schizophrenia](#).

I trust that we are on one accord that the Spiritual Gift of "speaking in Tongues" at the day of Pentecost was the gift of speaking in known languages not previously known to those in the disciples in the upper Room at Pentecost. (*Acts 2:3–8*)

There is one word in Acts 2:4 I will mention in passing.  
*Acts 2:4 (NKJV) <sup>4</sup> And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

The word "utterance" has been used to claim the ecstatic speech. The original Greek word meant (1 to speak out, speak forth, pronounce)  
1A not a word of everyday speech but one "belonging to dignified and elevated discourse".<sup>1</sup>

The other identification concerning "Speaking in tongues" practiced by some Christians (predominantly Charismatic religions) today refers to what they call "a prayer language or "Tongue of Angels." This is identified by an ecstatic unintelligible speech that even the speaker cannot understand.

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<sup>1</sup> Strong, J. (2001). *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

Today I want to address a few of the much harder questions concerning the validity of that kind of "tongue" is truly a "Spiritual Gift."

The first Question is: Is this kind of ecstatic speech a prayer language?

The term prayer language is a euphemism for what is commonly known as the practice of speaking in tongues.

In addressing the Prayer language question, I have chosen three examples that convinces me that the claim as such is at best questionable.

The disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray. (*Luke 11:1*). In Matthew Jesus gives a more detailed set of instructions to them.

*Matthew 6:5–8 (NKJV)* <sup>5</sup> “*And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.* <sup>6</sup> *But you, when you pray, **go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place;** and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. <sup>7</sup> **And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do.** For they think that they will be heard for their many words.*

I will give only a few points on this:

1. Pray to the Father in secret (personal prayer, petitioning God, thanking God).

If the ecstatic speech is a private prayer language then it should be done in private. Jesus often went to a solitary place to pray (*Mark 1:35*). So, if it is a "private prayer language" then why are people doing it in the church assembly?

2. Do not use VAIN repetitions as the heathens do. (repeating the same words, understand what you are saying so not to do so. Christian prayer is different from heathen prayers.)

Often those speaking in an ecstatic speech don't even know what they are saying if you ask them, that is why this gift is coupled with the gift of language interpretation.

When we pray, we must know what we are praying, how can we specifically request of God, specifically thank God or specifically praise God.

*Ecclesiastes 5:2 (NKJV)* <sup>2</sup> *Do not be rash with your mouth, and let not your heart utter anything hastily before God...*

Last on this point, Jesus gives them a model prayer that was in an understandable language with them know what they were saying.

If anyone would use a "Private prayer language it would be Jesus yet at the grave side of Lazarus Jesus prayed so that others understood for the benefit (edification) of others.

*John 11:41–42 (NKJV)* “*Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. <sup>42</sup> And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me.”*

In preparing this message I looked at what others had to say who spoke in ecstatic tongue.

Here are just a few:

"If you're a Christian who doesn't have the Prayer Language yet... Get It!"

My response: If it is a gift then the Holy Spirit will give it as He sees fit.

*1 Corinthians 12:11 (NKJV)* <sup>11</sup> *But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.*

Why does man think he knows better than God?

Another tells of an event in their church:

"My sister's prayer language sounded very strange, nothing like a Natural Language. And many people would have guessed that it was fake. But one day she sat next to a person who spoke Inuit, a rare Eskimo Indian language. After hearing my sister's prayer language, the man said, "Lady, do you even know what you're saying? You're saying a beautiful prayer to God." So even though her prayer language didn't sound natural, it was legitimate."

Now this is more credible than most. The language she spoke was not understood by those around her but it was later revealed that it was a known language by the Eskimo Indians.

The next is a twist on scripture. A person was refuting the charge that a person speaking in tongue is only edifying themselves.

*1 Cor. 14:4 He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself...*

They attempt to refute it with scripture

*Jude 1:20...build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit*

This is not a call to some ecstatic form of prayer, but simply a call to pray consistently in the will and power of the Spirit, as one would pray in the name of Jesus Christ<sup>2</sup>

Source: **divine revelations:** a site documenting several **face to face** encounters & visitations with Jesus Christ.

What about the claim it is the "Tongue of Angels?"

Why would a person think they were speaking in "angel tongue? Every time an angel communicated with man, he did so in a language man understood. Is it to place ourselves high above others that we communicated like angels?

This concept most likely came from the following verse:

*1 Corinthians 13:1 "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."*

The thinking may be that if Paul spoke with the tongue of angels then it was possible for others to do so. Therefore, it must be this unknown tongue belonging to angels.

