

Doctrine of Tongues

1. The Greek word glossa (γλῶσσα) according to Zondervan's lexicon means:

- 1.1 a part of the body, the tongue
- 1.2 speech or talk
- 1.3 language or languages
- 1.4 a language not known rationally to the speaker
- 1.5 a nation
- 1.6 a tongue shaped flame

2. A contextual definition of tongues is: "the supernatural gift of a foreign language not belonging to the speaker directed to an unbelieving Jew in order to evangelize him or her and thus fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah 28:11-13."

3. Prophecies of tongues:

3.1 Isaiah 28:11

Isa 28:11 Very well then, with foreign lips and strange tongues God will speak to this people,

3.2 Joel 2:28-31

Joe 2:28 "And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.

Joe 2:29 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

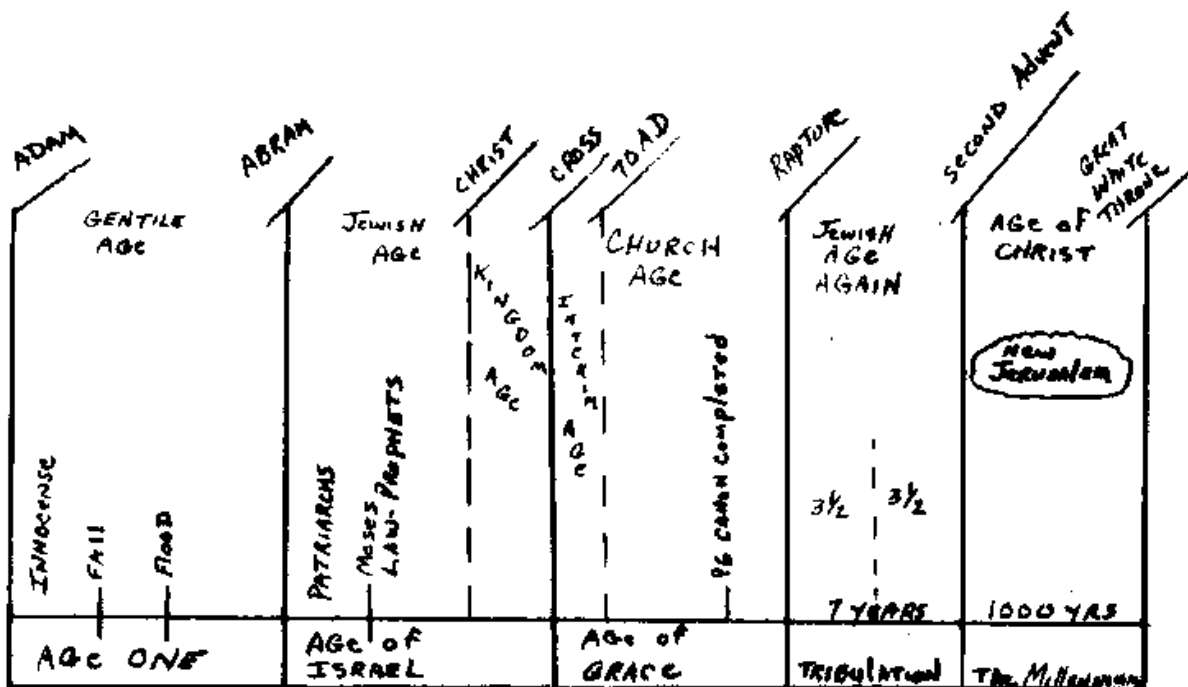
Joe 2:30 I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke.

Joe 2:31 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

3.3 Peter in Acts 2:14-21 introduced his Pentecostal Sermon with an explanation of the first phenomena of tongues by quoting Joel. His effort is problematic.

Acts 2:14 Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.

Acts 2:15 These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning!
 Acts 2:16 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:
 Acts 2:17 "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.
 Acts 2:18 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.
 Acts 2:19 I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke.
 Acts 2:20 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.
 Acts 2:21 And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."



3.4 Dr. Unger in his book entitled Tongues, writes:

"Joel's prophecy was to show his multilingual Jewish listeners, gathered from all parts of the Roman Empire to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost, that the strange exhibition of languages by these simple Galilean followers of Jesus was not an instance of drunkenness or emotional excess.

On the contrary it was something paralleled by their own prophetic Scriptures, closely akin to similar spiritual phenomena predicted to be visited upon their own race previous to the establishment in Kingdom blessing ...

Peter's quotation evidently purposefully goes beyond any possible fulfillment at Pentecost by including events in the still future Day of the Lord, preceding kingdom

establishment ... the reference is solely in an illustrative sense to Jewish listeners at Pentecost."

3.5 It is Unger's opinion that the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy in total is still future; a series of events to occur in the Tribulation ushering in Christ's Kingdom blessings.

