

Has the Gift of Speaking in Tongues Ceased?

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Ken asked this question: Has the gift of speaking in tongues ceased? I know in 1 Corinthians 13, Paul said that they would cease. Some ministers believe that speaking in tongues is no longer a valid gift today, others say it is, What's the truth?

Folks, in all these things, the Bible has to be our pattern, It's got to be our source for truth. Well, I would say this... or I would maybe ask the question: Is tongues ever set forth in the Bible as a viable spiritual gift? Clearly it is, 1 Corinthians 12, verse 7. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given this, and to another, this, and another this, and you move all the way along and it says: "To another, various kinds of tongues" So is tongues, or at least was tongues, a viable spiritual gift? Absolutely. Some have that gift given to them by the Spirit of God.

So... the question we have to ask is: At one time it was a viable gift, is it still a viable gift, or has it stopped? Well, he references 1 Corinthians 13 So I think he's referring to verses 8 and following, so let me read them to you "Love never ends, as for prophecies they will pass away, as for tongues, they will cease." You guys all see that? Tongues will cease So. We know 2 truths right? Tongues was a viable gift. Tongues is going to cease. The question we need to ask, is when are tongues going to cease? ... says they are going to cease. As for knowledge it will pass away For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.... Now notice that. We know in part... and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.

Well what's the partial? Obviously, what's going to pass away is the partial. And what's going to pass away? Prophesying, tongues speaking, special gifts of knowledge, they're going to pass away. The partial passes away. When does the partial pass away? When the perfect comes. Many people have said, the perfect is when the Bible is complete. But does anything here in 1 Corinthians 13 say, that when the perfect comes, it's speaking of the completion of the canon of Scripture?

Nothing says that. In fact, lets keep reading after verse 10, you're picking up in verse

11. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child. What Paul's doing is he's saying, there's a point where the partial exists, where we're like children, we don't see the whole deal, we're still learning. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child. Basically he's referring to prophesying, and speaking in tongues and gifts of knowledge, because it's partial, we're like little children, we don't see the whole deal, we're just learning. He says "I reasoned like a child, when I became a man I gave up childish ways.

In other words, that which is partial, is something that's going to be given up. He's comparing it to right now, we're like children, but one day's going to come when we're going to be like a full grown man. What one is that? He says: Now, when we're like a child, we see in a mirror dimly, We're like a child now, we're like those who see in mirror dimly now. We're in that age when things are partial.

When do we become like men? When we see face to face. Not when the canon's complete, when we see face to face! He says, now, I know in part, then... I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

You know what? Right now there's the partial. It's as though we see in a mirror dimly. We don't have the full thing. What he's talking about isn't the completion of the canon, it's not when the Bible, all the 66 books of the Bible all came together into one book. What he's talking about is seeing Christ face to face, and knowing Christ fully, as even he himself is known. When does that happen? That happens either at death, or that happens when? When Jesus Christ comes again.

Here's the fact. The Bible speaks about a whole lot of different gifts. Tongues, interpretation, gifts of knowledge, gifts of wisdom, gifts of healing, gifts of mercy, gifts of faith, gifts of giving, gifts of speaking, that would include exhortation, teaching, preaching, there's a place of evangelism, there's leadership gifts, administrative gifts. We have all sorts of gifts. Apostolic giftings.

You know what I can tell you? There's not a single verse in the Bible that tells you that says there's a time when they're going to discontinue in this age. There isn't. And you know, I know a lot of people rise up...we've been called charismatic. If you've visited our church, we don't have people jumping around, and running in circles and shouting out in tongues. Now let me say this: As much as I would say that, that there is no verse, that says these supernatural gifts have ceased, let me also give some cautions. Because the Bible does say this. The Bible says, that... Well, before I give the cautions, let me tell you what the Bible

does say in another place, in Mark 16. These... now listen to this, a lot of people want to say tongues have ceased. That text right there, I think you can all see, in 1 Corinthians 13, does not teach us that it ceases when all the canon of Scripture comes together. There's not a word about Scripture coming together! It's about seeing Christ face to face.

But what Scripture does say, is this: These signs will accompany those who believe. We are some of those who believe. These are some of the signs that accompany them: In my Name, this is found in Mark 16:17. They will cast out demons, they will speak in new tongues, they will pick up serpents with their hands, if they drink any deadly poison it will not hurt them, they will lay their hands on the sick and they will recover. So the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken with them, was taken up into Heaven, sat down at the right hand of God, and they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the message by accompanying signs. It does not say it's only believers in the early church, it's says believers, period, will have these accompanying signs, one of which is speaking in tongues.

Ok. Some of you are probably out there and you're saying: "What are you opening the door for?" As much as we say that, we need to say everything that the Bible says about this. You know what some people say? If you don't speak in tongues, your not what? Your not saved. Ok, where did they get that from? The Bible nowhere says that. In fact, do you know what Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 12 is? Some... are apostles, some are prophets, some are teachers, there's miracles, gifts of healing, helping, administration, various kinds of tongues, 1 Corinthians 12 :28 says that. And then what does he say? Are all apostles? What does he want you to conclude? No! Are all prophets? No! Are all teachers? No! Do all work miracles? No! Do all possess gifts of healing? No! DO all speak with tongues? No!

