

## SECTION IV. CHARISMATIC ARGUMENTS

### I. “Mark 16:17 shows that tongues are to follow all believers.”

#### ANSWER:

Mark 16:17 was an admonition to the Apostles for the need of faith. The signs would follow those who believed. They did.

However, it does not say that EVERY believer in all ages were to do these signs, much less that any believer must do any one or all of these signs. Even in the apostolic age, they did not (1Cor. 12:7-12, 30-31). 1Cor. 12:30 plainly says that all do “not” speak with tongues.

Since the gift of tongues is only one of several signs said to follow those that believe, it certainly does not prove that tongues was “the sign” that every believer was to. The Samaritans who became believers and were baptized into Christ by Philip, did not receive these powers until the Apostles came from Jerusalem (Ac. 8:12, 16). The Roman Christians did not have any of these gifts until Paul came to them (Rom. 1:8, 11). In neither case is tongues mentioned.

The purpose of these signs was to confirm the word (Mk. 16:20; Heb. 2:3-4). They followed believers for that purpose. Like when the Old Testament was finished, when all the word had been given and confirmed the gifts were no longer needed and ceased (1Cor. 13:8- 13).

These signs were given through laying on of the hands of the Apostles (Ac. 8:18, 19; 19:6; 2Tim. 1:6; Rom. 1:11). Only those who saw Jesus after his resurrection and were sent out by him became Apostles (Ac. 1:21, 22; 1Cor. 9:1; 15:7-9). The Apostles and Prophets, like Jesus, were only in the foundation of the church (Eph. 2:20). When they completed providing the revelation and went to heaven, they were no longer passed on. The “signs of an apostle” (2Cor. 12:12) came to an end when they died.

### II. “Jn. 14:12 says that we will do the works of Jesus and even greater works.”

#### ANSWER:

*Jesus said, “He that believes on me, the **works** that I do shall he do also; and greater **works** than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.*

Jesus told them they would do greater “works” (2041 *ergon*), not greater “miracles” (4592 *semeion*). While the word, “ergon” may include miracles, that is not the meaning of the word.

He was dealing with their unbelief (14:8-11). He would go to the father and they were to go on and accomplish what he had begun. The greater work of carrying his message to all nations was still ahead (cf. Eph. 3:1-11). Certainly every Christian does not do greater miracles than Jesus.

Pentecostals do not even do what they claim. They cannot do what Jesus did (walk on water, raise the dead, restore deformed limbs etc.), much less do greater miracles. They seek after and claim signs (Mt. 12:38, 39) but they “say and do not” (Mt. 23:3).

However, because Jesus went away, and his servants continue to spread the Gospel, we are collectively able to do greater works.

### III. “Ac. 2:38 teaches that the gift of the Holy Spirit is for all who are called.”

**ANSWER:** This is speaking of receiving the Holy Spirit, not spiritual gifts. The Greek word here for “gift” (1431 *dorea*) is not the one commonly used for the miraculous gifts (5486 *charisma*). (1Cor. 12:4, 9, 28, 30)

If it meant spiritual gifts it would have used the plural form of “charisma.” If it had intended some particular spiritual gift, it would have identified it.

Rather, it indicates the giving of the Holy Spirit himself, without which we cannot belong to God. The Holy Spirit is received when one is baptized into Christ (cf. Ac. 2:38; 1Co. 12:12-13; Jn. 3:3-5; 1Jn. 5:8; Rom. 8; Eph. 1:13-14; Tit. 3:5-6; 1Jn. 5:6-8). This is what we receive when we obey him (Ac. 5:32) --not what was received when the Apostles' laid their hands. (Ac. 8:17, 18)

**IV. “Lk. 11:11-13 teaches that if we ask for the Holy Spirit we will receive it rather than a stone.”**

**ANSWER:** No, we do not receive a stone. We receive the Holy Spirit. However, even in Bible times, everyone who received the Holy Spirit did not receive the miraculous manifestations (1Cor. 12:29-30). The Bible is now complete and the gifts have ceased (1Cor. 13).

**V. “Jn. 14:16 says that the Holy Spirit will be with you forever.”**

**ANSWER:** He still is. Christians receive the Holy Spirit at baptism. However, even in the Bible, not all of those who had the Holy Spirit did signs. As when the Old Testament was completed the miracles ended, so the miraculous gifts of tongues, prophecy and knowledge ended when the New Testament was complete (1Co. 13:8-13).

