

Why Speaking In Tongues is Not For Today

By Ben Webb

Introductory Note: The purpose of this study is not to condemn those Christians who practice speaking in tongues, but to shed some much needed light on an extremely controversial subject. The Lord is not limited to saving souls either within or without the Pentecostal church; the main difference is that Christians who are saved in a Pentecostal church are usually encouraged to "receive the Holy Ghost" by speaking in tongues. The question we need to ask is, Do those who speak in tongues today do so under the influence of the Holy Spirit, or is this simply another spirit they are seeking (2 Cor. 11:4)? Since there are many Christians who literally worship the spirit which causes them to speak in tongues, these believers could actually be guilty of idolatry if this is not the Holy Spirit which they are worshipping. We must therefore determine whether this is indeed the Holy Spirit which causes them to speak in tongues, or if another spirit is imitating the Holy Spirit. This is the intent of our study.

- Tongues were prophesied to be "for a sign" to unbelieving Israel
 - Contrary to the practice of Gentile churches today, scripture states that Jews were present every time tongues were spoken
 - "...whether there be tongues, they shall cease..." (1Cor.13:8)
 - The unknown tongue
 - Being "filled with" the Spirit (or Holy Ghost) does NOT always mean speaking in tongues
 - In Conclusion
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Tongues were prophesied to be "for a sign" to unbelieving Israel

Possibly one of the most divisive doctrines today (and certainly one of the most hotly debated) is that of speaking in tongues. Historically, it is true that tongues were a gift from the Lord to the early church; so the practice of speaking in tongues is certainly scriptural. But simply being scriptural does not necessarily make a doctrine applicable to Christians today. For example, there are scriptures which forbid the eating of certain meats (catfish, pork, shellfish, etc.). But when read in their context, it becomes obvious that these scriptures applied to a different time period (or dispensation), and are no longer binding upon us today. Yet these doctrines are still scriptural. We must therefore be careful to recognize the circumstances under which such doctrines were given, and avoid applying them to ourselves out of context simply because we wish to claim them.

Such is the case with the doctrine of speaking in tongues. Although tongues were a spiritual gift, they were also given for a specific purpose, and for a limited amount of time. Perhaps the most revealing passage concerning the temporary usage of tongues is found in 1 Corinthians 13:8 -

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.

In contrast to charity (which is not a gift), this passage indicates that gifts such as tongues were to be used only for a short time, after which they were to cease. But even though tongues were only given as a temporary gift, the question still remains as to just how long they were to remain in effect. There is much disagreement on this point, because Pentecostals claim that tongues are still in effect today, but will cease at some future time. So we need to first understand the purpose for which tongues were given. Once we see the scriptural reason for the gift of tongues, we can better comprehend why tongues have ceased for today.

The first mention of the gift of tongues is a prophecy recorded in the Old Testament book of Isaiah. Here, the prophet wrote that the Lord would use tongues to speak to Israel, in Isaiah 28:11-12 -

"For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. 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."

It is important to realize that in the context of the above passage, the words "this people" are a reference to Israel, and not to Uncircumcised Gentiles. So in this passage, the Lord promised to use tongues as an instrument through which He would speak to the children of Israel. In spite of this, the prophet continues, "this people" (Israel) would be those who not hear.

In order to explain the purpose for the gift of tongues, Paul quotes this prophecy of Isaiah in 1 Corinthians 14:21-22 -

"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. 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."

The context of this passage must remain the same as that of Isaiah 28, from which the quotation is taken; otherwise, Paul would be guilty of taking Isaiah's prophecy out of its context. Here, Paul quotes Isaiah's prophecy that the Lord would speak to Israel with men of

other tongues; yet they would not hear. In verse 22 above, he also states that tongues were for a sign to "them that believe not", which is a direct reference to those who would not hear in verse 21 (unbelieving Israel). So when Paul states that tongues are for a sign to them that believe not, he must be referring to unbelievers in Israel, rather than unbelieving Gentiles (as some churches would have us to think). After all, even though a small number of individual Israelites did believe, the nation of Israel did not. This is the context of the passage in Isaiah; so this must also be the context of the passage in 1 Cor.14:21-22. Those who interpret this passage to mean that tongues are for a sign to "Gentiles" that believe not must take the passage out of its context in order to support such a belief.

