

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

The Pentecostal/Charismatic perspective often presents 1 Corinthians 14 as the practical means for defining “tongues 2.” Their primary proof text within this chapter is 1 Corinthians 14:2-4 –

**“For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one understands, but in his spirit he speaks mysteries. But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church.”**

From this passage, which they view as evidence for “tongues 2,” they derive the following definition: “this expression of the Biblical gift of tongues consists of a private prayer language spoken to God, known only by God; for the express purpose of self-edification.” In considering the larger context of 1 Corinthians 14, is this a plausible explanation for what Paul is teaching here? It is not. Of course, speaking a foreign language which no one understands in the context of a church service, would obviously leave God as the only one in the room who understands it. But Paul’s desire is to have the Corinthian congregation move beyond self-edification. Time and again, throughout this chapter, he emphasizes the importance of using our spiritual gifts for the benefit of others. And when the gift of tongues is being spoken in the church without an interpretation, that can’t happen. Toward the end of the chapter, in 1 Corinthians 14:27-28, Paul makes certain to prohibit the speaking of tongues in the church, unless there is an interpreter –

**“If anyone speaks in a tongue, it should be by two or at the most three, and each in turn, and one must interpret; but if there is no interpreter, he must keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God.”**

So how is it possible that Paul’s admonition in the two passages above, against self-centered edification only, can be turned into something other than the foreign languages spoken in Jerusalem in Acts 2? How can the emphasis of this entire chapter produce a Pentecostal proof text for ecstatic speech which angels speak in heaven, now being spoken on earth as a second form of tongues, totally unlike what was spoken in Acts 2? Here’s how. The proponents of the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement just make stuff up. And they are good at it! And their abilities at misinterpreting and misapplying Biblical texts, making them guilty of **FATAL FLAW #4** in regard to the Biblical gift of speaking in tongues, has been a detriment to the body of Christ for far too long. And it is only getting worse.

But there is one portion of this chapter that they don’t dare touch with the proverbial ten-foot pole. Perhaps it’s because they know what a death blow it would be to their belief in a speaking of tongues which bears no resemblance to what occurred in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. Ironically, it is a text which has been neglected and virtually ignored by most Christians. But next week, it will be neglected and ignored no longer, as we will focus our attention upon the monumental significance of what the apostle Paul teaches us in that section of 1 Corinthians 14.