Well as always, we must look closer and investigate. Always be ready to accept the fact that our English Bible is a translation. Praise God there are more than one translation to help us in our studies.

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<sup>2</sup> *The MacArthur Study Bible*. 1997 (J. MacArthur, Jr., Ed.) (electronic ed.) (1988). Nashville, TN: Word Pub.

The more recent translations change the first word "Though"(NKJV, KJV) to "If" (NIV, ESV, NLT, NAS)

The original Greek root word is "Eanper" meaning "If indeed".

Five times Paul uses this word to make a point that if he indeed did these things and lacked love then it would amount to nothing.

*1 Corinthians 13:3 (NKJV) <sup>3</sup> ...and though (if indeed) **I give my body to be burned**, but have not love, it profits me nothing.*

Paul didn't give his body to be burned.

It is not hard to fool people today with demonstrations of unusual powers or abilities. WE have seen on TV so-called miraculous healings, people falling at the touch of a person's finger, blowing on them.

Just as there was in the Corinthian church a counterfeit religion there exist the same today. Perhaps a little more sophisticated but counterfeit just the same.

Among spiritual things it is not wrong to be a doubting Thomas, (Bad tag on the man).

*1 John 4:1 (NKJV) <sup>1</sup> Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*

Do not believe all you see and hear. Watch for the fruit. If a person is edifying themselves that is a true sign to stay away.

Read 1 Corinthians 13 and 14 chapter

**Message Scriptures: 1 Corinthians 13:1–3**, 1 Corinthians 12:10, Acts 2:4, Acts 2:3–8, Luke 11:1, Matthew 6:5–8, Ecclesiastes 5:2, John 11:41–42, 1 Corinthians 12:11, 1 Cor. 14:4, Jude 1:20, 1 Corinthians 13:1, 1 Corinthians 13:3, 1 John 4:1.

END

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Glossolalia has even been manufactured by University students in America (some of whom were atheist and had no religious interest at all) as a demonstration of what can happen given the right emotional environment and the right emotional effort. To quote one example, in Geelong,

Victoria, Australia, two men as an experiment (again apart from religion) spoke in tongues after repeating “Timbucktoo” in the right emotional setting. One in just a few minutes and one partly after two hours! (Modern New Tongues” p. 59 – A.S. Hill).

There have been instances of real foreign languages being spoken in meetings as fun or as an experiment and invariably receiving an “interpretation” wholly at conflict with what had been said! A young Dutch person entered a Pentecostal Assembly recently and rattled off a Dutch fairy story receiving an interpretation that God was asking the assembly to pray for the poor in China! A tape recording of glossolalia will receive totally different interpretations from those purporting to have the gift of interpreting. This is all very sad. Many become victims of their own emotions “aided by the great deceiver.”

Pentecostals and others engaging in tongue speaking as seen today normally say any or all of the following;

1. Tongues are a sign of Baptism in the Holy Spirit – but the Bible never says that.
2. All should speak in tongues – but the Bible never says that.
3. The initial experience of tongue speaking at the Baptism is different from the later “gift of tongues” – but the Bible never says that.
4. That tongues are, or can be a heavenly language – but the Bible never says that.
5. Tongue speaking is for the benefit of believers – but the Bible never says that.
6. Tongue speaking is for the most part unintelligible – but the Bible never says that.
7. These unintelligible tongues are Christian – but the Bible and history indicate that they are heathen.

<b>Early Church Tongue Speaking</b>	<b>Modern Church Tongue Speaking</b>
The least important gift. 1 Corinthians 14:5, 12:27-31	The most important and only sought-after gift.
Sign to unbelievers. 1 Corinthians 14:22	A Sign to believers.
Spoken in turn. 1 Corinthians 14:27	Spoken together in confusion.
If no interpreter, keep silent. 1 Corinthians 14:28	Rarely an interpreter and almost always proven false.
Pray for interpretation. 1 Corinthians 14:13	Pray for speaking in tongues.
Only one interpretation.	Interpretations differ when put to the test.
To edify the Church. 1 Corinthians 14:26	To edify yourself.
Spoke a known language. Acts 2:4-11	Almost never a known language.
Accusation of madness. 1 Corinthians 14:23	No accusation of madness.
Spoken for the benefit of hearers. 1 Corinthians 14:9	Spoken for the benefit of the speaker.
Maximum of 3 to speak at a time. 1 Corinthians 14:27	Whole Church freely speaks with no interpretation.
Interpret so everyone understands. 1 Corinthians 14:16	Interpretation almost never done today