

Are Tongues for the Church Today?

In the book of Acts and Corinthians, this was an era of time when God was working in different ways than He is now. In the Scriptures you will see that God worked in different ways in different dispensations (various eras of time). For instance, when God first began dealing with Adam and Eve and those early people, they didn't have the Scriptures, or church. God dealt with them through conscience. Later, God gave to the Jews through Moses, the Law, and they worshiped God by animal sacrifices. The sacrifices were pictures that one day God's Son would come and be the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Later, God instituted the church, this was a totally different work that God had never done in the past. How were the people in Peter & Paul's day to know that the man that died on the cross was really Christ and that He had risen again and it was God that was doing a new thing among His people and what they were seeing was not some false cult? He had told them in the OT that the Jews would hear people speak in tongues (unknown languages) and would prophesy and they would know this was a work of God (they didn't yet have the New Testament as we now do). But, once God had the church started and once the NT was written and made available to His church, they no longer needed the sign gifts to prove to them this was a work of God. They could go to the Scriptures and verify what was true and what was false and know what God has said.

In I Corinthians 13:8-10, Paul taught the church of Corinth there would come a time when prophecies would "fail" (the Greek word there means to *cease, to be done away with, vanish away*) and *tongues* would cease (stop being used). After the book of I Corinthians, tongues are never mentioned again as used by the church. Also, Paul emphatically minimized the use of tongues to the Corinthian people. He said that though he spoke in tongues the church should seek after the gift of prophecy and covet the other gifts. He went on to say that he would rather speak 5 words that could easily be understood by all, rather than 1000 words in an unknown tongue (I Corinthians 14:19). As a matter of fact, tongues were relatively unknown for about 150 years after Paul and then a group began to try to renew the use of them (Montanists). These people were viewed by the Church at that time as heretics and they didn't remain very long. The use of tongues as we see in some churches today among charismatics was begun in the early 1900's. So you see, this is not a belief and practice that was carried on by the church that followed Paul and the Apostles. What is sad is the same phenomenon is seen in many of the cults (clearly do not believe that Jesus is God) and in pagan countries where they also practice animal and human sacrifices.

For these reasons it is evident that tongues were never meant for the Church to minister to itself and to continue. They were meant for a sign for unbelieving Jews in the first century church to help them understand that God's salvation was open to the Gentile peoples too. Once this occurred, the church was established and the Scriptures were completed, there no longer was a need for Tongues. (1 Corinthians 14:21-22 and Isaiah 28:11-12)

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