

**Grace to You :: Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time**

**Charismatic Counterfeits: Do the Modern Gifts Meet the Biblical Standard? (Nathan Busenitz)**

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: TM13-14

Strange Fire Conference

Good morning. The title of our session for this hour is “Charismatic Counterfeits,” and I expect that there will be more people coming in as we get started, but it is just after 10:45 so we’re going to go ahead and start. We go until noon today. Title, as I mentioned, “Charismatic Counterfeits: Do the modern gifts meet the biblical standard?” And that subtitle really identifies what it is that we’re going to be addressing today. We want to consider the way in which the contemporary Charismatic Movement defines key spiritual gifts. And then we want to compare that Charismatic version with the Word of God to see how they match up.

Now just as a side note as we get started, I want to note that much of the material that we’re going to be covering today, and it will be quite a lot of material. It parallels what is in the *Strange Fire* book which you either have received or will be receiving later today. And so if you want to study this further, or if you’re wondering how you can much of this same content, repackaged a little bit, you’ll find it in the *Strange Fire* book. So I would direct you to that resource for further study.

All right, similar to my session yesterday, some of you may have been in here yesterday when we talked about the gift of prophecy. I think it’s important for us to begin by defining our terms so that we’re clear what it is that we are discussing.

First important term that we need to identify and I realize at this conference, we’ve been using these terms a lot already, so this may seem redundant. But I think it’s helpful for us to just review. The first term would be the term “charismatic.” The term “charismatic” itself is very broad. It encompasses millions of people and thousands of denominations. According to the *International Dictionary of Charismatic and Pentecostal Movements*, there are over 20 thousand distinct Pentecostal or Charismatic groups in the world today. So you can appreciate how diverse and how broad this Movement is.

Charismatics though are known for their belief that the miraculous and revelatory gifts described in the New Testament are still in operation today, and therefore they should be sought by believers. It should be sought by Christians in the church today. Now when we talk about the Charismatic Movement, we usually subdivide the Charismatic Movement into three main categories or waves. The first wave of the Charismatic Movement was classic Pentecostalism which began in Topeka, Kansas

on January 1, 1901 when a woman named Agnes Ozman reportedly spoke in Chinese under the directorship of Charles Parham who was a Methodist minister. It then spread to Los Angeles in 1905 right around there under the leadership of William Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival and classic Pentecostalism was born.

The second wave in the 1960's took place, actually started here in Van Nuys, California when Pentecostal theology began to infiltrate the mainline denominations and now you begin to have many different denominations which claim to experience the Charismatic gifts.

And then in the 1980's the Third Wave started when two professors at Fuller Theological Seminary introduced Pentecostal theology into evangelicalism. So Peter Wagner and John Wimber, John Wimber associated, of course, with the Vineyard Fellowship, but both of them were teaching at Fuller Seminary which is just down the road in Pasadena at the time. Now we'll use the term "charismatic" today to refer to all three of those waves and admittedly we're encompassing a lot in a little and so it necessarily demands that we speak in general terms.

There is a second term that I think is important for us to identify, and that's the term continuationist. Continuationist, that term is often used to differentiate theologically conservative Charismatics from those in the broader Movement. Now continuationist simply means they believe the gifts have continued, but they usually prefer that term over against the term Charismatic because there is, as we've seen this week, a lot of baggage associated with the term Charismatic.

Evangelical continuationist would include men like John Piper, Wayne Grudem, Sam Storms and others. I read this quote in my session yesterday, but I think it's helpful. Bob Kauflin talking about what makes a continuationist different than a Charismatic says this, "The term charismatic has sometimes been associated with doctrinal error, unsubstantiated claims of healing, financial impropriety, outlandish and unfulfilled predictions and an overemphasis on the speech gifts," and he includes some regrettable hair styles. He says, "That's why I've decided, or started, to identify myself more often as a continuationist rather than a charismatic." So, there you can see their own perspective on why they use that term.

And then finally, the term "cessationist" the term cessationist refers to those who believe the miraculous and revelatory gifts passed away after the Apostolic age ended. Cessationists assert that supernatural phenomena like the gifts of Apostleship, prophecy, tongues and healing are no longer functioning in the church today. Now that does not mean that cessationists are anti-supernaturalists, we do believe that God is working in the world today. Tom Pennington, I thought, did a good job clarifying that yesterday. It's just that we were talking specifically about the continuation of the Charismatic gifts, that is what cessationists are saying have ceased.

So cessationists believe those gifts were given as signs to authenticate the spread of the gospel and the ministry of the Apostles during the foundational age of the church. And once that age ended and the canon of Scripture was complete, the primary purpose for the miraculous and revelatory gifts passed away and so those gifts should no longer be sought.

There is obviously significant disagreement between Charismatics and Continuationists on the one hand, and cessationists on the other. The first group contends that the extraordinary gifts, the miraculous and revelatory gifts are still functioning in the church today. The other, cessationists by contrast, assert that those extraordinary gifts passed away because they were limited to the foundation age of the church, limited to the apostolic age.

That raises a key question. How should we approach this controversial issue when we talk about it with those whom we disagree with about this particular topic? Now Charismatics often approach the debate from an experiential starting point. They argue that the extraordinary gifts must have continued because they assert that they have personally experienced them. Or they know someone who has. I think this is summarized in James Warner's quote here. He says, "It is hard to argue with somebody that speaks in tongues that there isn't such a thing." As Warner's quote suggests, Charismatics believe that their personal experience makes it hard to argue that the extraordinary gifts are no longer happening. How can you tell me it's not happening when I've experienced it?

By contrast, cessationists often approach the debate from what I call a chronological starting point. They go to passages like 1 Corinthians 13:8 through 10, and they attempt to argue that the miraculous and revelatory gifts passed off the scene based on those verses in 1 Corinthians 13. Now seeking to know when the extraordinary gifts ceased is certainly a valid investigation. However, it's been my experience at least that this type of argument seldom succeeds when convincing Charismatics that their contemporary practices are misguided. Part of the reason why is because even if a cessationist can demonstrate that the extraordinary gifts passed off the scene of church history, shortly after the Apostolic age concluded, many Charismatics will respond by simply saying that the gifts returned in 1901 at the outbreak of the Pentecostal Movement.

