

BEWARE OF COUNTERFEIT "SPIRIT" GIFTS

By Allon Maxwell

Jesus left a VERY important warning about the danger of "false Christs", whose "ministry" would be accompanied by "great signs and wonders". (Matthew 24:24) These "miracles" would appear so genuine that even the elect would be in danger of deception!

Later, in 1 John 4:1, the warning is repeated by the Apostle. We are NOT to accept at face value, the authenticity of any claim that the Holy Spirit is the source of what we see or hear.

We are to put it all to the test to determine whether it really is from God, or not!

The story that follows is reported here for the solemn warning that it contains.

This story is about the experience of a young Christian whose meeting with Jesus has turned his life around in a remarkable way. In his Christian walk, he shows clear evidence of both the fruit and the power of the Holy Spirit. His "Baptism with the Holy Spirit" and the verbal ministry gifts through which he bears witness to Jesus, are clearly visible to those who know him well. He does not have those abilities within himself. they are a gift from God a gift of the Holy Spirit.

For anyone to suggest that he is not "baptised with the Holy Spirit", simply because he does not have the gift of tongues, is a grievous and tragic mistake. Indeed, to make such a suggestion, is a serious matter. It shows a spiritual blindness to the work of the Holy Spirit, and the real nature of God's gifts to His children.

There are indeed some who press this mistake to the extreme, by claiming that the gift of tongues is THE ESSENTIAL EVIDENCE of the baptism with the Holy Spirit, and therefore of salvation. At this point, this dangerous error becomes a FALSE GOSPEL!

Some time ago now, (towards the end of 1991), our young Christian friend met a Pentecostal man who told him of the "need" for all Christians to speak in tongues, so that they could be sure they really were "baptised with the Holy Spirit". He was told that his Christian experience was incomplete without it.

If he was willing, this man could lay hands on him and pray for him, and he would receive the gift of tongues. This "evidence" would "prove" that he had received the Baptism with the Holy Spirit.

On the basis of past teaching, he was not at all sure this was right. However, he did want all that God could give him, and he agreed to allow the man to pray for him.

He did also **silently pray**, asking for protection from anything that was not of God.

When the first prayer was said, after a little while the man asked whether he could hear any strange words at the back of his mind.

When he said that there was nothing like that in his mind, he was told again to listen carefully for strange words. There must be something there. Again, he said that there was nothing.

He was told that they would have to pray a second time. This time he was also told to picture a glass of water before him which he should pretend to drink, imagining at the same time, that he was drinking in the Holy Spirit.

Again, after a short time he was asked to search his mind for the strange words. When he still said that there was nothing, he was told that this was very unusual. It had never happened before. There must be some sort of "blockage". They would have to pray yet again.

This time the man began to "pray" aloud in tongues.

Our young brother, of course, did not understand what was said. After listening to the "prayer" in tongues for a little while, he was again asked to search his mind for strange words.

When, for the third time he said that there was nothing, the man gave up and the evening concluded.

He shared this experience with me a couple of days later. By this time, he was thanking God that his prayer for protection had been answered. There had indeed been a "blockage". It was the protecting hand of God!

He has now learnt the lesson of caution about giving himself ever again, so easily, to a prayer in which (with 20/20 hindsight) there is such danger.

What, you may ask, was so dangerous about praying for something with such outward appearance of good?

Firstly, he was being asked to reject his faith in the obvious reality of what God had already given him, in order to receive the experience.

Secondly, the prayer was based on a lie. There is nothing in the Bible at all to suggest that the gift of tongues is infallible proof of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit, or that Christian experience is incomplete without it.

In fact, the Bible says quite clearly, that although all are baptised into the body of Christ by the same Spirit, ([1 Corinthians 12:13](#)), not all have the same gift. Especially, NOT ALL SPEAK IN TONGUES. ([1 Corinthians 12:28-31](#)).

The young brother had unwittingly, but cautiously, without realising the full implications of what he was doing, exposed himself to a false gospel, with the very real inherent danger of receiving a false spirit! ([2 Corinthians 11:4](#))

God was gracious to him, accepting the honest prayer and heart's desire to receive only what came from God and to be protected from all that was not from God.

