

TONGUES HAVE CEASED - A BRIEF SUMMARY

Many people who speak in tongues say that their experience confirms that it is the Holy Spirit guiding them. A careful study of the following will show that the gift of tongues has actually ceased. I would be happy to hear from anyone who can Biblically refute this argument thus showing that the gift of tongues has not ceased, as I have no desire to dishonour the Lord with false doctrine.

1 Cor 13:8-10 says that tongues will cease and that prophecy and knowledge will fade and disappear when 'that which is perfect' has come. What is meant by 'that which is perfect' in 1 Cor 13:10 (KJV)?

- 1) 1 Cor 13:8 says that tongues, prophecy and knowledge will cease. When will they cease?
- 2) 1 Cor 13:9-10 say that prophecy and knowledge will cease when “*that which is perfect is come*”.
- 3) In Greek, the words “*that which*” and “*perfect*” are in the neuter form. So, “*that which is perfect*” cannot be referring to Jesus as the words are not masculine. (In Eph 4:13, G5046 is masculine).
- 4) When 1 Cor was written, the Bible was incomplete ... it was '*in part*', and that is why prophecy and knowledge, in 1 Cor 13:9, were said to be '*in part*'. When the Bible was completed, this special, revelatory prophecy and knowledge ceased because all the future prophecy and special knowledge which God wanted us to have was now contained in the Bible. The word 'perfect' can be translated 'complete' or 'finished' and these words describe our 'that which is perfect' Bible.

The inspired writers of the Bible were given futuristic prophecy and special knowledge. Futuristic prophecy, such as Revelation, was given to these men to foretell the things which God wanted to reveal to man. Supernatural knowledge was needed to explain things like redemption, Christian living, church guidelines etc. After these things were recorded in Scripture, this type of prophecy and knowledge ceased so Scripture cannot be added to today. Normal knowledge will **never** cease but will continue forever and increase greatly after Jesus' return. Today, we are encouraged to grow in biblical knowledge and to prophecy in the form of biblical preaching, as in 1 Cor 14:24-25, which saves and edifies souls.

What was the purpose of tongues?

- 1) 1 Cor 14:22 says, “*Tongues then ... are a sign for unbelievers*”. The word “*then*” (“*Wherefore*” in the KJV) means that this verse is referring back to the previous verse(s).
- 2) 1 Cor 14:21 says that God will speak to “*this people*”. The New Testament term “*this people*” always refers to Jews and the unbelievers being referred to in 1 Cor 14:22 (from Isa 28) were Jews.
- 3) In Acts, whenever tongues was used Jews were present.
- 4) So, the purpose of tongues was to be a **sign** to unbelieving Jews. One sign was to show that salvation was for the Gentiles also (hence the foreign languages). Clearly, the sign is no longer needed.
- 5) Tongues was also a **sign** of judgment against the Jews. The quote in 1 Cor 14:21-22 comes from Isaiah 28:11-13 where judgment is pronounced against Israel. Their Temple was destroyed in 70AD.

Tongues is nowhere said to be a sign of a Christian being saved through receiving the Holy Spirit, nor is it said to be either a Prayer Language, the Baptism of the Holy Spirit or Tongues of Angels. These things can only be read into the text. The Bible only says that tongues was a sign to unbelieving Jews, nothing more. The first church in Jerusalem was entirely Jewish and they badly needed convincing that Gentiles were part of God's salvation plan as they were fiercely, often violently, opposed to it. One example in Acts 11 shows this opposition and how tongues was used as a sign to verify that the Gentiles were in God's plan. Today, we have the Bible to explain the mystery of the church (Eph 3:1-6). Tongues, prophecy and knowledge are grouped because they had a limited purpose and when that purpose was served they were removed.

Is 'that which is perfect' Jesus' Second Coming or a believer's eventual state of perfection?

Sometimes “*that which is perfect*” is interpreted to be the Second Coming or the 'state of perfection' which believers attain when transformed into the likeness of Jesus. This has serious short-comings as:

1. If the three items of 1 Cor 13:8 were not going to cease before we see Jesus, then why does the Bible mention ceasing? If they were meant to be around until the end, like healing etc, why would God even bring the matter of ceasing up?
2. In vs.9-10, only prophecy and knowledge are spoken of in reference to perfection. Why? Simply because they are the very two gifts used since Genesis for the inspired writing of Scripture. With the completed Bible these '*in part*' gifts were withdrawn so today no one can add to the perfect Word.

