

Speaking in Tongues – Ceasing and Remaining

In 1 Cor. 13:8, we are told that Tongues, Prophecy and Knowledge will cease at some point in time and, after they cease, 1 Cor 13:13 says that Faith, Hope and Love will remain. We know that Love is eternal but our Faith and Hope are both fulfilled and come to their conclusion when Jesus returns as the following shows -

Regarding Faith, Heb. 11:1 tells us that Faith is *“being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see”* and 2 Cor. 5:7 says, *“we live by faith, not by sight”*, so when we see Jesus our Faith will give way to sight. 1 Pet. 1:9 says, *“you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls”*. Thayer’s dictionary defines *“goal”* as the *“termination, the limit at which a thing ceases to be”* so, when Jesus returns to bring our salvation (Heb. 9:28), our Faith will have reached its goal and terminate. The AMP says, *“you receive the result, the outcome, the consummation of your faith”* and the KJV says, *“receiving the end of our faith”* so it’s clear that our Faith reaches its conclusion when Jesus returns.

Regarding Hope, Tit. 2:13 tells us that we are waiting for Jesus, our Blessed Hope. In Rom. 8:19-25, our Hope is again defined as waiting for Jesus, for our adoption, for the redemption of our bodies, and the verses say, *“hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has?”* So, when we see Jesus, our waiting will be over and Hope will come to its conclusion.

From this we can see that Faith and Hope will only remain until Jesus returns but Love will continue eternally, as 1 Cor. 13:8 says.

So, Tongues, Prophecy and Knowledge are the first to cease, leaving Faith and Hope remaining and they will both conclude when Jesus returns. This shows that Tongues, Prophecy and Knowledge cease before Jesus returns and brings Faith and Hope to their conclusion.

It’s not possible for Tongues, Prophecy, Knowledge to remain alongside Faith and Hope as this would contradict Scripture which says that Faith and Hope remain *after* Tongues, Prophecy and Knowledge have ceased. (The word “now”, beginning 1 Cor. 13:13, is not the “now” of time but the “now” of logic or argument and is better translated as “but” - see this in the VWS and JFB commentaries. This means that the passage is saying that Tongues, Prophecy and Knowledge would cease at some point in time “but” Faith, Hope and Love would remain.)

Some say that Faith and Hope will continue eternally but their Biblical descriptions, as shown above, make it abundantly clear that they will both be consummated and terminate when Jesus returns.

A simplified explanation is -

First, Tongues, Prophecy and Knowledge cease, leaving Faith, Hope and Love remaining.

Next, Faith and Hope cease when Jesus returns.

Therefore Tongues, Prophecy and Knowledge cease before Jesus returns.

The aim of this article is simply to show that tongues, prophecy and knowledge were targeted to cease before Jesus returns. To keep things short, the timing of cessation has not been examined. However, I believe that a close look at 1 Cor. 13:8-13 shows that they ceased in the first century. An in-depth look at this can be found in the following links to free books on the subject. Amen.

Speaking In Tongues – A Sign

“Tongues then are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers” (1 Cor. 14:22).

It's commonly believed that speaking in tongues is a private prayer language but that idea is read into the text. Not a single verse states that tongues is for private prayer, however, 1 Cor. 14:21-22 clearly say that speaking in tongues was a sign. In 1 Cor. 14:21, God said, *“through men of strange tongues ... I will speak to this people”*. This is a quote from Isa. 28:11-14 in which God said that through *“foreign lips and strange tongues”* He was going to speak to, that is judge, *“this people in Jerusalem”*. Then 1 Cor. 14:22 continues on to say, *“Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers”*. From this we can see that speaking in tongues was a sign of judgement for *“this people”*, the unbelieving Jews who had rejected their Messiah. That judgement came in 70AD when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem.

Foreign languages were first used as a sign of judgement against the people who were building the tower of Babel. Gen. 11:1-9 tell us that, because they refused to spread throughout the world, God confused their languages and scattered them over the face of the earth.

Next, in Deu. 28, after God promised Israel that He would bless them if they were obedient, He said that if they were disobedient He would bring against them *“a nation whose language you will not understand”* (v.49). So, just as foreign languages were used as judgment against a disobedient people at Babel, they would be used as a sign of judgment against Israel if they were disobedient.

