

INTRODUCTION

We learned in the previous lesson that God wants us to seek spiritual gifts and the gift of prophesy in particular. We discovered that it is alright to pray and ask for a spiritual gift. God knows our hearts and the purity of our motives. To that end, God will decide who receives a spiritual gift and what gift will be given. God's motive will always be to edify the body of Christ and will choose those who will pursue love in the application of the gift. This lesson teaches us how to properly administer the gift of tongues and how not to utilize this gift and we should stay within these parameters to build up the body.

1 Corinthians 14:22-31 (NKJV)

²² Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe.

²³ Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in *those who are* uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind?

²⁴ But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all.

²⁵ And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on *his* face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.

²⁶ How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.

²⁷ If anyone speaks in a tongue, *let there be* two or at the most three, *each* in turn, and let one interpret.

²⁸ But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God.

²⁹ Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge.

³⁰ But if *anything* is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent.

³¹ For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged.

²² **Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe.**

²³ **Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in *those who are* uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind?**

The 22nd verse clearly explains the reason for the gift of tongues and this gift was best demonstrated in Acts 2:1-5 then the results were recorded in verse 41 of that same chapter. At first glance the first part of verse 22 appears to be a contradiction with verse 23. A glance can be deceiving! In verse 23 the church is not operating properly in their demonstration of the gift of tongues. As illustrated in Acts 2, the people were simply within earshot and were not the least bit interested about the word of God. They in fact thought the disciples were full of wine when they heard them speaking in other tongues. What the unbelievers in verse 22 heard got their attention to be open to the gospel that was preached shortly after that. The people in verse 23 wanted to hear about the gospel of Jesus Christ, that's why they ventured into a meeting place of believers. In that case, it was better for the church to prophesy, teach and preach than for all to speak in a strange tongue without interpretation.

²⁴ **But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all.**

²⁵ **And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on *his* face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.**

People who are open to the word of God and hear with understanding, it appears that the words spoken are specifically for them (and they are); which convinces them the word is true and convicts them to the point of repentance. In **Acts 16:30** ³⁰ says: And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" This cry can be heard on the lips of all those who recognize they are sinners in need of a savior. After this, the saved one becomes a witness to the greatness and goodness of God among the people of God.

²⁶ **How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.**

²⁷ **If anyone speaks in a tongue, *let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret.***

²⁸ **But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God.**

²⁹ **Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge.**

This is the order of service by which the Corinthian church was to follow. This order of service may not apply to every church meeting, but it shows that God desires order, but not for Him but for those that are in attendance so they may be built up. Each one may have a psalm (praise and worship song). Someone may have a teaching on a scripture that before now was not understood or misunderstood. Someone may have a tongue to speak but with interpretation and so on. However, whatever is done in the meeting it must be edifying to the body.

Everyone that can speak in a tongue is encouraged not to all stand at the same time and speak. This is a very confusing situation for all who are not speaking in a tongue and consequently there is no growth. So, speaking in tongues at a meeting is permitted, but there should be no more than two or three in order (one behind the other) and with interpretation so the body can grow. Furthermore, if there is no one to interpret, (that is there isn't anyone presently there that has the gift of interpretation of tongues) then the one that speaks in tongues should remain quite at that time and talk with God at a future time for his or her personal edification. If there are prophets, let them speak then allow others to determine if the revelation is of God. **1 John 4:1** says: ¹ **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.**

³⁰ **But if *anything* is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent.**

³¹ **For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged.**

The Holy Spirit wants to us to be sure that the one who is prophesying doesn't speak too long as the person may begin to rely on his own thoughts rather than what is coming from God. So, if a second person is given the unction to speak, the first must give pause and allow the next person to speak.

The bottom line is all can prophesy, that all others may learn and be encouraged by what is spoken.

This authenticates that the word spoken is from the Most High.