So we find ourselves then at a bit of an impasse when we consider the usual ways that this conversation is framed. Cessationists are generally unimpressed by the subjective experiences of Charismatics. And Charismatics remain largely unpersuaded by some of the chronological arguments that are made by cessationists.

So, the question is, is there a better way for us to frame the discussion in our efforts to think about these things in a meaningful and fruitful way? Well I'm convinced that there is and that's what I want to talk about this morning in this session. Before we start talking about when the gifts ceased, we first need to answer the question, what were the gifts? What is it that we're actually talking about. It's not until we determine what the gifts were from Scripture that we can then even answer the question

about whether or not they've ceased. So our goal then, this morning, is to articulate a biblical understanding of the miraculous and revelatory gifts which we will then compare to contemporary Charismatic practice. We're bringing the biblical standard to bear on the modern experience. And what we will find is that when compared to the real thing, the modern Charismatic gifts simply don't measure up. They're using biblical terminology but their experiences are not the same as what is described in the New Testament .

So, we might call this the what question. In other words, what were the gifts in the New Testament, based on the biblical evidence. And how does modern Charismatic practice compare? It's only after we answer that question that we are ready to then discuss subsequent questions like when did the gifts cease? Or why did the gifts cease? And we're not going to address those two questions today, we're going to focus simply on the first question, what were the gifts? And in particular this morning, we're going to consider the gifts of prophecy, gifts of tongues, and the gifts of healing. These three represent major points of disagreement and controversy between Charismatics and cessationists, so it's important that we consider each one of these from a biblical perspective. We'll begin with the gift of prophecy. And my entire session yesterday was focused just on the gift of prophecy, so I'm going to briefly cover prophecy this morning and I'll direct you to that earlier session or to again the *Strange Fire* book if you want to dig more deeply into the topic of prophecy.

As I noted in my seminary...seminar yesterday, Scripture gives us three criteria for evaluating anyone who would claim to be a prophet, anyone who would claim to deliver new revelation from God is subjected to these three criteria in Scripture. Both Charismatics and cessationists would agree that prophecy is the human report of divine revelation. In this case, new revelation, extra biblical revelation. And the Bible then gives us three tests for evaluating the legitimacy of anyone who claims to have received a new revelation from God.

What are those three tests? Well the first one is already up, it's doctrinal orthodoxy. The revelation declared by a true prophet must align perfectly with what has previously been revealed. God cannot contradict Himself and so if the revelation comes from God, then it cannot contradict something that God has previously revealed. So any self-proclaimed prophet who deceives people by delivering revelation that leads them into false doctrine, that person from a biblical perspective is considered a false prophet.

I'll just read one passage of Scripture to demonstrate this point. Deuteronomy 13:1 through 5. "If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you, gives you a sign or a wonder and the sign or the wonder comes true concerning which he spoke to you saying, 'Let us go after other gods and let us serve them,' you shall not listen to the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams for the Lord your God is testing you to find out if you love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul. You shall follow the Lord your God and fear Him. And you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him and cling to Him. But that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to

death because he has counseled rebellion against the Lord your God who brought you from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery to seduce you from the way in which the Lord your God commanded you to walk and so you shall purge the evil from among you.”

This passage makes it absolutely clear that if a prophet, even if a prophet says things that come true, or does some sort of seemingly supernatural work, if the prophet leads you into heresy, leads you into false doctrine, that prophet is to be deemed a false prophet. You’ll notice that God Himself fixes the death penalty to this which I think underscores just how serious this offense is in the mind of the Lord.

Second, a second test in addition to doctrinal orthodoxy was moral integrity. A true prophet was required to live by God’s standard. In Scripture, the Lord spoke through holy men who were moved by the Holy Spirit. So any self-proclaimed prophet lived in unrestrained lust or unrepentant sin showed himself to be a false prophet. Again, just one passage to make this point. This time from the New Testament. Second Peter 2, “But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there were also be false teachers among you.” Notice how Peter equates false prophets with false teachers. “Who will secretly introduce destructive heresies even denying the master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves,” and here’s the moral integrity part, “many will follow their sensuality and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned and in their greed they will exploit you with false words, their judgment from long ago is not idle and their destruction is not asleep.

So again we see that false prophets can be identified by their life style and also by the lifestyles of those who follow them. Jesus said in Matthew 7:20 that a prophet is known by his fruit, by the fruits of what he teaches and the fruit of how he lives.

That brings us to a third task, what I call predictive accuracy. When a prophet, a true prophet declares divine revelation about future events, or reveals other unknown things, if that word comes directly from God, He speaks with 100 percent accuracy. On the flip side, if someone claimed to speak prophetic revelation from God about the future, then that doesn’t happen, the Bible declares that person to be a false prophet.

Again, just one passage of Scripture, Deuteronomy 18. “The prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.” Now the question naturally arises, well how do we know? That’s exactly what the Lord says here. “You may say in your heart, how will we know the Word which the Lord has not spoken?” Here’s how you know. “When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about, or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously, you shall not be afraid of him.”

Well that’s just about as clear as God could possibly make it. How do we know if something doesn’t come true, it didn’t come from God. That’s exactly what God Himself says in that passage.

The rest of Scripture reverberates that truth. Isaiah 44:26 says that God confirms the Word of His true messengers. Jeremiah 28:9 says that a true prophet is the one whose predictions come true. Ezekiel 12:25, “The Word which God speaks always comes to pass.” And those who speak for God, if they’re speaking His Words, those words will be true words, one hundred percent of the time.