The Old Testament shows tongues being used as a sign of judgement against Israel on two occasions.

1) In Isa. 28:11-14, Isaiah prophesied that the Assyrians, a people *“with foreign lips and strange tongues”*, would be God's instrument of judgment against Israel.

2) In Jer. 5:15-17, Jeremiah prophesied that the Babylonians, *“a people whose language you do not know, whose speech you do not understand”*, would be God's instrument of judgment against Judah.

Both of these prophecies were fulfilled confirming tongues as a sign of judgement.

Moving on to the New Testament, 1 Cor. 1:22 says that Jews demanded signs.

- In John 20:30-31 we are told that Jesus did signs in the presence of His Jewish disciples to prove that He was the Christ, the Messiah, and eternal life was in His name.
- Then Heb. 2:2-4 tell us that God used signs to bear witness to salvation through Jesus.

Speaking in tongues was a sign to the Jews that salvation was in Jesus, the One they crucified. There are three mentions of tongues in Acts and on each occasion Jews were present and people believed in Jesus.

Looking at the three events in Acts, we see -

(a) In Acts 2, the Jews were amazed to hear God being praised in foreign languages and three thousand were cut to the heart and believed when they heard they had crucified their Lord and Christ (Act 2:36-41).

(b) In Acts 10-11, at Cornelius' house, Peter and the other Jews who had come with him were astonished when the Gentiles believed in Jesus and spoke in tongues (Acts 10:43-47).

(c) In Acts 19:1-7, twelve Jewish disciples of John the Baptist spoke in tongues after they had believed and were baptised in Jesus' name.

In all three passages, Jews were the target of the sign of speaking in tongues and each time it pointed to belief in Jesus so it is obvious that tongues were a sign to the Jews that salvation, even for the Gentiles, was in the One they had crucified – and they would be severely judged for it.

In Matt. 24:1-2, Jesus spoke of judgement saying that the Temple would be destroyed. It was further prophesied about in 1 Cor. 14:21-22 which say that through "*men of strange tongues*" God would speak to "*this people*" and it would be a sign to them. As already said, this quote comes from Isa. 28:11-14 and this connection to previous judgement against Israel makes it obvious that speaking in tongues was a sign of future judgement against them for crucifying their Messiah. Judgement came when God used the Roman army, a "*men of strange tongues*", to destroy Jerusalem. The sign of speaking in tongues was not likely needed beyond that point because tongues had served their purpose – judgement had come.

Finally, many believe that speaking in tongues is for private use despite 1 Cor. 12:7 and 1 Pet. 4:10 saying that all gifts are for serving others, for the common good. There is no suggestion of tongues being for private use but, as shown in this article, the Bible tells us that speaking in tongues was a sign of judgement against Israel. When Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, about 55AD, he said not to forbid speaking in tongues and this was simply because tongues were still being used as a sign to the Jews but once judgement came, in 70AD, the sign had served its purpose and the gift of tongues ceased. Many ignore the clearly stated purpose of speaking in tongues and force fit a 'private prayer language' into the text, at the expense of sound interpretation. Amen.

Speaking in Tongues and 1 Cor. 13:11

Regarding speaking in tongues, what is 1 Cor. 13:11 saying? The verse says, *"When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me"*. In this verse, the putting away of the so called childish ways of speaking, thinking and reasoning is parallel to the cessation of the gifts of tongues, prophecy and knowledge spoken of in 1 Cor. 13:8. The following points make this connection obvious -

I) 1 Cor. 13:11 is right in the middle of 1 Cor. 13:8-13 which is about the cessation of the three spiritual gifts of tongues, prophecy and knowledge.

II) In 1 Cor. 13:11, the word translated "put away" (G2673 - katargeo) is the same word that is used in 1 Cor. 13:8 where it talks about prophecy and knowledge ceasing. So, in saying "put away", Paul is talking about the cessation of speaking, thinking and reasoning.

III) Because verses 8 and 11 are both talking about the cessation of three things, it is obvious that speaking, thinking and reasoning are parallel to the gifts of tongues, prophecy and knowledge.

