

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 -

<http://www.christianissues.biz/tongues.html>

This article can be downloaded as a PDF or an MP3 from -

<http://www.christianissues.biz/downloads2.html>

The video of “Speaking In Tongues – General Comments” can be seen on YouTube at-

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w5_rRQiu4I

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