Now if we take a look at the broader Charismatic Movement, especially that which is represented by TBN and mainstream Charismatic media, we quickly see that the modern Charismatic version of prophecy fails to meet really all three of those criteria, certainly the last. The broader Charismatic Movement is hardly known for its doctrinal orthodoxy and it is often plagued by moral scandal. So even the first two tests call it into question.

But I want to focus on that third requirement of biblical prophecy, predictive accuracy because I think it underscores just how different the Charismatic definition of prophecy is from the way that the Bible describes prophecy. Here’s one of the pretty well-known Charismatic prophets, one of the Kansas City prophets, Rick Joyner. He says this about another prophet. He says, “There is a prophet named Bob Jones who was told that the general level of prophetic revelation in the church was about 65 percent accurate at this time. Some are only about ten percent accurate. Some of the most mature are approaching 85 to 95 percent accuracy. Prophecy is increasing in purity but it’s still a long way to go,” he says.

Phil Johnson in his breakout session yesterday talked about another one of the Kansas City prophets, Mike Bickle who admitted the fact that actually 80 percent of the time the prophecies he’s heard have been wrong. So you can see how low the standard is. And in Scripture, the standard is the opposite. It’s not how many you get right, it’s how many did you get wrong. And if that number is anything other than zero, then you are condemned by what Deuteronomy 18 says.

Another well-known Charismatic leader, Jack Deere. “Prophets are really messy,” he says. “Prophets make mistakes and sometimes when a prophet makes a mistake, it’s a serious mistake. I mean, I know prophets just last year that cost people millions of dollars with the mistake they made. I talked with people who made the wrong investments, moved their homes and spent tons of money, implication being on a supposed Word of prophecy.

Now I shared some of these quotes yesterday in my discussion of prophecy, I’m just going over them quickly now to show you that in the words of Charismatics themselves, the modern version of prophecy is riddled with errors and mistakes. Even among more conservative evangelical Charismatics or continuationists as we might call them, this view of modern prophecy prevails. So here Wayne Grudem in his book, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today* says this. “There is almost uniform testimony from all sections of the Charismatic Movement that prophecy is imperfect and impure and will contain elements that are not to be obeyed or trusted.” That’s an

amazing admission. Biblically, prophecy because it is a revelation from God is authoritative, meaning it must be obeyed and it is accurate, meaning it can be trusted. But as Grudem here acknowledges, "Modern prophecy by contrast is imperfect and impure and so as a result, it doesn't have to be obeyed, meaning it's not authoritative, and it often contains errors and so should not be trusted. Meaning that it's fallible.

The...well one more quote here, from John Piper talking about this same view of prophecy. He's comparing the gift of teaching to the gift of prophecy in this article. He says, Now compare this to the gift of prophecy. He says, "Prophecy is prompted by the Spirit and sustained by the Spirit and based on a revelation from God." So they are saying prophecy is a revelation that comes from God. "God revealed something to the mind of the prophet in some way beyond ordinary sense, perception. And since God never makes a mistake, we know that His revelation is true, it has no error in it.

Now up to this point, I'm tracking with what Dr. Piper is saying. But then he says this. "But the gift of prophecy does not guarantee the infallible transmission of that revelation. The prophet may perceive the revelation imperfectly. He may understand it imperfectly and he may deliver it imperfectly. And so the gift of prophecy then results in fallible prophecy.

So you see what's happened there is, he says the revelation is perfect, but it's the prophet who messes it up. The problem is that according to the standards of Deuteronomy 18, if a prophet gets perfect revelation and then messes it up in his proclamation, that prophet is condemned by the standard that God has laid out in His Word.

So all of this is an attempt to justify imperfect, erroneous, prophetic words because those are the only kind of prophetic words that exist in the modern Charismatic Movement. This, of course, makes it very, very difficult to be able to discern whether or not a prophecy is true. Somebody claims to have a word of prophecy, or a word from the Lord. How do you know if that really came from God or if it's just somebody's imagination? Well it's entirely subjective. Wayne Grudem, speaking about how to evaluate prophecy says this, "Pastorally if someone is in charge of a home fellowship group, or if a pastor is in charge of a prayer meeting, you have to call it as you see it. I have to use an American analogy, it's an umpire calling balls and strikes as the pitcher pitches the ball across the plate." So you can see just how subjective prophecy is treated.

Again, it's not authoritative, so you don't have to obey it. It's not accurate so you can't trust it. Well how do you know if it's good or not? How do you know if it comes from God or not? Well you call it as you see it. This, of course, leads to the potential for all sorts of misuse and abuse in the church, people claiming to speak for God, telling people they've received some sort of revelation from God and then manipulating or coercing people to do things as a result.

One of the most, I think, telling examples actually comes from the words of John Piper himself. You find that slide...here it is...in an interview just at the end of last year, December of two thousand twelve. Piper told this story. He said, "A woman came to me while my wife was pregnant with my fourth child. And she said, 'I have a very hard prophecy for you.' I said, 'Okay.' She said, in fact she wrote it down and gave it to me, 'Your wife is going to die in childbirth and you're going to have a daughter.' Piper says, 'I went back to my study, I got down and I just wept.' Then he goes on. "And when we delivered our fourth boy, not girl, I gave a whoop which I always do but this whoop was a little extra because I knew as soon as the boy was born, that this was not a true prophecy." So you can see even in the personal experience of a respected evangelical leader like John Piper, the destructive effects that modern Charismatic prophecy can have. He didn't know if it was a true prophecy or not until after his child was born. But biblically if he had applied the standards of Deuteronomy, of the Old Testament to how to discern true prophecy from a false one, he could have known from the outset not to trust this woman's supposed revelation from God.

So, the Charismatic version of prophecy then consists of supposed revelation that comes from God, which is then declared by a human prophet but in such a way that the prophecy is full of errors as this example illustrates, and is therefore not authoritative or binding, but can certainly have destructive effects in people's lives.