**VI. “The love and joy among Pentecostals show they have the Holy Spirit.” (Matt. 7:16-20; Gal. 5:22, 23)**

**ANSWER:** What looks good superficially is not necessarily of God. In Mt. 7:15, 20-23 Jesus warned to check out the fruits. Pretty blossoms in May do not necessarily indicate healthy fruit in September. He warned not to be fooled by nice sheep’s clothing and that false prophets would claim to have prophesied, cast out demons and done many mighty works. Jesus said he had never known them. “Tares” look very much like wheat until the harvest (Mt. 13:25-30). There is “love” even among the people outside of Christ (Mt. 5:46). Wicked people also rejoice (Acts 7:41; James 4:16; Rev. 11:10).

Those who love Jesus obey him (John 14:21-24). Those who have the true Spirit of God keep His word (Matt. 7:21, 24; 1Jn. 3:24; 4:6; 2:3-5; Jn. 8:31, 47; 1Cor. 14:33, 37, 38).

**VII. “Ac. 2:17 teaches that in the last days we will prophesy.”**

**ANSWER:** They did. Peter said of Joel's prophesy about the last days, “THIS is that” (2:16). They were the last days of the Jewish nation. The Spirit was poured out upon all flesh (Jews and Gentiles). They saw visions, dreamed and prophesied. Josephus tells of signs even at the destruction of the temple. There was blood, fire and vapor of smoke. The moon was turned blood red. When Jesus died the sun was turned to darkness. The New Testament writers repeatedly said they were in the last days (1Jn. 2:8; Heb. 9:26; 1:2; 1Pe. 1:20; Jude 16-19).

**VIII. “God says that He does not change?”**

**ANSWER:** When God makes a promise to someone he does not change it. However, all promises are not for every person in all ages. Some promises were not intended for us and others were conditional.

- A. God is not fickle (2Cor. 1:18-22). When he says the will do something he does it. He promised the Holy Spirit to those who obey him (Ac. 5:32; 2:38; Eph. 1:13-14; 1Cor. 12:13-14; John 3:5; 1John 5:6-8; Rom. 8). He did not promise that every Christian would speak in tongues (1Cor. 12).
- B. God’s plan for the gifts was to *confirm the word* (Mark 16:20; Heb. 2:3-4 ) and when it was complete they were to cease (1Cor. 13:8-13). His plan is not going to change.

- C. It is not true that God never changes anything. He clearly says that some things were to change. The Old Testament was done away (Heb. 7:12; 8:6-13; 2Co. 3; Rom. 7:1-6; Col. 2:14-17; Gal. 3:24-25; 4:21-30). God repented having made man (Gen. 6:6) and destroyed the world (2Pet. 3:6). Gen. 9:11 says He will no more destroy the world with a flood but it will be destroyed by fire (2Pet. 3).
- D. For those who insist that the same things are to be done today I ask when the next flood is coming and whether they can turn water to wine (Jn. 2:7-9) or to blood (Ex. 7:17). Let them divide the Red Sea or the Jordan River. If they will lead the way, I will even go for a walk on Lake Washington with them.

**IX. "God cannot be put in a box. He is not limited to what the Bible says."**

**ANSWER:** God gave us the standard by which truth and error is to be judged (Is. 8:20 etc.). I was told to use that basis (Gal. 1:7-10; 2Co. 11:13-15; 2Jn. 9-11). False teachers use these arguments to justify ignoring that basis. (Isa. 8:20)

**X. "The body of Christ would be incomplete without the gifts."**

**ANSWER:**

The "body" is composed of PEOPLE, not gifts. "YE are the body of Christ" (1Co. 12:25-27). It is clear that 1Co. 13:8-13 teaches that the time was to come when the gifts were to pass away. If the body would not be incomplete then, why would it be now? The body puts away childish things as it grows up. In doing so, is it any less the body of Christ? If one loses baby teeth, is the body no longer a body? Christ is the head of the body. If the head does not have to continue on earth, why can not Apostles and prophets also be in heaven and still be part of His body?

**XI. "You cannot understand the things of God because you have never been baptized in the Holy Spirit (1Cor. 2:10, 13). The Holy Spirit teaches us what the true meaning of His words are."**

**ANSWER:**

I must admit that it is pretty hard to argue with infallibility. The Pope claims He is right. The Mormons claim they are right. The Jehovah's Witnesses claim they are right. There is no end to those who profess that only they can understand the Bible by means of some special divine guidance. Like my dad once said, "When a feller knows it all, there isn't much left he can learn!"

