

*The Pentecostal
Problem.*

Those of us who would contend for the faith today based on the Bible, we are grateful that Paul dealt with the Pentecostal Problem (PP) in the first century of Christianity, and as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, recorded it in the Word of God in I Corinthians 14. Today, as the PP becomes a larger problem, we as faith contenders need only remind and refer people to I Corinthians 14, with background for understanding in chapters 12, 13, as well as the total context of Corinthians. {See in the Learn Christ Commentaries, volume 3 on the "Life and Letters of the Apostle Paul", the two chapters on "Understanding in the Corinthians."¹} The part that is hard to proclaim publicly {the real meaning of prophesy and prophets in the NT} these days is that the speaking in unknown tongues is being used as a substitute for the progress of maturity in the Christian life, whether you call it sanctification, godliness, fruits of the Spirit, or the additions to Christian faith that the Apostles Peter admonishes in II Peter 1:5-8. And Paul also dealt with that not only in the background of the rest of Corinthians, especially on the gifts of chapter 12 and the more excellent way to covet the best gifts of chapter 13, but in the last words of I Corinthians 14, where he expounds the word of God as, "If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual,

1. In the LCC commentary, volume 3 on "Believe and Be Baptized", the Life and 14 letters of the Apostle Paul, I Corinthians is summarized in chapter 7a as "Gifts and Skill in Understanding". On the web page of the progress chart of the Bible study, you can find a link to read chapter 7a or download in PDF the chapter.

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let him acknowledge that these things I write are commandments of the Lord" (I Corinthians 14:37). And also he adds, for those who would be in any local church or denomination stubborn about the matter, "But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant." (14:38)

Where we will have difficult today as contenders and protectors of the faith once for all delivered to the saints in the Bible, is in labeling such groups of the PP as superstitious and ignorant, a noted characteristics of certain regions of the United States more than others; but also we can glean this from how Paul told the people of Mars Hill in Athens, the close neighbor to Corinth¹, that "they were too superstitious" (Acts 17:22). It is not without significance that those who still practice and spread the PP, will most frequently use the word "Ghost" in Holy Ghost, rather than Holy Spirit².

3-1: You defenders of the faith should not use up all your ammo on the PP as there are also two other major doctrinal problems reaching up their ugly heads today in Contemporary Christianity, that of the "secret rapture" and that of "Messianic Judaism"; and both like the PP dealt with in the NT and in NT times, the secret rapture in II Timothy and Messianic Judaism at the great Jerusalem conference recorded in Acts 15.

1. We as Christians, must ask "why", why when we have so many battles with our own sinful natures, with Satan, and with the world, should we also have to do battle with fellow Christians. Think about it, however, these and many more unsound doctrines and practices are just part of the great departures from Christian faith near the END that the Bible calls the great apostasy or Falling Away (II Thessalonians). Even as Paul in II Thessalonians characterized this time of the Falling Away as a time of the "rising tide of sin and lawlessness", a mystery, and even as Jesus in the great eschatological chapter of Matthew 24 connects this "as sin abounds" with the love of many Christians waxing cold (24:12), so you have two big explanations--the flood of sin and the diminish of

1. There were 2 early NT churches in the southern part of Greece, both in the southern Roman province of Achaia, the one at Athens and the one at Corinth.

2. Holy Ghost in the King James Version is an unfortunate translation in 1611 of Holy Spirit, a time of Shakespeare and superstitions.

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love for Christ--that inevitably lead to intolerances toward sound Bible teachings and doctrines (II Timothy 4:4,5). It is not all stubbornness and even ignorance, but is also sin and diminished real love like in I Corinthians 13 where the more excellent way to covet the best gifts is presented and expounded!

2. Generally the same kind of Christians and churches who deny or ignore the present existence in history of the great Falling Away are also those of the PP!

