

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

The first specific instance of **FATAL FLAW #4**, exemplifying Pentecostal/Charismatic eisegesis at its worst, is what they offer as a proof text for “tongues 2” in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 –

“If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging symbol. If I have the gift of prophesy and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.”

Paul begins this chapter with a discourse on the superiority of love. Any other behavior which is marked by a lack of love is viewed by the apostle as meaningless. His initial point in v1 focusses on linguistic eloquence, and not a spiritual gift. Notice how a derivative of “glossais” is used later in 1 Corinthians 14:21 (heteroglossos), as a clear reference to an actual foreign language. “Glossa” can also refer to the physical organ of one’s tongue and in this context, can certainly be translated as “language.” As highly prized as elocution may have been in ancient Greek culture, Paul affirms that without love, articulate oratory amounts to nothing more than useless noise.

So how is it possible that 1 Corinthians 13:1 can be a Pentecostal proof text for “tongues 2?” Here’s how. When you are willing to practice unabated eisegesis, anything is possible. As a result, the “tongues of angels” mentioned by Paul, is offered as support for “tongues 2.” On a personal level, I have even heard one Pentecostal pastor confidently affirm that the unified language of the human race prior to the tower of Babel, was the “tongues 2” that is currently being practiced by Pentecostals and Charismatics in our world today. Furthermore, this heavenly angel-talk bears no resemblance to any known language on earth because it is, after all, heavenly angel-talk. Thus, the rationale for “tongues 2” possessing no similarity to any known language on earth.

Any attempt to counter this reasoning by pointing to angels communicating with people on earth in a language understood by the human audience, is immediately refuted. How? Angels have their own form of communication with one another in heaven and this is what you are hearing with the manifestation of “tongues 2.” But this only serves to create another dilemma due to Paul’s personal experience in being caught up into heaven, recorded for us in 2 Corinthians 12:3-4 –

“And I know how such a man – whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows – was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.”

Who was speaking these “inexpressible words?” Could it have been angels? Who else would be up there speaking in that way? If so, then Paul was not permitted to speak in this way when he returned to earth. Yet, in 1 Corinthians 14:18, Paul reveals to the Corinthian believers that he spoke in tongues more than them all. Then how is it possible, that “tongues 2” consists of heavenly angel-talk? Simple common-sense logic tells us that it is NOT possible. But what is possible and even likely? *Pentecostals and Charismatics just make stuff up!*