But that's not at all how the Bible defines prophecy. Revelation that comes from God is authoritative, it is absolutely trustworthy, it must be obeyed and if a revelation came from God, it will certainly come to pass. You can see then when we start with the biblical criteria for evaluating the gift of prophecy, when we compare it, the biblical data, with the contemporary Charismatic Movement, the modern version quickly is exposed as not being the same thing. The words they're using are biblical words, but the practice is not the biblical practice.

This is a quote that comes from the *Strange Fire* book and I think it summarizes it nicely. Dr. MacArthur says, "The true prophetic office demanded 100 percent accuracy. Insofar as they declared new revelation from God to the church, New Testament prophets were held to that standard. To be sure, the proclamation and exposition of the prophetic word continues today through faithful preaching and teaching. In the same way that biblical prophets exhorted and admonished people to listen to divine revelation so gifted preachers throughout all of church history have passionately encouraged their congregations to heed the Word of the Lord. The key difference is that whereas biblical prophets receive new revelation, directly from the Spirit of God, contemporary preachers are called to proclaim only that which the Spirit of God revealed in His Word.

Then this is the point. The only legitimate way anyone can say "thus says the Lord," or "I've received a Word from the Lord," is if the next words that follow come directly from the biblical text. Anything other than that is blasphemous, presumption and certainly not prophecy.



Okay, let's continue by talking about the gift of tongues. The Charismatic gift that launched the Pentecostal Movement in 1901 was speaking in tongues. As I mentioned earlier, it was in January 1, 1901 in Topeka, Kansas when Agnes Ozman, a woman there in Topeka, reportedly spoke in tongues. That's what launched the Pentecostal Movement.

The question is, does the contemporary version of Charismatic tongues, does it match the biblical gift? Now the definitive passage on tongues is Acts chapter 2. In fact, the reason the Movement is called the Pentecostal Movement is because they believe that they speak in tongues like what happened on the Day of Pentecost. So let's see what Luke tells us from Acts chapter 2 about what happened on that day.

“And they,” this is all who were gathered in the Upper Room, the Apostles along with the rest of the 120 who were gathered there. “They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven and when this sound occurred, the crowd came together and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. They were amazed and astonished, saying, ‘Are not all of these who are speaking Galileans? How is it that we hear them in our own language to which we were born, Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Libya, Cyrene, visitors from Rome, Jews, proselytes, Cretans, Arabs, we hear them in our own tongue, speaking of the mighty deeds of God. And they all continued in Amazement and great perplexity saying to one another, what does this mean?’”

Now that's a pretty clear description of what the gift of tongues was like and how it operated on the day of Pentecost. In fact, in Acts chapter 2 verse 4, it clearly states that this was a speaking gift. They spoke in other tongues. And verses 8 through 12 is equally explicit in defining those tongues as specific dialects which were spoken in the Roman world at that time. In other words, they were real human languages. And so we would conclude and I would add here that most Charismatics would agree with us on this, that the gift of tongues at least in Acts 2, the gift of tongues was the miraculous ability to speak foreign languages that the speakers themselves had never learned.

Wayne Grudem talking about the Charismatic view of tongues, wants to open the door to a second type of tongue speaking. So the tongues in Acts 2 are clearly foreign languages. But the Charismatic version of tongues is not foreign languages, so how do we get around this? Well Wayne Grudem asks this question: Are tongues known human languages? He says sometimes this gift may result in speaking in a human language that the speaker has not learned. But ordinarily it seems that it will involve speech in a language that no one understands, whether that be a human language or not, and I would highlight that second half there because that's really the modern version of Charismatic tongues.

Now he gives lip service, at least, to the possibility of real languages, because he can't deny that it was real languages in Acts chapter 2. But the reality is that in contemporary Charismatic experience, tongues is speech in a language that no one understands and that when linguists study it is not seen to be a real authentic human language. In fact, a professor at the University of Toronto, a linguist professor named William Samarin spent several years doing first-hand research, studying Charismatic tongues. What's commonly called *glossolalia* from the Greek words that mean to speak in tongues. And here's his conclusion. *Glossolalia* consists of strings of meaningless syllables made up of sounds taken from those familiar to the speaker and put together more or less haphazardly. The speaker controls the rhythm, volume, speed and inflection of his speech so that the sounds emerge as pseudo-language in the form of words and sentences." *Glossolalia* is language like because the speaker unconsciously wants it to be language-like. Yet in spite of superficial similarities, *glossolalia* fundamentally is not language."

Now Samarin is, I'm not even sure if he's a believer, he's not in the cessationists Charismatic debate, he's just approaching it from a linguistic perspective, and his research leads him to conclude the modern version of Charismatic tongues is not real language.

So it would seem then that the contemporary Charismatic version of tongues in terms of non-human languages that no one understands, fails to match the gift as it is clearly defined and described in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost. Now this raises a question. How then do Charismatics and continuationists who acknowledge that it was real languages in Acts 2, how do they justify the contemporary experience of speaking in non-languages?

We might put the question this way. If the tongues of Acts 2 were human languages, but the tongues of the modern Charismatic Movement are not human languages, then how do Charismatics defend their contemporary practice of speaking in incoherent speech?

Well in order to bypass what to me seems like a pretty clear dilemma, Charismatics actually argue that there are two different kinds of categories of tongues that are described in the New Testament. There is the real authentic human language kind of tongues, that's Acts chapter 2. And then there is the spiritual ecstatic incoherent non-sensible kind of tongues which is what takes place in their churches on a regular basis. Or in their private prayer closets wherever tongues are practiced.

So here's Adrian Warnock(?), pretty well-known Charismatic blogger, he says this, "One thing that most of us agree on is that there are different kinds of tongues. I think it is fair to say that the tongues of 1 Corinthians are different than those of Acts 2. Paul himself speaks of different kinds of tongues in 1 Corinthians 14:10. So it is at least possible that at different points in the passage, 1 Corinthians 12 to 14, Paul is talking about different forms of tongues.