3. It also hurts to say, but this is also based on the Bible on the Falling Away of the last of the last days, and according to Jesus: even as the PP as dealt with in I Corinthians 14 is a matter of a lack of priorities between prophesy and prophets versus unknown tongues, so false prophets and false teachers of false, or at least perverted doctrines, are a very big sign from Jesus¹ and others of the last of the last days. Once again, today in Contemporary Christianity, we don't have to say it as it has already been said for us by Jesus and the Apostles and Prophets in the Bible! Not to knock popularity, fame, and wealth and worldly success {but why not}, it has been stated over and over that when evangelists or preachers are popular and wealthy or very well-to-do, they are so because they have made one or more comprises with the world; and this very popularity itself during this incomparable time of history known in the Bible as the Falling Away, then they are also that sort of II Timothy 4:3,4 that have "itching ears" and itching ears doctrines, also that sort of 3:1-9 that are "lovers of self, lovers of money, boasters, and proud". {Check it out for yourself if you have not done so already!}

4. We defenders of and contenders for the faith once for all delivered in the Bible, must use these contemporary problems in Christian doctrines and practices as an opportunity to PROCLAIM that same faith once for all delivered to the saints and recorded in the Bible. After all, that preaching--same as proclaiming publicly and prophesying, the work of prophets--is our prime job anyway!

"Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come...{has come already in the Falling Away}. (II Timothy 4:2-4)

1. "Then many false prophet will rise up", from Jesus in Matthew 24--these are rising up today and in spite of self-denial in the churches and denominations, they are popular and MANY, a sign of the times; and the rest of Matthew 24:11, "they will deceive many". Are you going to be among the many Christians deceived in the present age of the great apostasy called the Falling Away?

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NOTE: We may have to dig a little deeper down into the Word, the Bible, than we orderly do, go back over some of the many verses of the Bible often slighted or neglected, like we are now doing in this expanding series on the Epistles of Peter and Paul, but that is our obligation to God, Christ, and faithfulness to the Bible!

3-2 Gist of the PP.

Gist: The heart of the Pentecostal Problem is that some pastors and churches strive to duplicate the first day of Pentecost after the Ascension of Christ {FDPAA}, which can not be duplicated as it was a one time historical event like the birth of Christ with signs and wonders, only the was the coming of the Holy Spirit with signs and wonders, to take the place of Jesus on earth and expand His work. There is no need to duplicate it as He, the Holy Spirit, our Helper, will be here until, as in II Thessalonians He is withdrawn from this earth in preparation for the END. The solution is to read and heed I Corinthians 14, with the background additions of chapter 12 on diversity and ranking of gifts, and chapter 13 on Christian love.

We can only tread lightly around the Pentecostal Problem so long, as we did in the first of this series, "Joy in the NT" and second "Filling in the book of Acts", before we have to take head on the pentecostal problem as Paul also had to do about "known" and "unknown" tongues {languages} in I Corinthians 14.

1. Why did Paul and the Holy Spirit through Paul chose the church at Corinth of Achaia only to deal with the matter of speaking in unknown tongues? You can search the 14 epistles of Paul to the churches, and no where except in the cluster of I Corinthians 12-14 will you find anything, outside the book of Acts, that informs us about the first century problems with tongues. Why in the world is it, that any time there is a weird doctrinal emphasis out of churches or in some cases denominations, it has something to do with teachings seldom mentioned in the Scriptures? One case in point, is these teachings on Messianic Judaism, that Pastor James dealt with terminally, we had hoped, "troubling the souls of Gentile believers" (Acts 15:24) to go back to the law of Moses; another is this incessant gospel of prosperity, coming like charismatic movements in all denominations, now heard with direct statements and undertones by those preachers and pastors who would cater to popularity {it is

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strange in the very book where Judah after Israel previously had lost peace, joy, and security, even freedom, these advocates of a substitute gospel for the gospel once for all delivered to the saints quote as teaching their brand of prosperity¹}; and the most detrimental today are both the misuses of houses of God as a business {See "Den of Thieves" from Jesus in Matthew 21:13 and from Jeremiah 7, and in the SunGrist_Bible book on the same subject}, and the second is lead by the Bible Baptist Fundamentalists {BBFer} who repeat another doctrinal problem dealt with by Paul in II Timothy, where some of "that sort" were teaching a false rapture.

2. Even though we must speculate the answer to why Paul chose Corinth to correct the unknown tongues problem {The Pentecostal Problem} in terms of the most probable answer, it could be either that only the church at Corinth had that problem, or that the churches of the larger region of Achaia--Corinth and Athens among them of Achaia--or that the Pentecostal Problem was far more prevalent in Achaia than in any other regions of early Christianity.