I have known others who were not so honest with God, who were allowed to get a lot further into the murky waters of false Pentecostal experience.

They learned a hard lesson about the hazards associated with some counterfeit "gifts".

Thirdly, those of you who know anything at all about HYPNOSIS, will recognise it in the techniques of suggestion which were used by the man who prayed for my young friend. Anyone lacking this familiarity with the very simple techniques of basic hypnosis, is easily deceived into receiving a false "experience", through opening their mind to suggestions of this sort.

On those occasions in the Bible where people actually did speak in tongues, it was completely spontaneous.

No one planted suggestions in their minds that they could find strange words there. No one planted actual words in their minds by speaking aloud in tongues during that vulnerable time when their minds were "open" to unite themselves with the prayer. No one gave them imaginary glasses of water to drink. God does not need this sort of help! God does not respond to attempts to force His hand in this way. In fact, those who practise these mind-bending techniques are dangerously close to the forbidden occult arts which God calls abomination.

Those of you who remember what Paul said about this, will have noted that third prayer, in tongues, which the young brother did not understand.

This use of tongues ignores Paul's instructions that in situations like this, tongues must be interpreted, so that others can say "amen" to the prayer. (1 Corinthians 14:13-17)

My young friend was being asked to give himself to someone else's "prayer" without knowing what it said! That is extremely foolish.

Not only does this ignore Paul, but it is also disobedience to what Jesus calls the FIRST AND GREATEST COMMANDMENT OF ALL. *"You shall worship the Lord with all your Heart, soul, strength and MIND"*. (Luke 10:27)

WE MUST NOT ABANDON OUR MINDS!

This experience is not unique. Anyone who spends much time at all around Pentecostals, with their eyes and ears open to receive only the truth which comes from the Spirit of Truth, will soon discover other similar things, by which the unwary who do not love truth enough are so easily deceived.

Many other equally suspect techniques are used amongst Pentecostals to induce speaking in tongues. These include:

- * Repeating the tongues, you hear spoken by someone else, until you can do it easily for yourself.
- * Repeating "spiritual tongue twisters" faster and faster, until the tongue stumbles and the Holy Spirit "takes over".
- * Making up some words and speaking them in "faith" that it is not just imagination, but that it really is the Holy Spirit giving the words.

When there are doubts about the logic or sanity of doing these things (as there surely ought to be for any sane person), you are likely to be told to ignore those feelings as they are merely Satan trying to rob you of the blessings!

My brothers and sisters, none of these techniques are found in the Bible!

That in itself ought to sound ***loud alarm bells*** for those who love truth!

It is not at all reasonable to base "faith" in any experience so important as they claim speaking in tongues to be, on things which are not plainly written, or else, not found in the Bible at all.

If there are any of our readers, who have been in touch with one of these ministers of a false gospel, perhaps even receiving an "experience" at their hands, we do ask you not to take offence with our suggestion that you need to pray again about what has happened to you.

Through much personal and sometimes painful experience, I have learned to value Paul's admonition to the Corinthians to "grow up" about speaking in tongues! *"Brethren do not be children in your thinking!"* (1 Corinthians 14:20)

When Paul encouraged the Corinthians to pray with both the mind and the spirit, I am certain that he meant the fruitful exercise of BOTH AT THE SAME TIME.

It is possible, and normal, and expected, for Christians to speak with both the mind AND THE SPIRIT, in their own mother tongue!

For some, but certainly not all, it is also possible by the Holy Spirit gift of tongues, to speak fruitfully with both mind and spirit, in another language which can be interpreted for the edification and common good of all.

THIS is Paul's clear message to the Corinthian Church!

I do not believe at all, that Paul was encouraging any unfruitful, mindless exercise of a "spiritual gift", which requires the surrender of our minds to an experience where we are unable to say "amen", either to another's prayer, or for that matter, to our own prayers!

Without interpretation, "Tongues" does not edify the hearer.

Neither, if he does not understand what he is saying, does it edify the speaker.

For my part I will continue to obey the First Commandment of ALL. Especially, in the context of this present discussion, I will try to obey with my *mind*.
