

Appendix VI – Does Everyone Receive the Gift of Tongues?

There are some believers who hold that without evidencing the gift of tongues a person cannot have been “baptized in the Holy Spirit.” There are others who do not go that far, but claim that each Christian has a prayer language, if they would only *yield to it*. I am convinced, from looking at Scripture and the face of the Church today, that both positions are in error. I will restrict myself to explaining my disagreement with the latter position since those reasons automatically apply to the former.

First, I do not see the gift of tongues *always* accompanying the “release” of the Spirit in *The Acts of the Apostles*. We are told specifically in Acts 10:45-47 and 19:6 that tongues accompanied the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on new Christians; in the second example this occurred when the Apostle Paul layed hands on the newly baptized. In Acts 8:14-17, however, we are told that the Holy Spirit came upon the newly-baptized Samaritans through the laying on of Peter and John’s hands – but without a mention of tongues. An oversight on the author Luke’s part? Well, consider also that there is no mention of the three thousand who were baptized on the day of Pentecost receiving tongues either. In fact, if you went through all the other conversion stories in *Acts* you wouldn’t find another mention of the charism.

St. Paul is clear that tongues is not an integral part of everyone’s Christian experience. In *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* he wrote:

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess the gift of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way. If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging symbol” (1 Corinthians 12:27-13:1).

At this point some “charismatic” believers will object to my citation of the above passage. They interpret Paul as saying that not all Christians should expect to *speak a prophetic message in tongues*, one in need of interpretation; but every Christian *should* expect to *pray in tongues*. I acknowledge that