Speaking = tongues

Thinking = prophecy

Reasoning = knowledge

Therefore, 1 Cor. 13:11 is saying, *"When I was a child, I talked like a child [tongues], I thought like a child [prophecy], I reasoned like a child [knowledge]. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me"*.

Paul figuratively refers to tongues, prophesy and knowledge as "childish ways" because they were for the infant church and were put away, ceased, as he became a man, that is, as the church matured. Tongues, being a sign of judgement (1 Cor. 14:21-22), ceased with the early church, some time after Jerusalem's judgement in 70AD and God stopped giving biblical prophecy and knowledge to men when Revelation was written (around 96AD) because He had nothing further to add to His written Word.

Some suggest that 1 Cor. 13:11 is about abuse or love or moving on spiritually but the context of the verse rules these out. The verse is right in the middle of three chapters on spiritual gifts and, further still, it is firmly anchored in the middle of six verses which are talking about the cessation of tongues, prophecy and knowledge so the context is clearly about the cessation of the spiritual gifts of tongues, prophecy and knowledge and not about things like abuse, love or moving on spiritually.

Another suggestion is that "becoming a man", in 1 Cor. 13:11, is talking about maturing when Jesus returns but this cannot be as, at the Rapture, we will not "become a man" but be totally transformed into spiritual beings, no longer even human (1 Cor. 15:50-53). Sudden change from a flesh and blood human being into an immortal, spiritual being can hardly be called maturing.

All this, I believe, shows that tongues, prophesy and knowledge ceased with the early church.

A final point for thought:

Some believe that, in 1 Cor. 13:9-10, "the perfect" is Jesus and that all gifts cease when He returns but this can't be true for two reasons:

I) "the perfect" is neuter gender, not masculine, so it cannot be referring to Jesus.

II) Even if “the perfect” was Jesus, 1 Cor. 13:9-10 say that only prophecy and knowledge cease at the coming of “the perfect”, not all the gifts. What happens to tongues?

See “Speaking In Tongues And The Perfect” at -

<http://www.christianissues.biz/blog/wordpress/2016/10/04/speaking-in-tongues-and-the-perfect/>

Amen.

Speaking In Tongues And The Perfect

What is “*the perfect*” in 1 Cor. 13:9-10?

Many believe that 1 Cor. 13:9-10 say that tongues will cease when “*the perfect*” comes but that can’t be true as these verses don’t even mention tongues; they only say that prophecy and knowledge cease when “*the perfect*” comes. Tongues cease in a different manner and this is verified by the use of different verbs, and verb tenses, in 1 Cor. 13:8. In this verse, the verb for the cessation of both prophecy and knowledge is in the Passive Voice meaning that something will cause them to cease. But the verb which tells us that tongues will cease is in the Middle Voice meaning that tongues will “make themselves cease or automatically cease of themselves” (RWP commentary). Therefore, tongues cease in a different manner to prophecy and knowledge.

So, what is “the perfect”?

Many believe it is Jesus but “*perfect*” is a neuter adjective, not masculine, meaning that it is not describing God or Jesus. Also, why would Jesus’ return selectively do away with only the two gifts of prophecy and knowledge? Something that is perfect, and very clearly linked to prophecy and knowledge, is the Bible as the following show:

- The Bible is made up entirely of prophecy and knowledge. It starts with the knowledge of Creation in Genesis and ends with the prophecy of Revelation. In between, it is full of prophecy and knowledge.
- The word “*perfect*” can be translated as “*complete*” - the Bible was completed when Revelation was written (about 95AD).
- When Paul wrote 1 Corinthians (about 55AD), the Bible was incomplete and that is why he said that prophecy and knowledge were “*in part*” (1 Cor. 13:9-10).
- After the book of Revelation was written, God ceased giving supernatural revelations of prophecy and knowledge to man as He had nothing further for them to add to the Bible.
- The Bible can’t be added to today. It’s perfect. It’s complete.