3.6 Dr. John Walvoord, in his book: The Holy Spirit, writes:

"The prophecy of Joel, a notable prophecy of the Old Testament is quoted in the New Testament by Peter ... the prophecy is first of all related to the present age and the phenomenon of the Day of Pentecost. A careful study of the passage will reveal that this is only a partial fulfillment. The prophecy of Joel will have its ultimate fulfillment in the consummation of God's purpose for Israel. The wonders in heaven and in earth obviously did not occur on the Day of Pentecost or any succeeding day of the Christian dispensation. It remains for the tribulation period as described in Revelation ..."

4. How long was the gift valid:

4.1 The gift was extant from ~ 32 AD to ~ 57 AD.

4.2 It is last mentioned in the 12th, 13th, and 14th chapters of 1 Corinthians which were written in ~ 57 AD.

5. Purpose:

5.1 Tongues was a sign to the Jew of the coming of the five cycles of discipline. Lev 26:16-39. The fifth cycle fell officially on Israel in August of 70 AD.

5.2 Tongues were a sign designating the beginning of the Church Age and the end of the Jewish Age.

5.3 Tongues were also a sign to Israel that she would no longer be God's Priest Nation.

5.4 Tongues signaled the future use of Client Nations (where there is neither Jew nor Gentile as opposed to Israel as His Priest Nation).

6. Concept of a Priest Nation:

6.1 For 2,000 years Israel was God's Priest nation.

6.2 God first resided in the Tabernacle and later the Temple.

6.3 God communicated directly with Israel's Priests, Kings and Prophets.

6.4 The written word came to Israel in the Hebrew language.

6.5 The Jews were to evangelize the world; in the main Israel failed in this missionary effort.

6.6 As a nation they were protected and disciplined by God.

6.7 The Messiah came to Israel with the message for Israel.

6.8 Tongues were a startling sign of a major change in God's Plan.

6.9 The change had been gradually coming with several warning signs.

6.10 Tongues was the ultimate sign of a sea change - the end of the Jewish Age and the beginning of the Church Age.

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are needed to see this picture.

6.11 Isaiah foretells of tongues. Isa 28:11-13

Isa 28:11 Very well then, with foreign lips and strange tongues God will speak to this people,

Isa 28:12 to whom he said, "This is the resting place, let the weary rest;" and, "This is the place of repose"--but they would not listen.

Isa 28:13 So then, the word of the LORD to them will become: Do and do, do and do, rule on rule, rule on rule; a little here, a little there--so that they will go and fall backward, be injured and snared and captured.

6.12 To sort the matter out Paul quotes Isaiah to explain the meaning of tongues. 1Co 14:21-22.

1Co 14:21 In the Law it is written: "Through men of strange tongues and through the lips of foreigners I will speak to this people, but even then they will not listen to me," says the Lord.

1Co 14:22 Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers; prophecy, however, is for believers, not for unbelievers.

6.13 We learn four things from 1Co 14:21-22:

6.13.1 That Isa 28:11-13 is related to the Pentecostal format of tongues.

6.13.2 That tongues is for "a sign" for Israel.

6.13.3 Since Isaiah was writing primarily to Israel we know its application is primarily for the Jew.

6.13.4 That the sign of tongues is for unbelievers, and since unbelievers only understand salvation doctrine we know the content of the message brought by tongues is one of salvation.

6.14 The phenomena of tongues was a shock to the Jew and difficult for them to comprehend how lowly Gentiles could be considered as equals.

6.15 From 32 AD to 56 AD we see born again Jews, Gentiles, and Samaritans evangelizing unbelieving Jews in various Gentile languages.

6.16 This miraculous, supernatural communication will continue even in early "Church services" as a sign of the intercalation of the Church Age.

7. There are four accounts of tongues found in the book of Acts.

7.1 Acts 2:1-13

Acts 2:1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.

Acts 2:2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.

Acts 2:3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.

Acts 2:4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Acts 2:5 Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.

Acts 2:6 When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language.

Acts 2:7 Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans?"

Acts 2:8 Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language?

Acts 2:9 Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,

Acts 2:10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome

Acts 2:11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs--we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!"

Acts 2:12 Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

Acts 2:13 Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

7.1.1 Jews came from all over the Empire to celebrate the Feast days and to worship in the Temple, hearing the Word read in Hebrew.

7.1.2 On the day of Pentecost, these Jews find other Jews proclaiming Christ as the Messiah in many foreign tongues.

7.1.3 In all that babble of voices there was only one aim; the declaration of the Gospel of salvation heard by many Jews on that momentous day, each being evangelized in his adopted native tongue.

