

Pleasant Valley
Church of Christ

3317 Amidon
Wichita KS 67204
(316) 838-4195
www.letjesusleadus.org

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Classes 9:30 am
Worship 10:30 am
Evening 6:00 pm

Wednesday

Classes 7:30 pm

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is a non-denominational group of believers who are committed to following Jesus in our attitudes, our relationships, and our worship. If you want the same thing in your life, please contact us. We'd like to help.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Wings



"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31)

February 21, 2010

Speaking in tongues

by David King

"In the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue" (1 Cor. 14:19).

Speaking in tongues (Greek: *glossolalia*) is a prominent component of worship in modern Pentecostal religions. Those who practice it claim it as the work of the Holy Spirit. But a study of the biblical background of this phenomenon yields a different conclusion.

Tongue-speaking clearly has a biblical basis. The first example of speaking in tongues occurred on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Jesus. The Holy Spirit came upon the apostles, and they "began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Ac. 2:4). From that point forward, tongue-speaking played a prominent role in the early church. The first Gentile converts spoke in tongues just prior to their conversion (Ac. 10:44-48). After Paul baptized disciples of John in Ephesus, they received the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues (Ac. 19:2-6). Tongue-speaking was such a significant part of the worship in the church in Corinth that it became a source of friction among them. Paul devoted a significant section of his first epistle dealing with the subject (1 Cor. 12-14).

But the modern Pentecostal practice of tongue-speaking is not a continuation of this ancient spiritual gift.

First, tongue-speaking in the New Testament involved real, identifiable languages. When the apostles spoke in tongues on the day of Pentecost, their audience instantly recog-

nized the speech: "How is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?" (Ac. 2:8). In his treatment of the subject with the Corinthians, Paul clearly viewed tongues as human languages that could be understood and interpreted (1 Cor. 14:9-13). Modern glossolalia, on the other hand, is demonstrably unintelligible. Linguistic experts have conducted exhaustive studies of Pentecostal tongue-speaking and concluded that the "speech" is merely a jumble of phonetic elements from the speakers' native languages. They are not languages communicating real messages.

Those who claim to speak in tongues today abuse the original intent of the phenomenon. It was a miracle designed to impress unbelievers, true (1 Cor. 14:22); but as on the day of Pentecost, the audience had to understand the meaning of the message, either as a native tongue or by translation (v. 13). Tongue-speaking that does not communicate an intelligible message is not only worthless, it exposes the speaker to ridicule (v. 23).

Finally, the early tongue-speaking, like all the spiritual gifts of the first century, was a temporary aid to help establish the new religion. It was not a permanent fixture. Paul described these gifts as a partial means of revealing and confirming God's word, until the arrival of a "perfect" (complete) body of revelation, at which time "that which is in part will be done away" (1 Cor. 13:10). We now have that complete body of revelation, the New Testament, and all those miraculous gifts, including tongue speaking, are now extinct.