Each of the above points clearly point to “*the perfect*” being the completed Bible. When 1 Corinthians was written, prophecy and knowledge were said to be in part because the Bible itself was in part, it was incomplete. After the book of Revelation was written, the Bible was complete. Then, because God had given man all the revelations of prophecy and knowledge He wanted in the Bible, prophecy and knowledge were done away with – the perfect, complete Bible had come and can no longer be added to.

The knowledge that has ceased is not personal knowledge as that would only happen if we became brain dead. What has ceased is the supernatural knowledge that God gave to man to insert in the Bible – things like how to run the church. Likewise, the prophecy that has ceased is supernatural, fore-telling (future) prophecy, like Revelation, that was to be written into the Bible. Of course, forth-telling prophecy, which everyone does when expounding the Bible, has not ceased.

So, what else besides the Bible fits so well?

As already said, it’s not Jesus as “*perfect*” is neuter, not masculine, and also, why would Jesus’ return selectively do away with only the two gifts of prophecy and knowledge?

Some suggest that “*the perfect*” is referring to the maturity of the Body of Christ and that this maturity occurs at some stage after the completion of the New Testament. However, 1 Cor. 13:9-10 tell us that the supernatural revelations of prophecy and knowledge, which make up the New Testament, cease after “*the perfect*” comes so, if “*the perfect*” is maturity, then prophecy and knowledge cease after maturity comes which means that the New Testament is not completed until maturity. Of course this doesn't make sense. What does make sense is that “*the perfect*” is referring to the Bible and that prophecy and knowledge ceased as soon as Revelation was written, giving a completed New Testament, and only then was maturity possible.

Also, it makes no sense to say the coming Millennium will be perfect as death will still exist (Isa. 65:20). Neither does it make sense to say that the New Heavens and New Earth are “*the perfect*” because that would mean that prophecy and knowledge, gifts to the church, would still be “*in part*” for one thousand years after the church has been raptured, all the way through the Millennium until the New Heavens and Earth come.

Whatever “*the perfect*” is believed to be, two questions need answering: 1) Why does it cause only prophecy and knowledge to cease? 2) Given that only prophecy and knowledge cease with the coming of “*the perfect*”, when do tongues cease? Whether “*the perfect*” is believed to be Jesus’ return or maturity or the Millennium or the New Heavens and Earth or whatever, these questions need answers.

Further evidence pointing to “*the perfect*” being the Bible is found in Jam. 1:21-25. These verses talk about sinners who listen to the Word which can save them but soon forget and don't do what it says. Then v.25 speaks of men being blessed (saved) if they don't forget but continue in “*the perfect law that gives freedom*”. This is an obvious reference to the Gospel so, in Jam. 1:25, “*the perfect law that gives freedom*” is referring to the Bible just like “*the perfect*”, in 1 Cor. 13:9-10, refers to the Bible.

Regarding tongues, not one verse states that tongues is a private prayer language; that is read into the text. However, 1 Cor. 14:21-22 say that tongues was a sign of judgement to the Jews and this judgement came upon them in 70AD when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem. After this, the sign of tongues was no longer needed; tongues automatically ceased at some point when their purpose had been served. The following link shows how God used tongues as a sign of judgement from Genesis through to the New Testament -

<http://www.christianissues.biz/pdf-bin/tongues/tonguesasasign.pdf>

Amen.

Speaking In Tongues And Face To Face

What does face to face mean in 1 Cor. 13:12?

Regarding 1 Cor. 13:12 and the term "*face to face*", in Ex. 33:11 we are told that God talked to Moses "*face to face, as a man speaks with a friend*". We know this is figurative language because Ex. 33:20 tells us that Moses did not actually see God's face. The same thing happens to us today when God speaks to us through His Word. Heb. 4:12 tells us that the Bible is living and active and that it judges the thoughts and attitudes of our hearts. As we read the Bible, even though we don't see God's face, we feel and know that we have personally come "*face to face*" with Him.

To understand 1 Cor. 13:12, we first need to look at James 1:21-25 and 2 Cor. 3:18.

