

Tongues and Prophecy

Beloved Brethren and Sisters

Our attention is drawn to verses 21-25 to focus on this subject, but all the verses in this chapter lend weight.

In chapter 13 Paul emphasizes that love (agape) is the most important thing and he shows how. No matter what good deeds we do or what abilities we have or express it is the motive that is most important thing and the only lasting thing and he describes how it can be a power in our lives

In chapter 14:1 Paul also compares the ability to speak in other languages and implies that it closely follows love as a valuable asset whilst also emphasizing its limited value. The word for prophesying is **prophēteuō** which means to foretell the future and the whole chapter is relevant. We do not have this gift in these days as it was given in the days of the apostles to a few (after Jesus rose to the heavens) so that the Gospel would be spread to whole world. But some nowadays have knowledge of more than one language and can use this to benefit all.

We, at the present, have brothers and sisters in African countries as well as the U.K. and many of them are able to speak English as well as their own language. We also can learn other languages if we so apply ourselves. This is invaluable in conveying the Gospel to those who have knowledge only in their own language. It is essential for all brothers and sisters that they understand the Gospel (indeed essential for baptism into the one body to become a brother or sister).

But why are there different languages? It would be much easier if there was just one language. We are told the reason in the Word itself in the very first book that it was because of the pride of man that confusion of languages came about. This is related in Genesis 11 when men built a tall tower which they imagined reached unto heaven. Of course it did not and could not reach unto Yahweh's dwelling place

and such thoughts are too high for mortal man to know; but it was the motive - pride - that was in their hearts that mattered and it was and will be so for it is not for mortal man to know. But pride is an evil and natural character that drives him forward to think that he is better than he is and, for the majority, God is not in all their thoughts.

In these days when knowledge has increased, telescopes are being built that can penetrate deeper and deeper into space but he cannot find where God's dwelling place is. But there is no place where God's Spirit is not. God is the Great Creator and we, and everything else visible and invisible, are the work of His Hands. Psalm 139 expresses this beautifully. Firstly there is an acknowledgement by David the sweet Psalmist that he was under the penetrating eyes of the almighty; God. For those who seek Him one thing is required of us as His creatures and this is told us in His word by Jesus the Son of God when a scribe asked him, "Which is the first commandment of all?" meaning the most important,

Mark 12:29-34 *And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: (not three in one) And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but He: And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly,(
nunechōs: prudently in his own pride, to justify himself?) he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.*

What can we deduce from Jesus' answer and the scribes' reaction? We recall that Jesus knew what was in man. Does this imply that the

scribe had all the answers from his head but not his heart? If so there was no way he could keep the commandments acceptably. This is a valuable lesson; no matter how much we can recite scripture to our self or to others, it is our practice, deeds, actions in our life that matter and we live only once to prove ourselves to God. But what a wonderful gift life is and a truly wonderful world we live in.

The gift of speech is also a wonderful thing and in man it is well developed but we must not think that we are the only creatures able to communicate for, in one way or another, it has been discovered that not only mammals communicate but that plants can too. In March, [a new study](#) showed many different plant species make ultrasonic sounds to communicate stress. It's the latest evidence showing how plants "talk" with everything from predators to pollinators. This research has an important use. Understanding how plants communicate could help us increase arable lands to feed our growing population and adapt to climate change.

Heard it through the grapevine

To react to their environment, a single plant must communicate among its roots, stems, leaves, flowers, and fruit. Instead of signals moving through a nervous system like ours, Simon Gilroy, professor of botany at University of Wisconsin-Madison says, in plants it's more like plumbing. Leaves detect predators or changes in light and sound, and roots monitor conditions below ground: problems with nutrients, water, and predators could be there too.

So it is a wonderful world that we live in and is for us to show true respect to our Father in heaven for this wonderful world knowing also that whilst at the present there are dangerous animals and plants the time will soon come, at least in God's holy mountain, when the prophecy in Isaiah 11 will become reality.

This wonderful time is about to arrive with the return of the Lord Jesus who will, with those glorified, live in the Kingdom of God upon earth.

Brother Ken