7.2 Later Peter and John investigate the Samaritan revival led by Philip and find the Holy Spirit falling in Pentecostal format on Samaritans. Acts 8:15-17

Acts 8:15 When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit,

Acts 8:16 because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 8:17 Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

7.3 Peter takes the gospel to a group of Gentiles at Caesarea Syria. Acts 10:24-43

7.3.1 At Caesarea, Cornelius, the Roman Centurion, was Peter's host.

7.3.2 These Gentiles received the gift of tongues. Acts 10:44-48.

Acts 10:44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message.

Acts 10:45 The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles.

Acts 10:46 For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said,

Acts 10:47 "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have."

Acts 10:48 So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

7.3.3 Tongues at Caesarea were a witness to events establishing the normal course of a new age.

7.4 A record of tongues coming upon certain believers at Ephesus can be found in Acts 19:3-6; these Ephesians had believed under the witness of John the Baptist.

Acts 19:3 So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied.

Acts 19:4 Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus."

Acts 19:5 On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 19:6 When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

7.4.1 Paul traveled to Ephesus, and found many believers who had never heard of the baptism of the Spirit.

7.4.2 These believers had heard and responded to the message of John the Baptist and received his water baptism.

7.4.3 After appropriate teaching, Paul laid his hands on them and they received the gift of tongues.

8. Tongues was a temporary gift.

8.1 The early church had some rather spectacular temporary gifts designed to substantiate the ministry of the Apostles.

8.2 These gifts were "attention getters" and designed to attract and authenticate.

8.3 Since the early church had no New Testament, the early gifts also provided a method for teaching.

8.4 Many of the early gifts tail-off into nonexistence:

8.4.1 Prophecy

8.4.2 Knowledge

8.4.3 Tongues

8.4.4 Interpretation of tongues

8.4.5 Discerning of Spirits

8.4.6 Casting out demons

8.4.7 Healing.

8.5 The early gifts were supernatural.

8.6 Tongues were in the early age of the Church a most important gift; the use and mechanics of their use are mentioned often in Scripture.

8.6.1 We have an extensive record of tongues as an extant gift up to and including ~ AD 57.

8.7 There were many scriptures written after c. 56 AD, e.g. the books written after AD 56 were Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude and Revelation.

8.8 The last mention of tongues in Scripture occurs in 1Co 12, 13 and 14 where a very carnal and evil church is found abusing the gift; the year of Paul's two letters to the church at Corinth was AD 56.

8.9 Church history and tongues:

8.9.1 Tongues had no significant place in the post apostolic church, 100-400 AD.

8.9.2 The Middle ages offer no evidence of tongues. So also the Reformation Period.

9. A few facts about this marvelous early Church Age gift:

9.1 It was extant early on and served to jump start the Church Age.

9.2 In later Biblical lists of gifts, tongues are omitted. Rom 12:6-8 (written in c. AD 58) and Ephesians 4:7-11 (written in c. 60 AD).

Rom 12:6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith.

Rom 12:7 If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach;

Rom 12:8 if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

Eph 4:7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.

Eph 4:8 This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men."

Eph 4:9 (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions?)

Eph 4:10 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)

Eph 4:11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,

9.3. Paul teaches that tongues, like the other early church age gifts, should be replaced by something more excellent, it is called AGAPE. 1Co 12:27-13:10.

1Co 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

1Co 12:28 And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.

1Co 12:29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles?

1Co 12:30 Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?

1Co 12:31 But eagerly desire the greater gifts. And now I will show you the most excellent way.

1Co 13:1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.

1Co 13:2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

1Co 13:3 If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

1Co 13:4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

1Co 13:5 It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

1Co 13:6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

1Co 13:7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

1Co 13:8 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

1Co 13:9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part,

1Co 13:10 but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.

9.4 To understand AGAPE, we need to study the subject categorically as has been done in the Doctrine of AGAPE.

9.5 For our purpose, it will suffice that AGAPE is the right mental attitude emanating from the consistent use of the two power options.

9.6 Paul tells us AGAPE will last, but the gifts of prophecy, knowledge and tongues will be hissed off the stage of history and vanish as we mature and then ultimately in phase three by our total and perfect transformation. 1Co 13:8-10

9.6.1 The timing of the ceasing shall be "when that which is perfect is come" and in the Greek, "That" is a single strong neuter thing. There is significant argument over what this verse means.

9.6.2 From the exegesis of 1Co 13:10 many like Col. R. B. Thieme have concluded the antecedent of "that" is the completed Canon of Scripture; and others believe the antecedent is "phase III sanctification."

9.6.3 As the Canon unfolds, we see many of the temporary gifts do vanish. After AD 56 we find no mention of the gifts of tongues, knowledge and/or prophecy and a gradual reduction of the gift of healing.

9.6.4 My conclusion therefore is: the "that" in 1Co 13:10 refers to the coming of the completed Canon of Scripture.

9.6.5 Two Examples of Paul's inability to heal: Phil 2:27; 2Ti 4:20.

Phi 2:25 But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs.