- i) James 1:21-25 liken reading the Bible to looking into a mirror. Just as a mirror reflects our physical condition, the Bible reflects our spiritual condition – a mirror is being used as a symbol for the Bible.
- ii) James 1:21-25 refer to the Bible as "*the perfect law that gives freedom*" and, in the next paragraph, there is a link to a PDF showing that "*the perfect*" in 1 Cor. 13:9-10 is speaking about the Bible also.
- iii) 2 Cor. 3:18 also speaks figuratively about looking into a mirror (the Bible) and being changed into Jesus' image. The Holy Spirit changes us from glory to glory as we continue to look into the Bible.

This tells us that Mirror = the Perfect = the Bible.

1 Cor. 13:12 is a continuation of the discussion on the cessation of prophecy and knowledge and it uses figurative language similar to James 1:21-25 and 2 Cor. 3:18. It says, "*Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known*". This verse speaks of "*now*" and "*then*" - "*now*" being the time when Paul was writing 1 Corinthians and "*then*" being the time when "*the perfect*" was to come. Therefore, our interpretation of this verse depends upon what "*the perfect*" is. In the following link, I show why I believe that the coming of "*the perfect*" refers to the time when God would give His final revelation for inclusion in the Bible, making it complete; this revelation being the book of Revelation - <http://www.christianissues.biz/pdf-bin/blogarticles/tonguesandthep perfect.pdf>

The following interprets 1 Cor. 13:12 in the light of "*the perfect*" being the completed Bible - "*Now [with an incomplete Bible] we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror [prophecy was limited]; then [when we have the completed Bible] we shall see face to face [figuratively speaking]. Now [with an incomplete Bible] I know in part [because knowledge is in part]; then [when we have the completed Bible] I shall know fully, even as I am fully known*".

Regarding "*mirror*", the polished metal mirrors used in Paul's day gave a poor reflection. This speaks of the poorer understanding of things like our spiritual condition, Jesus' sacrifice, End Times etc., that we get when we only read the Old Testament. But, just as today's glass mirrors give a clear reflection, the New Testament gives us a clear, "*face to face*" understanding of God's Will.

Knowing fully is not referring to knowing God fully as even in our eternal state we will not know Him fully or be all-knowing like He is. We will never be omniscient. Knowing fully simply means having a full knowledge of God's Will, Plans and Purposes as revealed in "*the perfect*", complete Bible. Through the New Testament we can come to a much deeper knowledge of these things than through reading the Old Testament alone. God's Will for man is fully known from the beginning to the end, from Genesis to Revelation. With this in mind, the verse is saying,

*"Now [with an incomplete Bible] I know in part [because knowledge is in part];
then [when the completed Bible comes] I shall know [God's Will] fully,
even as [that is, in the same manner as] I am fully known [by Him]".
[I will fully know God's Will just as He fully knows me].*

So, through the Bible, we can figuratively come face to face with God and as we continue to look into this spiritual mirror we will come to know His Will fully and be transformed into Jesus' likeness, going from one degree of glory to another (2 Cor. 3:18). Amen.

Speaking In Tongues And Private Prayer

Like all gifts, speaking in tongues was not for private use but for the common good.

Many believe that speaking in tongues is for private prayer, however, there is not one verse that supports the private use of tongues. The Bible tells us that -

- All mentions of tongues are in public settings – other people were always present.
- Interpretation was necessary, meaning others were present (1 Cor. 14:27-28).
- Tongues were a sign to the Jews, meaning Jews were present (1 Cor. 14:21-22).

1 Cor. 12:7 and 1 Pet. 4:10 say that all gifts are for serving others, for the common good. There is no suggestion that tongues or any other gift was for private use. 1 Cor. 14:4 says that tongues would edify the individual and that is quite understandable. It would probably be even more edifying to heal someone, however, personal edification was not the intended purpose of any gift. Tongues, with interpretation, were given to build up the church, not the individual, as the following show:

