

The Gift of Tongues (Languages)

Tongues are mentioned in three books of the Bible: Mark (Cpt 16); Acts (2,10,19); and I Cor (12-14).

Tongues Means Languages

Reasons Why

1. The Greek word "glossa" primarily means human language when used in Scripture, it is the normal for language. In the Greek Old Testament (Septuagint) the word is used 30 times and always meant human language. In Acts 2:6 when the gift is first mentioned, it says, "they were each one hearing them speak in his own language" and goes on to list some 15 different countries and areas whose languages were being spoken (8-11).
2. Also used in Acts 2 is the Greek word "dialektos" from which we get the English word dialect - some of those at Pentecost heard in their own dialect - own language.
3. The same term for language is used later in the book of Acts and in 1 Cor 12-14 - some Pentecostal believe languages are mentioned in Acts 2 but after that it means something else. Glossa always appears in the plural form throughout Acts - multiple of languages. When Paul used the singular in I Cor 14:2,4,13,14 and 19 he was referring to the counterfeit pagan gibberish (unintelligible speech). The King James Version used the work "unknown" with all these singulars to designate a difference between the pagan ecstatic speech and the true gift in plural form, which has no "unknown" in front of it.
4. I Cor 12:10 mentions the same word "glossa" and goes on to talk about interpretation of languages. Take one language and translate into another. You can't translate gibberish.
5. I Cor 14:21 indicates that tongues were a foreign language given as a sign to unbelieving Israel. Paul referred to Isaiah 28:11,12 when he said, "in the Law it is written, "By men of strange tongues and by the lips of strangers I will speak to this people, and even so they will not listen to me, says the Lord". And then Paul went on to say that tongues are for a sign, not for believers, but for unbelievers.
6. I Cor 14:27 indicates a genuine language since it was to be translated. Paul went on to say if no one was there to interpret then keep silent.
7. I Cor 12:10 mentions different "kinds" of languages .. Greek is "genos", family or group. Again the reference means normal human speech.

Tongues (Languages) Have Ceased

Reasons Why

1. The gift was predicted to cease. I Cor 13:8 Love never fails, but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away.
2. Tongues are a miracle gift, and the gift of miracles ended with the apostles. The last recorded miracle occurred around A.D. 58, the healing of Publius' father (Acts 28:7-10). Miracle gifts like tongues and healing are mentioned **only** in the **earliest epistles** such as I Cor. When you get to Ephesians and Romans, both of which discuss gifts of the Spirit at length, no mention is made of miracle gifts.
3. The miracle of tongues was a judicial sign to Israel because of Israel's unbelief. I Cor 14:22 clearly states that tongues are for a sign, not for those who believe but to unbelievers.
4. The gift of tongues was inferior to the gift of prophecy (I Cor. 14:1-3). Tongues can't edify the church in a proper way, only a pseudo self-edification is possible
5. Speaking in tongues was rendered useless when the New Testament was complete. Theoretically, the person who spoke in a tongue was receiving revelation from God. When the revelation was complete the gift was no longer needed. If the gift is available today why do people with the gift exist among denomination holding contrary beliefs. Why does it not correct doctrinal errors.
6. Tongues are mentioned only in the earliest books of the New Testament. The only epistle where it is even mentioned is First Corinthians. Paul wrote at least twelve other epistles and never mentioned tongues again. Peter never mentioned tongues. James never mentioned tongues. John nor Jude mentioned tongues. Tongues appear briefly in the early days of the church as the new word of God was being spread and the Church was being established. But once this occurred tongues were gone.
7. History records that tongues did cease. I Cor 13:8 uses the verb "pauo" - cease never to start again. Cleion Rogers, scholar-missionary, wrote "It is significant that the gift of tongues is nowhere alluded to, hinted at or even found in any writings of the Post-Apostolic Fathers".

What is modern tongue speaking (glossolalia)?-- William Samarin, professor of linguistics at the University of Toronto: " Over a period of five years I have taken part in meetings in Italy, Holland, Jamaica, Canada and the United States. I have observed old-fashioned Pentecostals and neo-Pentecostals; I have been in small meetings at private homes as well as in mammoth public meetings; I have seen such different cultural settings as are found among the Puerto Ricans of the Bronx, the snake handlers of the Appalachians [and] Russian Molakans in Los Angeles... Glossolalia is indeed like language in some ways, but this is only because the speaker (unconsciously) wants to be like language. Yet in spite of superficial similarities, glossolalia is fundamentally **not** language."

He is one of many who have made studies of glossolalia. The studies all agree that what we are hearing today is not language, then it is not the biblical gift of tongues.