So you see what they're doing is they're saying there's actually a different category or a different kind of tongues and that's the kind of tongues that is consistent with modern Charismatic practice.

So this brings up an important question: Does the biblical evidence allow for this kind of distinction? Are there two kinds of tongues that are described in the New Testament. Is the gift of tongues in 1 Corinthians 12 to 14 different than the gift of tongues that was described in Acts chapter 2? I would argue, absolutely not, and I'm going to give you quickly here seven observations drawn from these two passages that demonstrate the fact that the gift of tongues in 1 Corinthians is exactly the same, at least it's described in exactly the same way as the gift of tongues in Acts. And therefore, there is no biblical reason for us to conclude that the tongues in 1 Corinthians was qualitatively or categorically different.

So here are these seven reasons. And again, much of this material is...or parallels what's in the *Strange Fire* book, so rather than trying to feverishly write everything down, you'll find a lot of this material covered in the *Strange Fire* book itself.

But are there two kinds of tongues? Well here are seven similarities. First of all, the same terminology is used in both passages, both in Acts and in 1 Corinthians 12 to 14 the same words are used to describe the gift of tongues. The primary word for tongues in Acts 1 is *glossa*. *Glossa* is a Greek word that means, it can mean the literal tongue, or it means language. That's what it means. As in Acts, the primary word for tongues in 1 Corinthians 12 to 14 is *glossa*, so it is the same word that is being used in both places.

Wayne Grudem, I realize that I've been reading a lot today that I disagree with from Grudem, but here's a part of Grudem's evaluation that I would wholeheartedly agree with. He says this, "It should be said at the outset that the Greek word *glossa* translated tongue is not used only to mean the physical tongue in a person's mouth, but also to mean language. In the New Testament passages where speaking in tongues is discussed, the meaning languages is certainly in view. It is unfortunate, therefore, that English translations have continued to use the phrase "speaking in tongues" which is an expression not otherwise used in ordinary English and which gives the impression of a strange experience, something completely foreign to ordinary human life. But if English translations were to use the expression "speaking in languages," it would not seem merely as strange and would give the reader a sense much closer to what first century Greek-speaking readers would have heard in the phrase when they read it in Acts or in 1 Corinthians."

I would absolutely agree with that. Now where I disagree with Dr. Grudem is that he's going to allow the word "language" to include incoherent speech. But that's not a language. A language is a real meaningful way to communicate with other people. But he's absolutely right. In fact, the reason the gift of tongues language has held on in English is because the translators of the King James back in

1611 translated it as the gift of tongues at a time in English where tongue could mean foreign language. In fact, the cover page of the King James says that this is a translation of the Bible in the English tongue. So it was a common way of referring to language back in the seventeenth century. That language has been retained by many translations, largely because they don't want to enter the Charismatic cessationist debate, and so they just keep it ambiguous.

So, same terminology. A second similarity is the same description. In both Acts and in 1 Corinthians 12 to 14, the gift of languages, or the gift of tongues is described in ways that rational languages would be described. So, for example, the miraculous ability as it is described in Acts 2, is the supernatural ability to speak in foreign languages. And we've already covered that. Now in 1 Corinthians, the fact that these languages can be interpreted, which is, by the way, a translation, it's really the gift of translation, and we still use that word in English when we talk about an interpreter. It means a translator. The fact that these languages can be interpreted indicates that it consisted of, or that they consisted of an authentic foreign language, similar to the tongues or languages of Acts 2. Paul's direct association of tongue speaking in verses 10 and 11 of chapter 14, which we're not going to read today just for the sake of time, and also his reference to Isaiah 28:11 and 12, also in chapter 14, really makes this conclusion, I think, very persuasive. Paul speaks about these languages as if they were real human languages, even there in 1 Corinthians 14.

Now what about 1 Corinthians 12:10 where Paul says that there are different kinds of tongues? Well the word for "kind" there is *genos* from which we get the English word genus as in genus and species, the things you learn about in biology. It refers to different families of languages. And this is a normal way for linguists who categorize human language. So it's not two different categories of languages, a real language and a fake language. No, this is different kinds of human languages. And, of course, in Acts 2 we see more than a dozen different kinds of human dialects that are listed there on the Day of Pentecost.

A third similarity, and I realize we're going quickly but that's intentional. A third similarity is that the same source is behind these gifts. So unlike the modern Charismatic version of tongues which, at least, in some circles can be learned, some churches even have classes that will teach you how to speak in tongues, the gift in the Bible was a miraculous gift that was given to you by the Holy Spirit. And, you know, what is more miraculous, the ability to suddenly speak fluently in a human foreign language that you never went to school to learn? Or the ability to speak incoherent mumbo-jumbo? I'm...obviously that's not how they would describe it, but which is more miraculous? Obviously one is miraculous and the other is something that is not. And that's because the real gift of tongues found its source in the Holy Spirit.

Now fourthly, we see that the same recipients received the gift of tongues in both passages. In Acts 2 it's the 120 who are gathered in the Upper Room, it's more than just the Twelve Apostles. In Acts 10 it's Cornelius, in Acts 19 it's the former disciples of John the Baptist. And in fact, in Acts 11, speaking

of Acts 10, Peter makes the point that what happened with Cornelius was the same as what had happened at Pentecost.

In 1 Corinthians, Paul as an Apostle speaks in tongues, but also the believers in the church in Corinth speak in tongues. So this is not just an apostolic version of the gift, or a lay version of the gift, the recipients in both cases are the same.

Now, in both passages the same primary purpose is listed. In Acts chapter 2, this is a sign to the unbelieving Jews on the Day of Pentecost. In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul explicitly says the gift of tongues is a sign for unbelievers, and then he quotes Isaiah 28:11 which demonstrates that it was a sign specifically for the unbelieving Jews.