1 Cor. 12:7 - "... *the manifestation of the Spirit is given **for the common good...***"

1 Pet. 4:10 - "... *each one should use whatever gift he has received **to serve others...***"

1 Cor. 14:5 - "... *so that **the church** may be edified.*" (Note 1 Pet. 4:10)

1 Cor. 14:6 - "... *[without interpretation] **what good** will I be **to you?***"

1 Cor. 14:7 - "... *[without interpretation] how will **anyone** know...?"*

1 Cor. 14:8 - "... *[without interpretation] **who** will get ready...?"*

1 Cor. 14:9 - "... *[without interpretation] how will **anyone** know...?"*

1 Cor. 14:11 - "... *If I do not grasp the meaning of **what someone is saying...***"

1 Cor. 14:12 - "... *try to excel in gifts that **build up the church.***"

1 Cor. 14:16 - "... *how can one **who does not understand** say 'amen'?"*

1 Cor. 14:16 - "... ***he does not know** what you are saying."*

1 Cor. 14:17 - "... *the **other man** is not edified."*

1 Cor. 14:19 - "... *to instruct **others...***"

1 Cor. 14:26 - "... *all things must be done **for the strengthening of the church.***"

1 Cor. 14:27 - "... *if anyone speaks in a tongue ... **someone must interpret.***"

These verses all point to the public use of tongues with interpretation for building up the church. There is not a single verse that supports the use of tongues for private prayer. (This list is taken from All About Speaking In Tongues by Fernand LeGrand)

A passage said to support tongues as a private prayer language is 1 Cor. 14:13-17. These verses talk about praying in tongues but interpretation is called for so that others can say "Amen" so clearly this passage describes a public prayer setting and has nothing at all to do with private prayer.

1 Cor. 14:2 is also used in the attempt to prove that tongues is a private prayer language. It says, "*For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit*". Obviously, this verse cannot support private prayer either as it says, "*no one understands him*", telling us that it's a public setting. Three other points about this verse are -

i) Many believe that the "*mysteries*" of 1 Cor. 14:2 are angelic languages but this comes from a misinterpretation of 1 Cor. 13:1-3 in which Paul uses exaggerated speech to show that love is greater than all. He is not saying that he could do the impossible and fathom all mysteries or have all knowledge etc but *even if he could*, yet didn't have love, then he had nothing. Likewise, he is not saying that anyone could speak in the tongues of angels; that too is exaggerated language.

ii) By itself, 1 Cor. 14:2 makes absolutely no sense as it says that no one, except God, ever understood anyone who spoke in tongues. Obviously, this is wrong because tongues were understood (Acts 2:8). To make sense of this verse we need to look at v.28 which is also talking about speaking to God. It says, *“If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God”*. So, if we consider v.2 in the light of v.28 we see it is saying that, without an interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet and talk to God as no one understands him. Again, this is a public setting and, without interpretation, the speaker would have been uttering mysteries in the same way that any foreign language is a mystery to us, unless interpreted.

iii) The KJV has helped to confuse this issue by adding *“unknown”* to the text implying that some tongues were unknown languages. However, all tongues from God were known, human languages just as 1 Cor. 14:10 tells us: *“There are doubtless many different languages in the world, and none is without meaning”*.

Finally, a careful study shows that every verse on tongues, whether about prayer or otherwise, is in the context of a public setting with interpretation called for every time. Not a single verse speaks of the private use of tongues. This is because tongues was a sign of judgement to unbelieving Jews and, once that purpose had been served, speaking in tongues ceased. See “Speaking In Tongues – A Sign” at - <http://www.christianissues.biz/pdf-bin/blogarticles/tonguesandasign.pdf>

Speaking In Tongues – General Comments

Comments on various points about speaking in tongues.

1) If tongues have ceased, why did Paul say not to forbid speaking in tongues (1 Cor. 14:39)?

The simple reason is that when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, about 55AD, tongues was still a gift and being used as a sign of judgment against the Jews. After judgment came, in 70AD, tongues ceased being a gift because they had served their purpose as a sign.

See the blog “Speaking In Tongues – A Sign” at -

<http://www.christianissues.biz/blog/wordpress/2016/12/05/speaking-in-tongues-a-sign/>

2) If tongues have ceased then why was 1 Cor. 14 written?

As already stated, tongues were still being used as a sign of judgment to the Jews when 1 Corinthians was written. Because of the misuse of tongues, Paul wrote about their purpose and proper use, stressing the need for interpretation at all times.

3) Why did Paul speak in tongues more than anyone (1 Cor. 14:18-22)?