If anybody comes along and tells you that if you don't speak in tongues, you're not saved, get away, get out. You know what? They've got a false gospel, and they're teaching lies. That isn't right, that isn't anywhere close to right. And that is a damnable lie. That... Folks, in those circles, when they would tell you that that is the proof of salvation, that is a lie. As soon as they set up speaking in tongues, you know what happens? You know how many... The reason I say it's damnable, is you see how easily it deceives people? Cause all you've got to do is get somebody to babble out some things, and everybody's going to come along and assure them they're saved.

Do all have the gifts of tongues? No! So if anybody comes along and says... Who's

Paul talking about? He's talking about Christians. Do all Christians have the gift of tongues? No! And if somebody comes along and tells you that you're not a Christian unless you speak in tongues, you can tell them they're a liar. The Word of God says otherwise. That right there will blow most of the Charismatic air right out of the water.

And you know what the second verse is that blows it out of the water? It's found in 1 Corinthians 14. Let me tell you this... verse 27, if any speak in a tongue, let there be only 2 or 3 and each in turn. In other words, Each in turn! You don't want to have a bunch of people babbling all at once. You go into a church, where you've got 2, 3, 4, 10 people all babbling in tongues at once, guess what? Not a biblical church. Not scriptural. They don't have any respect for the Word of God. They're just carrying on the way they want to with no regard for the Word of God. And it says if you're going to speak in tongues, let someone interpret. If there is no one to interpret... let each of them who speak in tongues keep silent in the church. I'll tell you what, right here, you take these 3 things, if you come across those who say you've got to speak in tongues to be saved, reject it, get out of there. If you come across places where they're all babbling in tongues at once, They're not following the Scriptures, and if you come across people speaking in tongues and there's no interpreter, they're not doing it according to the Spirit of God. I'll tell you what, you boil down tongues speaking in this country, in light of those 3 realities, and you've just burnt off 99% of everything that claims to be tongues speaking in this country.

Then I'll tell you this. The Apostle Paul said that he would rather speak... what? words in tongues, why? Because he says this. The gift of tongues is for unbelievers. You know why it's for unbelievers? Because what happened in the Day of Pentecost. They began speaking in tongues, and people were hearing... the mighty works of God in their own language. You see, when we're in churches where everybody knows the same language, We don't need the gift of tongues. So is it for today? I would say yes, its for today, but Paul diminishes its value inside the local church where we all know the same language to the point where we don't need it. It's not useful. It's out there on the front lines, where people are preaching the gospel, and its in a certain place...

You know, it's interesting, John Sytsma told me, that when he's been down in Mexico, he's gone to some of the Spanish speaking Mexican charismatics down there, and he said, "Well you guys all speak in tongues, would somebody please speak in English" Or how was it? that they would be basically be able to... I think that's what he wanted to have happen. He

was among people that couldn't speak English, and didn't know English, and he was calling on some of them to speak English, and if they all had the gift of tongues, he said it was amazing, they all had the gift of tongues, but nobody could speak English. I mean what a dead giveaway. Is this a God-given gift or isn't it? If it's a God-given gift it's a supernatural deal.

I'll tell you this, Paul Washer had a man by the name of Bill McLeod (and some of you I've probably told the story before), Bill McLeod was down there at the last HeartCry conference. Back in the lumberjack revival days up in Canada they had an Indian woman come in who didn't know a lick of English and he preached the entire - she only spoke her Indian language, her Native language. He preached the entire message in English, and when he got done, she had heard the entire... You know what, that's exactly the kind of place where the gift of tongues is given, but the vast majority of what's going on today in these charismatic circles, it's garbage, it's man made, it's simply babble.

Kenny Flaspoebler's brother was just here, brother in law was just here, we had dinner a week ago, and he's sitting across the table from me. He came out of a charismatic circle, he's in a Reformed Baptist circle now. I said, "Did you speak in tongues?" He said "Ya." I said: "Do it." And he just rattled off some stuff. You know what? Most of that stuff is made up. Or it's demonic. And sometime it's demonic.

Now I've heard of missionaries that have been in churches where they've heard tongues speaking, and they thought, "Wow, that's strange, that does sound like a language." And I can remember one where a man thought, "That sounds like Hebrew" and he had a friend who knew Hebrew, and he brought him back into those services, and sure enough, it was Hebrew, and they were cursing God, they were not proclaiming the mighty works, and it was demonic.

Folks... That's basically what I'll say about tongues, but you know what, Paul tells us to desire prophesying, that's what he tells us to desire. He tells us that we should be -- look if you speak in a tongue that nobody else understands, you don't profit anybody. That's the whole point, when we come together in the church, we need to... That's where the love element comes in, we need to love, we need to use our gifts in order to profit one another. And the problem with these Corinthians, and the problems in the charismatic circles is, you know why people speak in tongues? Because they want to bring glory to themselves, not because they want to help anybody else. They want you to be impressed by their amazing spiritual gift,

rather than imparting something to you that will actually edify you. And you are not being edified if you don't understand what's being said. Bottom line. You don't! A bunch of babble doesn't edify anybody. We're people of truth, not people of babble. And your not going to transfer truths, unless we're speaking clearly, Understandably, with purpose, to edify one another. So there's the deal on... you know what?

