

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

There is one chapter in the New Testament above all others, where the creative and fanciful eisegetical “genius” of the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement is on full display. It is found in 1 Corinthians 14. The proponents of this perspective have latched onto this portion of Scripture with every fiber of their being, in order to develop it into the ultimate validation for “tongues 2.” Ironically, in that context, the apostle Paul actually provides us with a contradictory proof-text, which serves the purpose of confirming “tongues 1.” It is recorded for us in 1 Corinthians 14:9-11 where we read the following –

**“So also you, unless you utter by the tongue speech that is clear, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air. There are, perhaps, a great many kinds of languages in the world, and no kind is without meaning. If then I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be to the one who speaks a barbarian, and the one who speaks will be a barbarian to me.”**

The most spiritually dysfunctional congregation in the early Church was located in Corinth. Paul needed two epistles and twenty-nine chapters of Biblical text in order to rebuke and correct the many problems which existed there. The larger issue being addressed in chapter fourteen consists of the chaotic nature of the church services being held by those believers. Paul desired to clarify the confusion and instill some order for what had deteriorated into a disorderly situation (14:40).

The passage quoted above serves as Paul’s most stinging rebuke in his overall desire to provide some much-needed reform. As fond as the Greeks were of linguistic eloquence, their greatest source of pride was in the Greek language itself. Paul’s use of the word “barbarian” (barbaros), would have reminded them of its original usage and its current connotation. The word literally described any attempt to imitate the sound of a foreign language. But it also developed into a disparaging reference toward anyone who did not speak Greek. As a result, the Greeks viewed the rest of the non-Greek speaking world as barbarians.

Imagine the embarrassment the Corinthian believers must have felt in regard to Paul describing them as barbarians, for speaking in tongues without an interpreter (14:27-28). At the same time, Paul’s comparison of the gift of tongues (a supernatural expression), with the many differing languages of the world (a natural occurrence); only serves to confirm that the tongues spoken in Corinth were no different than the tongues spoken in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. The only significant distinction between Pentecost in Jerusalem and the tongues spoken in Corinth involved the need for someone with the gift of interpretation in Corinth. Nowhere in this chapter is the ecstatic speech of a personal and heavenly prayer language in view. But that hasn’t stopped the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement from reading things into this chapter that just aren’t there; making them guilty of **FATAL FLAW #4**, in misinterpreting and misapplying the Biblical gift of speaking in tongues. Much more about that, next.