

Why Tongues Are Not Available Today

A Synopsis

I have written extensively on this subject in other places, but here I need to explain the Biblical position very briefly for modern readers. For further information please consult my papers: *A Catechism on Tongues* (10pp). *What about tongue speaking?* (24pp) *A Concise Examination of tongue speaking?* (6pp). I will keep Bible references to an absolute minimum here.

Ecstatic tongues are pagan

- This has been a universal manifestation of heathen religious practice since earliest times.
- Almost all forms of religion and cults have some history of babbling tongue-speaking, including: Mormons, JWs, Hindus, African cults, witches and even Eskimos (Innuits).
- Along with other mystical phenomena, this ability is passed on from adept to novice by the laying on of hands.
- This requires Christians to carefully discern what it is they are saying. Can Charismatics be sure of the origin of their tongues since lines can be traced from modern tongue-speakers to occult roots?

Gibberish tongue-speaking is also the result of mental aberrations.

- Psychologically and organically brain damaged patients manifest forms of tongue-speaking that are identical to those found in Charismatic and Pentecostal churches.
- Christian tongue-speakers need to confirm that their 'gift' is not merely psychological?

Apostolic tongues were never gibberish or babbling.

- The gift of tongues was always the use of unlearned human languages; the Greek word (*glossa*) means human language, and thus a nation (Acts 2, 10:44-48; Rev 5:9, 7:9).
- Those who knew these languages saw this as a miracle (Acts 2:9-11).
- Therefore, modern tongues (which are non-languages) are false gifts.
- All linguistic examinations of Charismatic / Pentecostal tongue-speaking have confirmed that they are not languages. Most Charismatics do not even claim that they are, being deluded that they are angelic tongues. However, Angels, being spirits, do not have spoken languages. When they appeared in human form they spoke with human languages.

There were several purposes in the gift of tongues, chiefly, two.

1. Primarily, they were a sign of the universality of the kingdom of God under the New Covenant. No longer was a relationship with God restricted to the Jewish nation.
2. Secondly, they were a sign of judgment to the Jews. Moses warned that judgment on Israel would take the form of invasion by foreign language speakers (Deut 28:33, 36, 49). Isaiah and Jeremiah also warn about this (Jer 5:15). Paul states categorically that this was true with tongues in the church, quoting Isaiah (1 Cor 14:21-22 quoting Isa 28:11). Thus tongues were a judicial sign to Jews for rejecting their Messiah.
3. Other reasons include: the authentication of Gospel preaching, the demonstration of a new order, and confirmation of the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy of the Spirit outpoured.

Biblical references to tongues are limited to a few early writings.

- They are found only in Acts and 1 Corinthians (plus Mk 16:17-19, which refers to apostolic ministry).

- Only Paul discusses them, and in 1 Cor 14 chiefly exposes the dangers of the gift in writing to an aberrant church. Paul's sarcasm here is misunderstood by Charismatics to be positive.
- There is no teaching on them by the other apostles.
- There is no mention of them in Paul's later ministry.
- They are mentioned in Acts as part of the authentication of apostolic ministry to all nations, proof of the Spirit's outpouring and signifying the end of Jewish Old Covenant.

The gift of tongues did not continue in the early church but ceased before 100 AD.

- References to tongues had virtually vanished by the destruction of Jerusalem (70 AD) when God's patience with Israel was ended and the New Covenant fully manifest.
- All (including Pentecostals) accept that the gift disappeared until the late 19th century.
- Occasional appearances of babbling tongues were limited to a few heretical cults and mystical individuals and sects.

The Bible explains how tongues shall cease.

- In 1 Cor 13:8 the Greek text explains that tongues will cease 'of themselves'; which is what happened in history.
- This is contrasted with other gifts that cease at the end (e.g. prophecy or teaching).
- Since all accept that tongues ceased in the first century, this is the end of tongues in the church.
- This is also confirmed by tongues-speaking only arising in heretical sects in history.

Consequences of Biblical teaching on tongues.

1. Since babbling tongues are common in occult religions, it behoves Christians using this gift today to ascertain the source of their gift.
2. The Biblical gift of tongues ceased after the death of the apostles. Tongues only re-appeared in heretical and mystical sects.
3. The supernatural gift of tongues was always the use of an unlearned human language to signify the universality of the Gospel and judgment upon Israel.
4. Tongues are not private prayer languages. All the spiritual gifts are for corporate edification not personal pleasure (1 Cor 12:7).
5. Neither are they prophecies. Originally they were declarations to God of his glory and wonderful works, heard by foreigners in their own language and dialect.
6. Throughout history, the greatest saints, martyrs, teachers, preachers, leaders and theologians did not speak in tongues, just as Jesus and John the Baptist did not speak in tongues. If tongues were so vital to Christians (as claimed by Charismatics) how can this be?
7. If tongues are not available today, then the use of them is either: psychologically self-generated (which will damage the person), or are demonically inspired, deceitful manifestations (which will damage the person even more). In any event, they distract the individual from serving God in purity.

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Contact: understandingministries@yahoo.com