In 1 Cor. 14:18, Paul said, “*I speak in tongues more than all of you*” and he went on to say, “*BUT in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue*” (v.19). The words “*BUT in the church*” tell us that Paul’s abundant use of tongues was not inside the church but outside the church. This was because he was a pioneering missionary and as he went from city to city throughout the world he went to the Jewish synagogues first (the very people the sign of tongues was for - vs.20-22) and then he went to the Gentiles. In this way he met new groups of Jews more than anyone else hence he used the sign of speaking in tongues more than anyone. For more on tongues being a sign, see the blog at the link in comment #1.

4) Why did Paul say he wished that all spoke in tongues (1 Cor. 14:5)?

If everyone spoke in tongues then it would mean that everyone was out and about evangelising and using tongues as a sign whenever they met Jewish people. This would please Paul because his heart was for his people as Rom. 9:1-5 tell us. Or, he may have wanted to see others edified.

5) What is the “*unknown tongue*” of 1 Cor. 14:2 in the KJV?

The word “*unknown*” is not in the original Greek; it was added in italics in the KJV. 1 Cor. 14:2 (KJV) says that when someone speaks in an “*unknown tongue*” he utters mysteries but this is simply because there is no interpreter. Note that 1 Cor. 14:27-28 (KJV) say that “*unknown tongues*” must be interpreted or the speaker was to be quiet in the church so there is no doubt that these “*unknown tongues*” were real languages. Also, 1 Cor. 14:10 says there are many languages in the world but none without meaning so this verse rules out unknown languages also. Interpretation always removed the mystery of what was said.

6) What are the tongues of angels in 1 Cor. 13:1-3?

The idea that people can speak in the tongues of angels comes from a misinterpretation of 1 Cor. 13:1-3 in which Paul used exaggerated speech to show that love is greater than all. He is not saying that he could do the impossible by fathoming all mysteries or that he had all knowledge etc but even if he did, yet didn’t have love, then he had nothing. Likewise, he is not saying that anyone could speak in the tongues of angels. That too is part of the exaggerated language used to show that love is greater than anything.

7) What are the groans of Rom. 8:26?

It's suggested that the "groans" in this verse is man praying in tongues but that can't be right as-

- i) It is the Spirit who is interceding with groans, not humans. A person cannot intercede for himself.
- ii) The verse says that the groans cannot be expressed in words so it is not a language.
- iii) The Greek word for "groans" is only found in one other place - Acts 7:34. This verse speaks of the groans coming from the Israelites who were suffering in Egypt. Just as the Israelites groaned and struggled in Egypt, we can struggle in prayer and when we are in that state the Spirit comes to our aid and "*intercedes for us with groans that words can't express*". Groans are groans, not speaking in tongues.

8) What does praying in the Spirit mean (Eph. 6:18)?

Many believe that praying in the Spirit is praying in tongues but how can a person pray in tongues "*with all kinds of prayers and requests*" if they don't know what they are saying (Eph. 6:18)? Considering that they don't know what they are praying about, how would they know if even one of their prayers was answered? For all they know, they could be praying a curse on someone. Praying in the Spirit is nothing more than praying intelligibly and intellectually with the aid of the Holy Spirit.

9) Does 1 Cor. 1:7 mean that the spiritual gifts remain until Jesus returns?

This verse says to the Corinthians, "... you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed". This is often taken as meaning that all the gifts will continue in all churches until Jesus returns. However, the verse is more than likely only relevant to the Corinthians as it says, "... you [that is, you Corinthians] do not lack any spiritual gift ... ". Rather than addressing all churches regarding the continuation of spiritual gifts, Paul was simply telling the Corinthians that they were not lacking in the gifts at that point in time. Further on, in 1 Cor. 3:1-3, he spoke about their spiritual state saying, "*I could not address you [you Corinthians] as spiritual but as worldly - mere infants in Christ*". It is obvious that Paul is only referring to the Corinthians here and not every church. In the same way, 1 Cor. 1:7 is also referring to just the Corinthian church.

10) Asking for a fish and getting a snake – Matt. 7:7-11 and Luke 11:5-13.

