

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>

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>

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