NOTE: Greece then as part of the Roman Empire was divided into the northern half of Macedonia and the southern half of Achaia, with both the cities of Athens and Corinth and no far apart. Even today, to a certain extent those two major divisions of Greece remain, but no where in the Bible is the Pentecostal Problem {PP} mentioned as a problem in Macedonia {recall that Paul wrote the book of Philippians to Philippi of Macedonia}, nor is the PP mentioned in any other books of the Bible. So before we speculate on the most probable cause of the PP, just to keep our feed solid in Scriptures, let us take a quick look at Philippians as typical of all other epistles of Paul, on words often related to the Pentecostal Problem--joy, peace, "filling",

1. However here in Jeremiah 33:9 as other places where you find prosperity in the Bible, it applies to an abundance of necessities for life and living, not wealth. "And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it." Stay in context, this is a promise to Israel for national prosperity in the sense of food, clothing, and peace, after 70 years of Captivity; and in fact any place in the Bible you find prosper or prosperity, for the most part, it refers to: (1) national gross product so that all citizens have enough to live on, and in peace; and (2) like in the whole Christian philosophy of life and living of the NT, God works with us on a as needed basis not on a as desired basis. Some like to quote Jeremiah 29:11 in the NIV, where prosperity is added, not in the KJV or the NJKV, but the meaning is still the same the nation will do well and have peace after 17 years of Captivity.

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Holy Spirit, and "tongues", known and unknown, holy and holiness, and sanctification

3-3: Words must often referenced by the Pentecostal Problem as used in a typical NT epistle of Paul, that of Philippians. {For a more thorough look at "joy" in the NT, see the first in this series, "Joy in the New Testament"}.

Joy in Philippians.

6 times the word "joy" is found in the book of Philippians: (1) Philippians 1:4, "making request with joy", where Paul after addressing the saints, bishops, and deacons at Philippi, tell them how often he thinks of them with fond memories and then in his prayers has joy as he makes requests or petitions to God for the benefit of those believers at Philippi; (2) "joy of faith" in 1:25, where Paul is in a strait as to where he should desire to depart this life on earth, and be with Christ, which is much better, or to stay and help the church at Philippi with their "furtherance and joy in the faith"; (3) "my joy", Paul's joy in 2:22, where Paul requests that the church be like-minded, and of one accord, that they might fill up or make full his joy; (4) & (5) Philippians 2:17,18, "I joy" and "you joy" respectively, where for several reasons mentioned in the verses before, Paul rejoices with the church members and they in turn rejoice with him {those reasons, for our own joy, will be listed below in section 3; (6) "my joy and crown", Paul's joy and crown in 4:1, where the "bret hen" are dearly beloved, longed for, and the joy and crown of Paul.

*3-4: Joy starts in Philippians chapter two, before coming to usage #5 and #6 of the word "joy" in 2:17,18 {this is sort of a conclusion or sub-conclusion in Paul's joy and their joy in verses 17 and 18 of what was before}; and what it starts with is **THE MIND OF CHRIST**, which should be in all Christians like it was in Christ.*

NOTE: We are laboring some of these Bible words like joy, peace, filling, and the Holy Spirit, because it is considered that what many believers

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after in the filling of the Holy Spirit with speaking in unknown tongues, is inward joy and peace. Also as previously seen on filling, filling is used in the Bible for more times on other inward fillings and feelings of believers than of the Holy Spirit, per se in those words! Perhaps many times, what we really want is to take on internally the mind of the Lord Jesus Christ. In either case, in public worship, our minds should be more on the Mind of Jesus, and like mindedness with Him, who as far as we can tell in Scriptures never spoke in an unknown tongue.

1. (Philippians 2:1) We know that there is consolation in Christ, comfort of love, fellow hip of the Holy Spirit, affection and mercy in the body of Christ; and Paul only uses the word "if" for effect, and just in case some church members have not come to that fulfillment of joy with Paul.

