

ELIM PENTECOSTALS AND SPEAKING IN TONGUES

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The special teaching of the Elim Pentecostal church and other Pentecostal, charismatic and house churches concerns the Holy Spirit who, it is claimed, enables the believer to have power by the Baptism in the Holy Spirit which is evidenced by signs, usually the speaking in tongues and this enables the believer to worship aright, evangelise and witness. So it is said and written in the Elim and Pentecostal doctrinal statements.

They go on to tell us how to receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Kenneth Copeland writes that after you have become a Christian, God's desire and plan is that you receive the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues. By implication he suggests that this is for all Christians.

However, the New Testament says that all believers receive the Spirit upon conversion. Romans 8 9 states, Ye are not (now) in the flesh but in the Spirit. Now if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.

1 Corinthians 12. 13 says, For by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. Paul W Marsh rightly says that this refers to spiritual regeneration which begins the new life, the Christian life and the acceptance into the Body of Christ. This baptism in the Spirit refers to all believers.

Paul writes, If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things become new. (2 Corinthians 5. 17).

Paul asks the rhetoric question, Do all speak in tongues (1 Corinthians 12. 10). If they did, or should, he would not ask the question.

Copeland says that when you are filled with the Spirit, you speak in tongues and that speaking in tongues is a language that only God understands and even you won't understand it.

This is contrary to Acts 2 where the hearers said, Do we not hear this in the language in which we were born? The speaking in tongues were known languages not languages not understood. Paul says we are to pray, and sing, with understanding (1 Corinthians 14. 15).

God is not the author of confusion and I cannot see that God would wish anyone to speak something he does not understand (1 Corinthians 14.33).

The charismatic writer continues that speaking in tongues happens as the Spirit prays through you about things you may know nothing about or may not know how to pray about.

This is contrary to what Paul says about speaking and praying with your own understanding.

Our charismatic write continues, "When you pray in tongues you need to realise that speaking with an unknown tongue is the voice of your heart... speaking in a known tongue is the voice of the human mind. To speak in tongues you must operate with the Holy Spirit who must take charge of your tongue and you must yield your tongue to His use. Your voice and tongue will form syllables around what you heart desires and so you will speak in tongues. You supply the sounds but the Holy Spirit supplies the words... words unknown to you. "

"Finally, as you seek the baptism in the Holy Spirit, you need not wait to get a word from God about

it, nor do you have to wait around for it. The Spirit of God entered into His ministry on the Day of Pentecost and has done so ever since. “

But this is not so. The Day of Pentecost was not speaking in unknown languages but in real understood languages and dialects. As E H Trenchard writes there were people present from as far as afield as Rome and Persia and, therefore, what the apostles said would go back to those various countries. The main message of the speaking in tongues was the mighty works of God. (Acts 2.11)

Copeland quotes many verses out of context such as Luke 11.11... “how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” So if you want to receive your baptism in the Holy Spirit, ask him now, asserts Copeland.

But as Romans 8 and 1 Corinthians state the baptism in the Holy Spirit happens at conversion and is not a second blessing nor an optional extra.

Copeland concludes that our prayer for the Spirit to baptise us will enable us to speak in tongues and so we must rejoice having been endued with power– hallelujah!

This is contrary to 1 Corinthians 12. 10 and other verses.

W E Vine reminds us that the speaking in tongues was for the edification of the Church and not for personal use. The tongues had to be interpreted (1 Corinthians 14. 28) and so an interpreter had to be present. There was to be no speaking in tongues unless it was known that an interpreter was present. If there was no such person to interpret then there was to be no tongue speaking.

1 Corinthians 13.8 states that the charismatic gifts of prophecies, tongues and knowledge will pass away. Prophecies and knowledge are new revelations of the Divine will, but when that which is perfect is come, that is to say the completion of Holy Scriptures, these things will come to an end. Revelation 22 verses 18ff warns against adding to the Scriptures or taking away from them and such offenders will not enter the eternal kingdom.

As Lambert Dolphin writes, A prophet is one who speaks forth to proclaim the mind and counsel of God but that is all now available in the Holy Scriptures. We are to preach the gospel and minister the Word of God but the mind and counsel of God is all in the scriptures.

As to tongues they will cease. This charismatic sign gift will come to an end when the Scripture are perfect, that is to say complete, tongues having served their purpose in the accomplishment of the Father’s will. The word cease is in the Middle Voice and refers to something very soon not hundreds of years or centuries away.

There was also the need for discernment. Paul spoke of testing the gifts. They had to be evaluated to see whether they were of God. There was also a need for ministering which were actions performed with the help of God to comfort, support, encourage and build up the people of God.

The speaking in tongues was a sign gift not a permanent gift (Mark 16.17ff). It was to establish the church and to spread the Word of God in the first decades after the resurrection. Sign gifts were given to authenticate the work of New Testament prophets and apostles at the beginning of a new age (dispensation) when God did something new and different.

Other sign gifts were the taking up of serpents, drinking deadly things and healing the sick, casting out devils as well as new tongues.

There are Pentecostals in the USA who practice the handling of snakes and there are many resultant

fatalities. These are Holiness-Pentecostal churches and one is called The Church of Jesus Christ with Signs Following. You cannot emulate what the apostles did in the first century.

It is curious that Pentecostals allow women to speak and to speak in tongues in their churches and fellowships which is in contradiction to what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14. 34.

This is another matter where the Pentecostal and charismatics are wrong and astray from the Bible.

So when Copeland writes that when we are saved God's plan and desire for us is that we are all to be baptised in the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues is completely wrong.

Paul states that the greatest attribute to seek is love (1 Corinthians 13. 13) and that the most profitable charismatic gift is prophecy (1 Corinthians 14. 1). Prophecy is not necessarily foretelling something in the future but proclaiming a Divine message and would include preaching the Gospel. Foretelling future events has ceased with the completion of scripture and I would draw your attention again to Revelation 22. 18ff.

Copeland's assertion that it is only when you speak in tongues that you can worship God aright is absurd. It means that only tongue speakers know what worship really is and therefore this makes them superior. When sign gifts were given it was by Divine choice and they were temporary gifts.

Men of God of the past have had power given to them from the Lord to witness, evangelise and preach yet they did not speak in tongues.

Graham Scroggie wrote, There are no such people as better Christians but there are more obedient ones.

It has always been strange to me that Pentecostals and charismatics base their beliefs on the wayward church at Corinth. It was full of division (1 Corinthians 1. 10-17); they gave a false witness (1. 18 to 2. 5); they had a carnal misunderstanding about God's servants (3. 1 - 9). There were cases of immorality (5. 1 -13) ; there were lawsuits (6. 1 -11) ; there was fornication and impurity (6. 12-20) ; infidelity in marriage (7.1-40); idol worship and offering food to idols, which is paganism (8. 1-11) and they disregarded the regulations of speaking in tongues and used this as promotion for personal pride. They were an unruly lot mixing their brand of Christianity with pagan worship and worldly pursuits.

There are no such people as better Christians, but there are more obedient ones.

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