Phi 2:26 For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill.

Phi 2:27 Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow.

2Ti 4:20 Erastus stayed in Corinth, and I left Trophimus sick in Miletus.

9.6.6 It is interesting to compare these two passages with Paul's earlier power to heal in Acts 19:11-12.

Acts 19:11 God did extraordinary miracles through Paul,

Acts 19:12 so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.

9.6.7 In Phil 2:27 & 2Ti 4:20 we find Paul cannot heal either Epaphroditus in 60 AD or Trophimus in 68 AD respectively.

9.7. In 1st Corinthians chapter 14 Paul establishes rules for the gift of tongues when it was extant and a valid early Church Age gift.

10. Tongues as we have seen was said to be an inferior gift. 1Co 14:1-6; 1Co 14:23-25 and 1Co 14:39-40.

1Co 14:1 Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy.

1Co 14:2 For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit.

1Co 14:3 But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort.

1Co 14:4 He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.

1Co 14:5 I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. He who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may be edified.

1Co 14:6 Now, brothers, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction?

1Co 14:23 So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and some who do not understand or some unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind?

1Co 14:24 But if an unbeliever or someone who does not understand comes in while everybody is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be judged by all,

1Co 14:25 and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, "God is really among you!"

1Co 14:39 Therefore, my brothers, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues.

1Co 14:40 But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

11. Tongues were a sign to Jews, a message to unbelieving Jews to accept Christ as Savior; as we earlier noted it was a fulfillment said Paul of Isaiah's prophesy found in Isa 28:11-13 as compared with 1Co 14:20-22.

Isa 28:11 Very well then, with foreign lips and strange tongues God will speak to this people,

Isa 28:12 to whom he said, "This is the resting place, let the weary rest;" and, "This is the place of repose"--but they would not listen.

Isa 28:13 So then, the word of the LORD to them will become: Do and do, do and do, rule on rule, rule on rule; a little here, a little there--so that they will go and fall backward, be injured and snared and captured.

1Co 14:20 Brothers, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults.

1Co 14:21 In the Law it is written: "Through men of strange tongues and through the lips of foreigners I will speak to this people, but even then they will not listen to me," says the Lord.

1Co 14:22 Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers; prophecy, however, is for believers, not for unbelievers.

12. Tongues provided a salvation message to Israel in a Gentile language.

13. Tongues were to be used to communicate and not to be done without an interpreter present said Paul in 1Co 14:6-15; 17, 18, 23, 26-28.

1Co 14:6 Now, brothers, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction?

1Co 14:7 Even in the case of lifeless things that make sounds, such as the flute or harp, how will anyone know what tune is being played unless there is a distinction in the notes?

1Co 14:8 Again, if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle?

1Co 14:9 So it is with you. Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking into the air.

1Co 14:10 Undoubtedly there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning.

1Co 14:11 If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and he is a foreigner to me.

1Co 14:12 So it is with you. Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church.

1Co 14:13 For this reason anyone who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret what he says.

1Co 14:14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful.

1Co 14:15 So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind ...

1Co 14:17 You may be giving thanks well enough, but the other man is not edified.

1Co 14:18 I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you.

1Co 14:23 So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and some who do not understand or some unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind?

1Co 14:26 What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church.

1Co 14:27 If anyone speaks in a tongue, two--or at the most three--should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret.

1Co 14:28 If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God.

14. Tongues were always under the control of the speaker. 1Co 14:32-33

1Co 14:32 The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets.

1Co 14:33 For God is not a God of disorder but of peace. As in all the congregations of the saints,

15. Tongues were listed as the least of all the gifts. 1Co 12:8-10 and 1Co 12:28.

1Co 12:8 To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit,

1Co 12:9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit,

1Co 12:10 to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.

1Co 12:28 And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.

16. What about tongues as seen today?

16.1 The Scriptures reveal tongues have ceased.

17. There are no scriptural references to tongues after c. 56 AD.

18. Today, we have the completed Canon, and need nothing more. 1Pe 1:7-8; 2Pe 1:19-21, Gal 1:8-9 and Heb 1:2

1Pe 1:7 These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

1Pe 1:8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,

2Pe 1:19 And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

2Pe 1:20 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation.

2Pe 1:21 For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Gal 1:8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!

Gal 1:9 As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!

Heb 1:1 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways,

Heb 1:2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.

19. Today, tongues are either demonism at worst or hyper-emotionalism.

20. Tongues started in churches where grace was and is rejected, even ridiculed.

21. It spread to the more "refined churches" where both grace and doctrine are and were rejected.

22. Tongues have been historically documented as occurring in:

22.1 many fine born again Christians and

Joseph Smith

Mary Baker Patterson Glover Eddy

Tibetan Monks

Buddhist Priest

Many occult worshipers.