And then sixthly, same connection to prophecy. In the gift in Acts chapter 2, the gift of tongues is then followed by Peter talking about the prophecy of Joel, characterizing the apostolic age. And here we have in 1 Corinthians 12 to 14, clear connections to the gift of prophecy throughout. This shows that the gift of tongues in both places was a revelatory gift like the gift of prophecy.

And then finally, the same reaction from unbelievers. In Acts chapter 2, the Jews who are there who don't speak those languages and therefore don't understand what the 120 are saying, they react by saying, "These people must be drunk." And in 1 Corinthians 12 to 14 we find out that if an unbeliever comes into the congregation and the tongues, the languages are not translated, meaning the people who are there won't understand what's being said, they will respond by saying, "These people are crazy." That's not really that much different...drunk, crazy...it's essentially the same conclusion that people will draw if they don't understand what is being said. Now that doesn't mean that these languages were no languages or ecstatic incoherent speech, it simply means that unless the real language was translated, people wouldn't understand what you're saying and they would conclude that you're crazy.

Now there's an additional note that I think is important to make, Luke wrote Acts and he wrote the book of Acts after Paul wrote the book of 1 Corinthians. Paul wrote the book of 1 Corinthians around 55 A.D. Luke wrote the Book of Acts around 60 A.D., five, maybe a few years after that, so maybe 61 or 62, so five to six years later Luke writes Acts. Luke, of course, is the traveling companion of Paul. He even writes under Paul's apostolic authority. It is hard to imagine that Luke would use the same terminology, the same description, and all these other similarities to describe what happened on Pentecost if he knew that this was only going to create confusion with the Corinthian congregation who had already been confused about this five years earlier.

So the biblical evidence then leads us to conclude that there is only one kind of gift of tongues, and if we had time, this morning, I would love to go through all of 1 Corinthians 12 to 14 and discuss each portion there. But when we compare the two passages, we see that what was happening in 1

Corinthians is the same thing as was happening on the Day of Pentecost. Thus it is really an intrusion into the text. It is Charismatics placing their own experiential...yeah, their own experience on to the text that forces them to draw a conclusion that is not inherent in the text. And that conclusion, of course, has significant implications for the contemporary Charismatic Movement. The gift of tongues was the miraculous ability to speak a human foreign language you had never learned before. And as I already mentioned, that is a spectacular gift.

Now, this is an interesting point. The original Pentecostals, Charles Parham and the school there in Topeka, Kansas, they also understood the New Testament as only teaching one kind of tongues, and they believe that it was real human foreign languages. In fact, they sent missionaries around the world who didn't go to language school because they were convinced that as soon as they arrived on the mission field, God would supernaturally endow them with the ability to speak the language of the people to whom they were attempting to minister. They returned in disappointment because that didn't happen. And so here even Charismatic authors, Jack Hayford, and David Moore, acknowledged the fact that sadly the idea of xenoglossalallic tongues, i.e. foreign languages, sadly that idea would later prove to be an embarrassing failure as Pentecostal workers went off to mission fields with their gift of tongues and found their hearers did not understand them. The problem is, when the Pentecostal Movement realized that what they're doing isn't a real human language, instead of stopping, they reinterpreted the Bible in order to try and find a way to justify their experience. So they redefined tongues in order to include what it is that they're doing in their churches.

Now just a couple of additional notes here about the gift of tongues, and I think this is important. First of all, 1 Corinthians 12 tells us specifically, explicitly, really, that not everyone was given the gift of tongues. So any church that tells every believer that they should seek the gift of tongues is really violating what Paul explicitly says at the end of 1 Corinthians 12, where he uses a question, but the implied answer is no. He says, "Not everyone speaks in tongues, do they?" And the answer is no.

Now somebody will probably ask at that point, what about 1 Corinthians chapter 14 verse 5 where Paul says, "Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues. Doesn't that mean that everyone can speak in tongues? Why would Paul wish for something that can't be true of everyone?"

Well the answer is because Paul is actually making a rhetorical point. He's saying prophecy is better than tongues. I wish you all spoke in tongues, but even more so, that you would prophesy. So the point is not to elevate tongues, it's actually to elevate prophecy as being superior to tongues. Now how do we know that Paul didn't think that everyone could speak in tongues? Well I think we're helped by 1 Corinthians 7 verse 7, earlier in the book of 1 Corinthians, Paul uses almost the identical Greek expression to say I wish you were all like me, referring to being single. I wish you all had the gift of singleness. Now did Paul actually think that everyone in the Corinthian congregation had the gift of singleness? No, of course not. He knew there were married people in the church. So why would he use that expression? Cause he's making a rhetorical point, uses the same exact same

Greek expression construction wise in chapter 14 verse 5 to say, I wish you all spoke in tongues. It doesn't mean that everybody could, or that everybody did. In fact, Paul had already said not everyone speaks in tongues and he's not contradicting himself, just a chapter and a half later.

Now second question, what about the tongues of angels? That's what everybody wants to go to. First Corinthians 13:1, what about the languages of angels? "If I speak with the tongues of men and even of angels, but have not love..." and then Paul goes on there.

Well first and foremost, of course, the purpose of 1 Corinthians 13 is to demonstrate the superiority of love over any of the gifts. But I think the way we understand languages of angels is with the parallel statements that Paul makes in verse 2 and verse 3. Paul is using hyperbole to show just how great love is. So the statement, "Languages of angels," is actually parallel to statements "knowing all mysteries and all knowledge." Well that's clearly an impossibility. No one knows all mysteries and all knowledge. That's a hyperbolic statement. And then he says, "Faith that could literally move mountains." Well that again, he's using hyperbole. So we ought to interpret languages of angels in the context that Paul intends it to be understood. If you speak in human languages, the normal use of tongues, or even if you were to speak in the most extravagant possible way to imagine it, hyperbolic scenario, hypothetical scenario. Even then if you didn't have love, you would still be like a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

Now if someone insists on taking tongues of angels, or languages of angels literally, there's still a couple of things to consider. Number one, it is obviously the exception not the rule, if you take it literally as Paul uses it in this passage. The rest of the New Testament teaching on tongues makes it clear that human foreign languages was the norm. And then secondly, I think this is important. Every single time that angels speak in the Bible, they always communicate in a real and meaningful way. And I don't mean to be trite when I say this, but I think it's something of an insult to angels to claim that gibberish is angelic language. No. Clearly not.

