

## **THE FATAL FLAWS OF CHARISMANIA – Fatal Flaw #4: The Misinterpretation and Misapplication of the Biblical Gift of Speaking in Tongues (Part One of Five)**

For any serious student of Scripture who is sincerely committed to both learning and living God's Word; possessing an awareness of fundamental principles of interpretation is essential. Of primary importance is the relationship which exists between eisegesis and exegesis. Eisegesis involves reading something into the Biblical text that isn't there, by succumbing to the temptation of personal subjectivity at the expense of objective truth. Exegesis, on the other hand, demands the acceptance of a Biblical text at face value, in order to determine its true meaning. One of the central tenets of Pentecostal/Charismatic doctrine consists of their belief in the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues. Pentecostalism derives its name from the manifestation of this spiritual gift in Acts 2:1-13. The impact of that event was monumental. It marked a "new beginning" in the fulfilment of God's redemptive purpose (Acts 11:15). In addition, the Acts 2 account of what transpired at Pentecost includes the **only** definitive description of the true nature and character of the tongues which were spoken on that day. Notice what is recorded for us in Acts 2:5-11 –

**"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 (emphasis added). They were amazed and astonished, saying, 'Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we each hear them IN OUR OWN LANGUAGE (emphasis added) to which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs – we hear them IN OUR OWN TONGUES (emphasis added) speaking of the mighty deeds of God.'"**

By interacting with this passage at its exegetical face value, we can arrive at an indisputable working definition for the spiritual gift of tongues experienced in Acts 2:1-13 – "the spiritual gift of tongues involves the supernatural ability to speak a known language that is unknown to the one speaking it." No interpreter was necessary for the resulting impression to be made, since that audience heard these tongues being spoken in their own language to which they were born (Acts 2:8, 11). So why are the modern-day proponents of this spiritual gift not practicing it in the manner described in Acts 2:1-13? Instead, they claim that a second kind of tongues has been given. It is an ecstatic form of speech which some have labelled as a heavenly language spoken by angels. Others refer to it as a private prayer language given by God for the purpose of self-edification. Then again, there are those, after an extensive linguistic evaluation, who have come to the sobering conclusion that this second kind of tongues is nothing more than unintelligible gibberish, which possesses no similarity to any known language on earth.

Most importantly, for the purpose of our study, this second kind of tongues bears no resemblance whatsoever to what was spoken on the day of Pentecost, infallibly recorded for us in Acts 2:1-13. From this point onward, in our study of the spiritual gift of tongues, those manifested in Acts 2 will be referred to as "tongues 1," while those practiced by Pentecostals and Charismatics will be called "tongues 2." Going forward, we will also discover that "tongues 2" is the by-product of eisegetical malpractice and qualifies as **FATAL FLAW #4** within this movement.