3. There are six items mentioned in the passage 1 Cor 13:8-13. Of these six, three are said to remain and three are said to cease. Clearly, if words mean anything, three cease at some point in time while the other three remain beyond that point, until we see Jesus ... when faith and hope will also cease. (see 'Remaining And Ceasing' below).
4. 1 Cor. 13:11 speaks of maturing in the here and now, not when Jesus returns. V.12 mentions a mirror - mirrors are for reflection ... to see ourselves. Jam. 1:23-25 connects the perfect Word of God with a mirror and it is through the Bible that we mature and come 'face to face' with our sinful self as it "*judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart*" (Heb. 4:12). Also, just as God knows us fully, through the Bible we can fully know His plans and purposes from Genesis to Revelation.
For a more detailed explanation of this, by John Farr, please download:
<http://www.christianissues.biz/pdf-bin/heraldofhope/qanda/18.pdf>
For further insight into the term 'face to face', see the small article:
<http://www.christianissues.biz/pdf-bin/tongues/thelaver.pdf>

Remaining And Ceasing.

1 Cor 13:1-3 uses exaggerated language (hyperbole) to emphasise that love is more important than any gift. Paul says that *even if* he could speak in an angelic tongue, fathom all mysteries, had all knowledge or faith to move mountains but didn't have love then he had nothing. He didn't say that he could do these things (in v.9 he said that knowledge and prophecy were in part) but that *if* he could yet didn't have love then he had nothing. Vs.4-8 tell us what love is.

Paul goes on in v.8 to say that tongues, prophecy and knowledge will cease. Then vs.9-10 tell us when and vs.11-12 give us the result of having the full revelation of God. Verse 13, which starts with "*and now*" (the Amplified Bible says "*and so*"), is a summation of vs.1-12. It sums it all up by saying, "And so [although some gifts will eventually pass away] the greater gifts of faith, hope and love will remain." The word 'remain' implies that something has been removed and v.8 tells us that tongues, prophecy and knowledge are the things to be removed. V.13 says that faith, hope and love will remain after this happens. So clearly there is a time when three gifts disappear and after that time faith, hope and love continue on.

2 Cor 5:7 says, "*We live by faith, not by sight.*" Heb 11:1 says, "*faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see*" and "*hope that is seen is no hope at all*" (Rom 8:24). So when we see Jesus, and are made perfect, our faith and hope will be fulfilled and then only love will remain. (Eph 4:5-6 say there is only *one* hope and *one* faith - the gift of 1 Cor 12:9 - and like all gifts it will not continue into eternity.) From this it can be seen that the timing for the cessation of tongues, prophecy and knowledge is separate from, and before, the time of Jesus' return. Tongues, prophecy and knowledge were singled out to disappear while faith and hope remain, but only until Jesus returns (Note 1 Pet. 1:9 and Tit. 2:13). It is not possible for the three gifts of v.8 to remain along with our faith and hope. Why? Because that would be saying that the things to cease will remain until the things that remain cease. (All other gifts must still be with us as there is no mention of them ceasing).

There are only two things which are perfect - Jesus and the Bible. Because Jesus is ruled out, then only the Bible is left. However, if there is a third thing which is perfect then it has to:

- 1) be genderless
- 2) be relevant to prophecy and knowledge
- 3) do away with prophecy and knowledge
- 4) be likened to a mirror
- 5) be something through which a believer can mature
- 6) bring us face to face with something
- 7) come before Jesus returns.

I don't think that any stretch of the imagination could come up with a perfect thing, other than the Bible, which meets these criteria.

In Mark 16:15-18, Jesus said that tongues would be one of the signs to follow evangelists as they preached the gospel. This did occur as Acts shows. However, about 20 years after Jesus said this, 1 Corinthians was written stating that tongues would cease and this occurred many years later, when the Bible was completed. The rules of 1 Cor 14 were given because of the abuse of the gift and didn't alter the fact that tongues, being just a sign, was to cease later on. An unemotional study of the Bible will reveal that tongues has ceased and should be renounced and cut off in the Lord's Name.

This can be downloaded as a one page foldable tract from:
<http://www.christianissues.biz/pdf-bin/tongues/tonguessummarytract.pdf>

For some comments on 1 Cor 14, please download the following PDF:
<http://www.christianissues.biz/pdf-bin/tongues/1cor14.pdf>

For a simplified argument, download the Tongues Chart at:
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Bryce Hartin

The Christian, His Enemies And His Armour, was written by Bryce Hartin as an aid to the spiritual warfare in which all Christians are engaged. The writer feels that perhaps the greatest assistance he can offer is to give some Biblical instruction on **the Christian's enemies** - what they can and cannot do - and on **the Christian's armour** and how to use it.

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More of Bryce's books including **Counselling Tongues Speaking People, Riding The Waves, Living In A Shattered Society, The Last Days, Signposts On The Way To Heaven** and **Satan Wants Your Mind** are also available for the above link.

Dennis Hartin

God's Conditions For Revival, by Dennis Hartin. "The Church is in an incredible dilemma." That was the comment of a young sales executive ... One prominent minister went so far as to say that the church as an institution was dead. This book outlines God's conditions which were previously met and led to revival.

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Perseverance Of The Saints is a clear Biblical argument against the Once Saved Always Saved doctrine, otherwise called Unconditional Security.

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