Think a little. If there is no way to evaluate whether a thing is poison before you swallow it we are in very grave difficulty. It is manifest that everybody who makes such a claim cannot be right. I am warned not to be deceived (Mt. 24:4, 11, 24; 7:15, 20-23). If I must have direct revelation to know who is right, I am left to the solution of refusing to accept any until God speaks to me. Even in the days of the Apostles the burden of proof rested on the person claiming those powers. (Rev. 2:2)

1Co. 2:10 does not say that no one can understand the word of God without miraculous gifts. It is saying that God's will is revealed only through the Spirit, not through man's wisdom (2Pet. 1:20, 21). The uninspired man cannot know God without revelation. It is revealed through those who were inspired.

Some would suggest that this passage has to do with being yielded to the Spirit. Even if we accept that, it does not require us to do miracles or else none are Christians until they can. Certainly every Christian has God's Spirit (Rom. 8:4-16). I have as much right to claim that as any Pentecostal (Jn. 7:17). The Spirit has told me no such thing.

## CONCLUSION:

Pentecostalism paints an attractive picture. The feelings generated are very real and appealing. The claims of signs and wonders with instant healing sound so good that one almost fears to breath lest the magic spell be broken and bring us rudely back to harsh reality.

But that is exactly the problem. Because of the desire to see some great thing, and fear lest it vanish, multitudes are making themselves vulnerable to a captivating illusion like a dream out of which one fears to awake. It is like a drug creating a spell but it is a delusion in which those who share are increasingly isolated from the truth which could make them truly free. They become numb to reality and vulnerable to false teachers who milk them financially.

“Feeling” becomes God. A feeling is claimed to be the Holy Spirit. If the feeling ceases, the Holy Spirit has forsaken them. How often I have tried to deal with their “downers” in which they think that maybe they have committed the sin against the Holy Spirit.

I am not opposed to Christians having good feelings but the scriptures nowhere gives feeling as a basis of knowing God. The word, “feel” is used only twice in the Authorized Version (King James) of the New Testament, and “experience” only once, yet these two words are some of the most common in the vocabulary of Pentecostals. Feelings are important, like gas in the car makes it go, but it takes knowledge to direct it safely.

We are to walk by faith, not feeling. Faith is not the “feeling concerning things hoped for...” (Heb 11:1) Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God (Rom. 10:17)

We are warned that he who trusts in his heart is a fool (Pr. 28:26). What people do not seem to realize is that feelings we experience, and even some we may not yet have experienced, are part of the our physical makeup. You can actually get “high” on your own juices. I am persuaded that what some people worship is nothing but a quiver of their liver!

The idea that some miraculous power will keep us feeling good and above sin is a delusion. The church at Corinth, where these gifts were manifested, was plagued with gross immorality, lawsuits, division, drunkenness, idolatry, conflicts over the gifts, and unbelief in the resurrection. Paul indicated they were still “children in mind” (14:18-20). Speaking in tongues was no guarantee against carnality (1Cor. 3:1).

People question, why we oppose it. It is argued that, even if they are wrong, why should we discourage them from the joy they get in doing it? What harm does it do?

My response is that throughout the Bible we are warned to beware of false prophets (Matt. 7:15; 24:4, 24; Gal. 1:6-10; 2Co. 11:13-15; 2Jn. 7-11). God commended Churches for testing those who made miraculous claims (Rev. 2:2) and condemned those that did not (Rev. 2:20). The Bible warned of a day when false teachers would *wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived* (2Tim. 3:13). It warns of a time when *they will not endure the sound doctrine but having itching ears will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables* (2Tim. 4:1-5). It warned of a time when there would be *a falling away when all power and signs and lying wonders* would deceive those who perish because they did not have a love of the truth. They would receive *a working of error that they should believe a lie*.

It is dangerous to rely upon claims of signs (Mt. 12:38-39; Lk. 10:17, 20). Like the Jews, seeking signs leads to a false basis for faith. (1Co. 1:22-23). They ignore the warning of Jesus not to rely upon those who in the name of the Lord claim they have done miraculous works. (Matt. 7:21-23)

Indeed, if I were going to identify our fundamental difference I would cite Matthew 7:24-27. Instead of following signs or feelings, the true believer hears the word of God and obeys it. He thus builds upon the rock of Christ.

When the storms of life come, instead of being carried about by every wind of doctrine, he stands firm. He may feel the storms but because his faith is solidly founded, his house does not fall.

Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ (Rom. 10:17). It is the truth that makes us free (Jn. 8:31-32). It is the word that shall judge us in the last day (Jn. 12:48). The word of God is able to save our souls (James 1:21). We walk by faith, not by sight (2Co. 5:7). The only sound basis for evaluating claims of spiritual gifts is by the word which the Holy Spirit revealed.

**Bibliography:**

Highly recommend: "GLOSSOLALIA, from God or man?" by Jimmy Jividen  
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