Now, third, the fact that true languages could be translated indicates that they consisted of genuine languages. The gift of tongues can be interpreted. This doesn't mean that you hear somebody speak in an incoherent sense and then you make up an interpretation. Not at all. This means that you hear a meaningful communication and you translate that message. So Norm Geisler says this, "The fact that tongues...the tongues of which Paul spoke in 1 Corinthians could be interpreted shows that it was a meaningful language, otherwise it would not be an interpretation but a creation of the meaning. So the gift of interpretation supports the fact that tongues were a real language that could be translated for the benefit of all by this special gift of interpretation or translation.

All right, a fourth note here, I think this is also important. The purpose of the gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 to 14 was to edify others, not to edify yourself. And so we would say the primary purpose was as a sign for unbelieving Israel, but a secondary purpose was when used within the body of Christ, it must

be used to edify other people. So this idea of using tongues to edify yourself, that is not a helpful practice, but it is the primary way in which the modern Charismatic version of tongues is used. Now when Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14, "He who speaks in a tongue, edifies himself," the context there shows that Paul clearly intends that in a negative sense. You're edifying yourself but that's not the purpose of the gifts. The purpose is to edify the body. In fact, the entire theme of 1 Corinthians 12 to 14, which really orbits around chapter 13, is love and love edifies others. So a selfish, self-oriented, self-centered use of the gift of tongues is a clearly unbiblical use.

Now, the prayer in tongues that is mentioned in 1 Corinthians 14 is a public prayer, not a private prayer. So does Paul talk about praying in languages? Yes he does. Does he talk about doing that at home in your private prayer closet? No he does not. It's a public prayer and we know that because Paul says that people are hearing you pray and the congregation is going to affirm the prayer by saying "amen" but how can they do that if they don't understand the words you're speaking which is why the prayer had to be translated, so that people could be edified and the congregation could affirm it. It's a public prayer, not a private prayer.

And then number six, these gifts were to be exercised in an orderly way. And so 1 Corinthians 14, especially verses 39 and 40 says that if it actually comes from God, it will manifest itself in a way that is orderly. And we certainly see examples of the way in which that is completely ignored in the broader Charismatic Movement.

All right, number seven, nothing in 1 Corinthians suggest that the languages described there were anything other than genuine foreign languages. Viewing tongues as authentic foreign languages is the only really possible interpretation of Acts 2 and almost everyone agrees on that. And has the least number of problems in interpreting 1 Corinthians 12 to 14. Because if I started speaking in a language that none of you understood, to you it would sound like incoherent speech, unless somebody who knew that language was able to translate it and then you would understand it. So Thomas Edgar says there are verses in 1 Corinthians 14 where foreign language makes sense, but where unintelligible ecstatic utterance does not. However, the reverse cannot be said. A foreign language not understood by the hearer is no different from unintelligible speech in his sight. Therefore in any passage where such ecstatic speech may be considered possible, it is also possible to substitute a language not familiar to the hearers. In this passage there are no reasons, much less the very strong reasons necessary to depart from the normal meaning of *glossa* and to flee to a completely unsupported usage. So the idea of using the Greek word for language and making it mean a non-language is just not possible in terms of the way those terms were used in first century times.

Now, one final note here and I realize that church history is not authoritative but it's helpful since I teach church history to get a little bit of it in here. The universal testimony of the church fathers supports the cessationist understanding of the nature of tongues. When the...when the church leaders, Christian leaders for the first five hundred years of church history, when they talk about the



gift of tongues, they always talk about it as a real human foreign language and they equate the gift of tongues in 1 Corinthians 12 to 14 with the gift of tongues in Acts chapter 2.

Let me just give you a couple examples and I'm not going to read many of them, but we could. Here's just four. Augustine said, "In the earliest times, the Holy Ghost fell upon those who believed and they spoke with tongues which they had not learned as the Spirit gave them utterance. These were signs adapted to the time, for it was necessary for there to be that betokening of the Holy Spirit in all tongues, to show that the gospel of God was to run through all tongues over the whole earth."

You can see there, even in that last statement, the gospel needs to go to all the languages of the world, so God gives a sign in which the gospel is miraculously translated into the languages of the whole world. Gregory of Nazianzus who was one of the Cappadocian fathers who stood with Athanasius in defense of the Trinity. He says, "They spoke with foreign tongues and not those of their native land. And the wonder was great, a language spoken by those who had not learned it. And the sign is to them that believe not, not to them that believe, that it may be an accusation of the unbelievers as it is written, and here he quotes from Isaiah 28:11, same passage that Paul quotes from in 1 Corinthians 14, with other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people and not even so will they listen to me, says the Lord."

John Chrysostom, this is perhaps the most clear. He's commenting in his homily on 1 Corinthians 14, he says, "And as in the time of the building of the tower of Babel, the one tongue was divided into many so then the many tongues frequently met in one man. And the same person could discourse both in Persian and Roman and Indian and many other tongues, the Spirit sounding within him. And the gift was called the gift of tongues because he could all at once speak diverse languages.

And then just one more, Savarian(?) says this and it's just a powerful statement. He says, "The person who speaks in the Holy Spirit, speaks when he chooses to do so and then can be silent like the prophets. But those who are possessed by an unclean spirit, speak even when they do not want to and they say things they do not understand." So that's a pretty direct statement and I think a fair warning for those who would equate nonsense speech with the miraculous gift of tongues as it is described in the New Testament.