When it comes to the supernatural, please folks, don't put God in your little boxes. We serve a God who does amazing things, and we should not seek to limit what God can do and will do, and is willing to do.

We need to be cautious. You know what the Scripture says? We need to test the spirits. We need to know how to do that. If some guy comes in... Listen, I'll tell you this, no matter what spiritual gift it is; If some guy starts speaking in tongues, somebody starts interpreting, somebody starts prophesying, somebody starts healing, somebody starts having visions, somebody claims that they have some supernatural manifestation of the super gift of knowledge or wisdom, or any of these described in Scripture. I'll tell you this. Test the spirits. You say, "How do you do that?" Well look at the brother, the sister who's claiming to have the ability, Are they godly people? are they people that you know? People that have walked with the Lord, people that you know are praying people, that are people of the Word? You know when one of the most godly men or women in the church comes to me and says "I had a vision, or had this..." You know what, I'm not going to lightly look on that, but when a guy comes in, he's just walked in off the streets, you know I don't know the guy from anywhere, he's just kind of come into the church, and he wants to all of a sudden tell us that he's had this or he's had that other thing, I mean typically you talk to someone like that. "You ever hear voices?" "Well ya I hear voices all the time." "Well, you're not going to come in here and prophesy to us." I mean, ya, you've got a familiar spirit or something. Test the spirits. We need to be discerning people.

How do you test the spirits? We have to look at things biblically. Basically, are things being done biblically and in order. Are things being done - You know when it comes to this whole tongues thing, is it being done in a biblical fashion. Somebody comes and says that they've got something that they want to speak in tongues and there's no interpretation. That's not biblical. So test the spirits in these things, that's the thing.

I mean I can tell you back in the Hebrides revival, you had 2 old women. One of them, by the name of Peggy Smith, had a vision of the church, full of young people with a

man in the pulpit that she didn't recognize. Guess what? They had not a single young person in the church. She saw revival was coming, and God was going to save a whole bunch of young people. She told her elders, there was a man in the pulpit that she didn't recognize. You know what? Her elders didn't write her off. You know why? She was a godly woman, she was one of the godliest women there. She truly did have those visions, she truly did prophesy. We've got to test the spirits.

Don't put God in your little cessationist box, don't put God in your little comfort zone box. Objection: "Well I don't like the supernatural, it makes me uncomfortable. So I don't want any of that." Remember, Jesus Christ did not do many might works there because of their unbelief. Don't let your unbelief be a reason why God doesn't do the supernatural in our midst. Because we have a God of the supernatural. When it's God we serve, we should expect at times, that God is going to do things. Listen, it says right there in the last 2 verses of Mark 16: Those who believe are going to have Christ attend their mission into this world with the supernatural. We ought not to fear it. But we need to test everything. Folks, the Bible is our manual. The Bible is that by which we must test everything. We must test the spirits, and if it stands up, don't be afraid of it.

When people have the door shut to parading their supposed spiritual gift in a public arena, They don't go do it privately by themselves, because they weren't really interested in anything but the attention they got out of it, anyway. And typically, people do this because they want attention, they want approval of man, they want the applause, they want the pat on the back, they want to feel like they've been slain in the Spirit, they want to feel like now they've lived up to the expectations of the religious community they're in. But when they're off by themselves, its, you know, its typically not an issue. But the fact is, the gift of tongues was a legitimate and I believe, is, a legitimate spiritual gift, and if somebody has an ability - look I read a book not too long ago, called 'From Witchcraft to Christ', and the man who was heavily involved in delivering this woman from all these demons that were in her, she was involved in witchcraft, she was involved in Satan worship, and a friend of Martyn Lloyd-Jones, he believed he had the gift of the tongues of angels, and you know what the woman said, who had been delivered of all these demons? She said, "Whether he did or not, I can't say" but she said "I know this, when he would talk in that language, the demons inside me were terrified and they understood him." So again, I'm not going to say what God can or can't do. And this was a very godly man, and like I say, he was a friend of Martyn

Lloyd-Jones, and it seemed like God had given him special and unique gifts to be able to deal... Is it possible man can speak in the tongues of angels? Hey, I haven't had it, I'm not going to say first hand. Paul definitely alludes to things like that. Whether he's saying it sarcastically, I don't know, but like I say, typically, when... typically the circles that they want to talk like that, and they want to be so dogmatic like that, once you remove it from the public arena, they don't really have the gift, so, most of it's just talk, and they're trying to justify what they're doing publicly. And you know in so many of those circles, you just get multiple people babbling at the same time, no interpretation being done. People being taught that if you don't do that, it's an indication you don't have the spirit of God and you're not saved, and it's just a bunch of garbage. And when you clear all that out, typically this private thing doesn't even become much of an issue. That's been my experience.