

A Scriptural Perspective of Tongues

Letting The Bible Speak To Us On This Issue

(Verses from the 1769 Authorized King James Version with 1833 Webster's Update.)

1Cor. 13:8-10 "Charity never faileth: but whether [there be] prophecies, they shall fail; whether [there be] tongues, they shall cease; whether [there be] knowledge, it shall vanish away. [9] For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. [10] But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."

What was given in part (a little)?

Isaiah 28:13 "But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, [and] there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken."

Were tongues as authoritative as the Word of the Lord?

1Corinthians 14:2 "For he that speaketh in an [unknown] tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth [him]; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries."

1Corinthians 14:6 "Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?"

1Corinthians 14:21 "In the law it is written, With [men of] other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord."

Where is it written?

Isaiah 28:11-13 "For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. [12] To whom he said, This [is] the rest [wherewith] ye may cause the weary to rest; and this [is] the refreshing: yet they would not hear. [13] But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, [and] there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken."

Could tongues also denote the judgment of God?

Deuteronomy 28:49 "The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far,

from the end of the earth, [as swift] as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand;"

Jeremiah 5:15 "Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the LORD: it [is] a mighty nation, it [is] an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understandest what they say."

1 Corinthians 14:22 "Wherefore tongues are for a *sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying [serveth] not for them that believe not, but for them which believe."

Should I seek this *sign?

* Strong's # 4592 semeion {say-mi'-on}

Matthew 16:4 "A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a *sign; and there shall no *sign be given unto it, but the *sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed."

Luke 11:29 "And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a *sign; and there shall no *sign be given it, but the *sign of Jonas the prophet."

Who then will perform a *sign?

* Strong's # 4592 semeion {say-mi'-on}

Mark 13:22-23 "For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew *signs and wonders, to seduce, if [it were] possible, even the elect. [23] But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things."

2 Thessalonians 2:9-11 "[Even him], whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and *signs and lying wonders, [10] And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. [11] And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie"

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 "For such [are] false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. [14] And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. [15] Therefore [it is] no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."

2 Corinthians 11:3-4 "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. [4] For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or [if] ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with [him]."

Why then did God tell us about tongues?

Deuteronomy 13:1-3 “If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, [2] And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; [3] Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”

Deuteronomy 8:2 “And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, [and] to prove thee, to know what [was] in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.”

Oh! but tongues are wonderful, and Jesus is my Lord!

Matthew 7:22-23 “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? [23] And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

Revelation 22:18-19 “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: [19] And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and [from] the things which are written in this book.”

A Historical Perspective of Tongues

The writings of Polycarp (69-159 A.D.), Justin Martyr (110-164 A.D.), Irenaeus (120-202 A.D.), Tertullian (160-220 A.D.), Eusebius (260-340 A.D.), Chrysostom (347-407 A.D.), Augustine (354-430 A.D.), Aquinas (1124-1274 A.D.), Luther (1483-1546 A.D.), and Calvin (1509-1564 A.D.) indicate that the gift of tongues ceased in the first century and therefore prohibited its use for their contemporaries. Whereas the writings of Plato (429-347 B.C.), Virgil (70-19 B.C.) and various cults/non-christian religions made references to experiencing ecstatic speech. The only (non-biblical) claims of tongues speaking within the church are a few vague references from the so-called “mystics” of the 13th and 14th centuries, as well as references from Montanus who broke off from the church in the 2nd century. — *James Riscinti*