

Is Speaking in Tongues a Weapon for War?

Of the nine gifts of the Spirit listed in 1 Corinthians, few would question the fact that the gift of tongues is by far the most controversial. If the gifts were likened to a family, tongues would be that member of the family nobody wants to acknowledge or be associated with. This is the one member we are embarrassed to be related to and even more reluctant to talk about. What is it about this gift that is so obnoxious to so many believers? For years, certain denominations have warned their people about going anywhere near those who speak in tongues lest they become demonized or demented themselves.

Since every good and perfect gift comes from God, including the gift of tongues, then we need to ask ourselves what is really going on?

Some denominations hold to a cessationist belief, which basically teaches that the gifts have all been withdrawn in this dispensation and therefore are no longer relevant. Behind this teaching is the devil, who fosters this lie in order to strengthen his own agenda. What better way to undermine God's purpose than to do away with the very means of equipping God's people with spiritual strength and insight?

Allow me to explain. The Scripture teaches us that when we speak in tongues we edify ourselves. This word "edify" is the Greek word used for building or constructing a dwelling. We have all watched a building being erected or constructed. Day by day, we see it change into the shape and purpose for which the owner and architect planned. The gift of tongues, in like manner, is one of God's methods of strengthening and building up our spiritual house. Just as our physical body needs to be fortified by food our spirits also need to be strengthened and built up.

I personally believe God intended the gift of tongues to act as a doorway for all the other gifts. By building up your spirit, you become more aware of the spiritual realm that God desires us all to operate in. Now if I were the devil, I would do everything possible to discredit this gift for that very reason.

A tongue has other purposes also. One of these is the supernatural ability of being able to communicate in a language unknown to the one speaking, yet understood by the one listening. We also know from God's Word that the gift of tongues, when interpreted, can edify those listening in a similar way to the gift of prophecy.

Now let me share with you another possibility concerning the use of the gift of tongues. Notice I used the word "possibility." We are told in God's Word that it is the glory of God to conceal a matter and the glory of kings to search it out.

With that in mind allow me to piece together this possibility. What is the purpose of a tongue? A tongue is used to communicate with another person.

When I want to communicate with my wife, I use English, as it's the only language I know. If I were able to speak in Mandarin, my wife wouldn't understand a word I was saying, as she doesn't speak Mandarin. The apostle Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 13 that we can speak in the tongues of men or of angels. If tongues are used to communicate, then speaking in an angelic tongue means I'm saying something or communicating something to an angel or angels. Now we know according to God's Word that we are not to worship angels. John fell down at the foot of an angel and was told, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours" (see Rev. 19:10).

A servant's role is to serve. We are told in Hebrews 1:14 that angels are ministering spirits sent forth on behalf of those

who are heirs of salvation. In other words, one of their functions is to serve us as directed by the Lord. We know that when we speak in an unknown tongue, it is not something we can do naturally, but rather it is the Spirit of God speaking through us and enabling us. With that in mind, isn't there a good probability that when we speak in tongues, the Spirit of God is giving orders through us to His angelic host of servants?

Remember when Jerusalem was surrounded by the armies of Sennacherib? King Hezekiah prayed with the prophet Isaiah. God's response to their prayer was to send an angel who destroyed 185,000 Assyrians. The psalmist reminds us that God's throne is in the heavens, and His sovereignty rules over all. We read that surrounding His throne are angels waiting to serve and carry out His orders.

With this concept in mind, is it any wonder, then, that the devil hates the gift of tongues? If God's people can partner with the Holy Spirit by praying in tongues and thereby gain victory after victory; no wonder he seeks to malign, demean and deter people from seeking after this good and perfect gift (see James 1:17).

God has provided His people with weapons for spiritual warfare, which include His name, His Word, His blood and yes, even tongues. I encourage you to keep this weapon in your arsenal and use it along with all your others. {eo}

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