These passages say that God gives good gifts to those who ask - if someone asks for a fish, God will not give them a snake etc. Those who speak in today's tongues claim that their unintelligible 'private prayer language' is a gift from God even though there are no verses to support such an idea. The fact is-

- Every instance of tongues in the Bible is in a public setting, never private.
- Every instance calls for interpretation, including prayer in tongues (vs.13-17 & 27).
- All languages in the world have meaning, none are unintelligible (v.10).
- All gifts were for the edification of the church, never for individuals (1 Cor. 12:7; 1 Pet. 4:10).

These points are discussed a little more in the blog "Speaking In Tongues And Private Prayer" at <http://www.christianissues.biz/blog/wordpress/2016/12/29/speaking-in-tongues-and-private-prayer/>

Clearly, private prayer languages are not a gift from God and this makes sense as tongues have ceased. There is enormous peer pressure to be 'more spiritual' like those who think they have received a private prayer language from God. This pressure leads people to strongly seek something that doesn't exist and often leads to a learned, make-believe, unintelligible 'tongue' or, if nothing happens, the seeker may feel unspiritual and suffer a crisis of faith. Be assured, God is not the source of these prayer languages.

11) Was speaking in tongues intended as a gift for everyone?

1 Cor. 12:7-11 tell us that the Holy Spirit gave various gifts to the church for the common good. To some the Spirit gave one gift (say tongues) and to others different gifts (healing, discernment etc), just as He determined. Also, 1 Cor. 12:29-30 tell us that no gift, including tongues, was given to everyone. So, we can conclude that tongues were not given to all Christians as a private prayer language. Tongues were simply a sign to the Jews as 1 Cor. 14:21-22 tell us. See the blog “Speaking In Tongues – A Sign” at -

<http://www.christianissues.biz/blog/wordpress/2016/12/05/speaking-in-tongues-a-sign/>

12) Were tongues meant for the edification of the person with the gift (1 Cor. 14:4)?

There is no doubt that anyone would be edified (spiritually uplifted) if they were used miraculously by God to speak in tongues or heal someone or raise a dead person etc but the primary purpose of all gifts was the edification of the church, not the individual. Being edified by speaking in tongues was simply a by-product of being used miraculously. In the same way, a person would be edified if God used him to heal someone. The gift of healing, like tongues, was for the benefit of the church, not the healer, even though the healer would have been edified. There is a 15 point list in the following blog which shows that tongues were for the uplifting of the church and not the individual -

<http://www.christianissues.biz/blog/wordpress/2016/12/29/speaking-in-tongues-and-private-prayer/>

13) Is there more than one purpose for tongues?

Some say there are two purposes for tongues, even three or more, but the Bible only states one purpose and that was as a sign to the Jews (1 Cor. 14:21-22). When the sign of speaking in tongues had served its purpose, tongues ceased – see comment #1. Other purposes, such as ‘private prayer languages’, have no basis in Scripture – they are read into the text

The following link is to a series of short blogs showing that tongues ceased with the early church.

<http://www.christianissues.biz/blog/wordpress/category/speakingintongues/>

I suggest reading the blogs in the following order -

Speaking In Tongues – Ceasing And Remaining

Speaking In Tongues – A Sign

Speaking In Tongues And 1 Cor. 13:11

Speaking In Tongues And The Perfect

Speaking In Tongues And Face To Face

Speaking In Tongues And Private Prayer

Speaking In Tongues – General Comments

The following books on the cessation of Tongues, Prophecy and Knowledge are free to download.

All About Speaking In Tongues by an ex-Pentecostal Pastor -

<http://www.christianissues.biz/pdf-bin/tongues/allaboutspeakingintongues.pdf>

Today's Tongues by Bryce Hartin a Baptist Pastor involved in deliverance -

<http://www.christianissues.biz/pdf-bin/tongues/todaystongues.pdf>

Sola Scriptura – very good, author unknown -

http://www.christianissues.biz/pdf-bin/tongues/tongues_solascriptura.pdf

The Doctrine Of Tongues written by a New Zealand Barrister in the 1960s -
<http://www.christianissues.biz/pdf-bin/tongues/tonguesbywgbroadbent.pdf>

Other free books and articles -
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