So if we were to define tongues then, we would say the gift of tongues was the miraculous ability given by the Holy Spirit to select Christians, enabling those believers to speak in human foreign languages that they had not previously learned, that is how it is described in Acts 2 and there is nothing in 1 Corinthians 12 to 14 that should lead us to conclude that the tongues there is any different. It was the same phenomena.

That, of course, is very different from the tongues that are being practiced in contemporary Charismatic circles. So here Norm Geisler adds this, "Even those who believe in tongues

acknowledge that unsaved people have tongues experiences. There's nothing supernatural about them. But there is something unique about speaking complete and meaningful sentences and discourses in a noble language to which one has never been exposed. This is what the real New Testament gift of tongues entailed. Anything short of this like private tongues should not be considered the biblical gift of tongues."

Now we just have a few minutes left and so we're going to go very quickly through the gift of healing. I intentionally spent most of our time this morning on the gift of tongues. But when we look at the gift of healing, we see again that the modern Charismatic version of the gift of healing does not match the miraculous healing ministries of Jesus and the Apostles. So if we were to discuss perhaps descriptions of the biblical gift of healing, we would see that New Testament healings did not depend on the recipient's faith. We would see that New Testament healings were complete, permanent, and 100 percent effective. We would see thirdly that New Testament healings were undeniable and that they cured real diseases and disabilities. In fact, the Pharisees who hated Jesus couldn't deny His miracles. The best they could do was try and distort the source of the power behind His miracles, which, of course, they did in Matthew chapter 12.

New Testament healings were immediate. They were instantaneous. Now there were occasions where Jesus healed in stages, but it was only a matter of moments before the person was completely well. So we can say that New Testament healings were immediate in their effectiveness. And then finally, New Testament healings were not prearranged. We don't need a stadium where we can emotionally manipulate people in order to heal them of psychosomatic diseases. No, in the course of everyday life, Jesus goes to Peter's house, his mother-in-law is sick. Jesus heals her. So there's no screeners at the stage keeping people with real disabilities and diseases off. Jesus heals anybody and everybody.

You can see then that when modern faith healers excuse their inability to heal on a lack of faith on the part of the sick person, or when their healings are not successful, or when their supposed successes don't stand up under scrutiny from medical professionals, or when they claim their healings take place over a long period of time, or when they limit their miracle crusades to tightly control the highly manipulated events, they show just how far short they fall of the biblical standard.

Here's John Wimber, this is an article that appeared in "Christianity Today," called "Signs, Wonders, and Cancer," because John Wimber was diagnosed with cancer. He says this, "Sometimes our experiences don't fit with our understanding of what the Bible teaches. That should be a red flag, by the way. On the one hand, we know that God is sovereign and that He sent Jesus to commission us to pray for and heal the sick. On the other hand, we know from experience that healing does not always occur. Why would God command us to heal the sick and then choose not to back up our act by not healing the person for whom we pray? This can be downright discouraging. As I used years ago in my own congregation, when I began to teach on healing, it was nine months before we saw

the first person healed.

Well Wimber is right to be frustrated but he fails to recognize the real problem. It is his misguided understanding of the miraculous gift of healing itself and his misguided impression that he somehow possesses that gift that leads to the disconnect in his life.

So you can see then that there's a massive disconnect between the way that the New Testament describes miraculous healing and the way in which the modern Charismatic version expresses itself. Now to be fair, conservative continuationists generally define the gift of healing as simply praying for people with the gift of faith and trust in God to answer that prayer.

I would respond by saying, as a cessationist, I also believe in the power of prayer and I believe that God can heal people through prayer. That's just not the New Testament miraculous gift of healing. That's not the type of healing that is exhibited in the ministries of Jesus and the Apostles. So they're using the terminology but it's not the same thing.

Now we've seen that the gift of prophecy was authoritative, revelation from God accurately declared by the prophets. We see that the gift of tongues was the ability to supernaturally speak a human foreign language that you had never gone to school to learn. And the gift of healing as illustrated by Christ and the Apostles, was the ability to lay hands on people and pronounced them healed and the result was 100 percent effective, complete, immediate, undeniable and not pre-arranged. And that is simply not happening today.

So, if we were to compare is prophecy revelation from God which is accurate and authoritative, or is prophecy revelation from God which is inaccurate, non-authoritative, full of mistakes and full of errors? We would say that version is not the true version of prophecy. Tongues...is tongues the miraculous ability to speak in previously unlearned human foreign languages? Or is tongue, again for lack of a better word, is tongues gibberish? No, we would reject that form of tongues.

Healing, is healing the miraculous ability of a person with a gift to impart immediate and complete healing to people who are sick, like Jesus and the Apostles did? Or is healing either a claim to heal based on the sick person's faith or redefinition of healing simply as answers to prayer? No, we would reject that definition.

Though Charismatics claim to possess the gifts of prophecy, tongues and healing, a comparison of their experiences with the biblical reality demonstrates that the Charismatic version of these gifts consist of something other than the real thing. And that's essentially what cessationists are trying to defend. We want to defend the miraculous things that God was doing in Scripture, we don't want to cheapen those things by allowing artificial substitutes that are called the same thing to taint our understanding of what God was actually doing when He authenticated His message two thousand

years ago.

All right, let's pray and then we'll close our time.

Heavenly Father, thank You for the opportunity to go to Your Word and to study these things. I know that this was a lot of information and that we covered it very quickly. Thank You for the *Strange Fire* book which much of this information in our talk parallels the content that is there in that book and so I pray that if people have more questions or want to dig into this deeper that they would find that to be a helpful resource. Lord, thank You for all of these men and women who have come to this conference. Thank You for their desire to examine their own experiences in light of Your Word. And I pray that You would continue to bless them and encourage them as they spend the next few days here in Southern California and be with them now as we dismiss our time for lunch. We pray this in Jesus name, Amen.

Available online at: <http://www.gty.org>

COPYRIGHT (C) 2013 Grace to You

You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (<http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright>).