2. (Philippians 2:2). Okay church member and Christian, you have passed from the "if" into the assurance, then take that comfort and assurance, and BE LIKE-MINDED with it. {Paul as he often does piles up other words to say the same thing: to be like-minded is to (1) have the same love, (2) be of one accord, and (3) be of one mind.}

3. **THE BIG ONE:** " Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus..." (Philippians 2:5)

"Christ Jesus, WHO..." It did not hurt to remind them, as most of them knew, WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

(1) Who? He who was in the form of God from before the beginning of Creation; (2) Who? He who did not count lightly to be One with God, and be the mediating cause in Creation and salvation; (3) Who? He who came to earth in human form, in the likeness of man and a bondservant; (4) Who? He who becomes obedient to the will and way of God on earth to the full extent of death on the cross for the sins of the world; (5) Who? Because of all this, He who God exalted with a name above all other names; (6) Who? He who at whose name every knee should bow in heaven and earth; (7) Who? He at whose every tongue should confess that Jesus in Lord to the glory of God the Father.

NOTE: If you want to find a good use of your tongue in public worship, let it be in order to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord¹, and that will within

1. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy". (Revelation 19:10)

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itself, and mainly itself, be glory for God the Father. No where in the Bible does it tell us publicly and in worship to glorify the Father with an unknown tongue, just the opposite in I Corinthians 14, even though as standard practice in the PP is the repetitive use of the word "glory". Within itself not conducive to matters "done decently and in order" in public worship, the bottom line of I Corinthians 14:40.

3-5: However it was not the church at Philippi in Macedonia which had the Pentecostal Problem, it was the church at Corinth in Achaia; and Paul dealt with that directly in I Corinthians 14, with a preface in I Corinthians 12 of respect for other and higher ranking gifts, then going in the famous love chapter of I Corinthians on to the "more excellent" way than to "covet earnestly the best gifts".

Lest the reader become impatient, let us set forth in order the bottom lines of I Corinthians 12 and 14 on God's ordained solutions for the Pentecostal Problem.

1. First of all, let it be stated again as emphases from the previous in the Bible study sessions, "Filled in the book of Acts", that the crux of those who would repeat the Pentecostal Problem today, much like in Corinth and corrected in I Corinthians 14, is that many strive to duplicate the historical day of the first day of Pentecost, FDPAA, after the ascension of Jesus; and being a one time only first coming of the Holy Spirit in power and glory can not be duplicated.
2. The one who speaks in an unknown tongue in public worship "edifies himself" (I Corinthians 14:4; but he who preaches, teaches, and gives testimony in a known tongue that the congregation knows as a language, prophesies to the whole assembly.
3. I Corinthians 14, most of the time, distinguishes between unknown tongues, those not spoken in any language known on earth, and known tongues, languages of the earth; and so should we in our Bible understanding and preaching and teaching. If we do not, the false impression is created that somewhere on the face of the earth--it just has not been found yet, and that is hard to believe--that unknown tongue is a language. {A good working definition for public wor-

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ship is that if the whole congregation does not have the language capabilities to understand it, say it is not in English, French, Spanish, or whatever the local dialects, then it is an unknown language.} After all the whole import of I Corinthians 14 in the use of prophesying is to communicate with understanding; and it is amazing that those who so often can make beautiful distinctions in sounds of music, can not also rightly divide the tongue to make distinction in understandable words of worship.

4. Most of the time those with the PP also have a problem with "special revelation", often using such words as "God told me" or "God said to me"; and far beyond the ordinary Bible understanding on Revelation and illumination, where Revelation came only from Apostles and Prophets in the Bible--you know, the same as the "faith once for all delivered to {all} the saints" (Jude 3) and recorded as complete in the Bible--and what our misguided brothers mean instead of an special revelation that adds to the Bible, sometimes called isogesis instead of the reading out of the Bible the read meaning, is that God has given them some new illuminations! All 3 of the major doctrinal problems today--unknown tongues, Messianic Judaism, and the secret rapture--can be traced back to misguided special revelation that tried to add to the Bible by the way of isogesis. Those who have a habit of homiletics by spiritualizing tend to also drift into the problem of special revelation, and you will more often note it among preachers that preach and teach more from the OT than the NT. But this last point must be clarified more after consideration in the series of understanding skill in I Corinthians.