Contrary to the practice of Gentile churches today, scripture states that Jews were present every time tongues were spoken

This, then, was the Lord's actual purpose for giving the gift of tongues: They were an instrument through which He would speak to the nation of Israel. As a result, every time someone spoke in tongues in the Bible, there were children of Israel present to receive the words that were spoken. Not once did anyone ever speak in tongues when only in the presence of Gentiles, as those in the Pentecostal churches do today.

In the book of Acts, there are four separate instances in which the Lord spoke to men with tongues. And in each occurrence, He spoke to Israel, in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. Not once did He speak to Gentiles with tongues. The most well known of these is probably that of Acts chapter 2, the passage upon which the Pentecostal churches base much of their doctrine. However, these were JEWS, not Gentiles, to whom the Lord spoke upon the day of Pentecost, according to Acts 2:4-8 -

"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?"

According to verse 5, these men were devout Jews, not Gentiles, who had come to Jerusalem from other nations. The reason these Jews had returned to Jerusalem at this particular time is obvious. Every Jewish male was required to return to Jerusalem three times a year to worship - in the feast of unleavened bread (the Passover), in the feast of weeks (or Pentecost, in the New Testament), and in the feast of tabernacles (see Deut. 16:16). As a result, these Jews who had returned to worship at Pentecost were the ones to whom the Lord was speaking with tongues.

In addition, according to verse 8 above, these Jews understood the words that were spoken, since these tongues were their native languages. These were not unknown tongues; these were other languages spoken in the various nations from which these Jews had come.

Another case in which the Lord used tongues for the purpose of speaking to the Jews is found in Acts chapter 10. Again, there were Jews present to receive the words of the Lord, just as Isaiah had prophesied in Is.28:11-12. But in order to understand Peter's reaction in Acts chapter 10, we must first realize that he was still observing the Old Testament ordinance that prohibited Jews from associating with Uncircumcised Gentiles. The Lord had forbidden the Jews from eating unclean meats, in order to separate them from "other people" (the Gentiles), according to Lev.20:25-26 -

"Ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean: and ye shall not make your souls abominable by beast, or by fowl, or by any manner of living thing that creepeth on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean. And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine."

Peter, then, was still observing this ordinance, since he stated that it was unlawful for him to associate with "one of another nation" (the Gentiles), in Acts10:28 -

And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

Once Peter arrived at the house of Cornelius, though, and began to expound the word of God, he was interrupted when the Gentiles began to speak with tongues, according to Acts 10:44-47

"While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"

Again, in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy that the Lord would speak to Israel with men of other tongues, there were Jews present when these Uncircumcised Gentiles spoke in tongues.

It is important to fully understand that the Lord would use tongues to speak to all of Israel, which would include those Jews who believed on Christ, as well as those who didn't believe. By contrast, tongues were for a sign only to those Jews who did not believe, according to 1 Cor.

14:22. Even though the Lord also used tongues to speak to believing Jews, tongues were never a sign to these believing Jews. This crucial distinction must be recognized in order to understand why, here in Acts chapter 10, these tongues were not given as a sign to Peter. These were believing Jews, and since tongues were a sign only to unbelieving Jews, Peter accepted these Gentiles simply because the Holy Ghost had fallen upon them.

Notice also that the Holy Ghost simply fell on these Gentiles. They never attempted to "pray through" in order to receive the Holy Ghost, as many do today. As a matter of fact, the entire concept of "praying through" to get the Spirit is entirely foreign to the scriptures. There is simply no record of anyone who ever had to "pray through" in order to speak in tongues; this idea is purely an invention of modern religion.

Scripturally, whenever someone spoke in tongues, he either did so spontaneously, as in the two previously mentioned cases, or he did so through the laying on of the apostles' hands, as in Acts chapter 8. Here, the Holy Ghost did not instantly fall upon those that believed. Instead, the Holy Ghost was given to them through the laying on of the apostles' hands, according to Acts 8:14-18 -

"Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,"

In view of Peter's later unwillingness to preach to the Gentiles in Acts 10, and his statement there that it was unlawful for a Jew to keep company with men from other nations, it is obvious that these were Jewish believers to whom Peter and John were sent. Otherwise, Peter would not have been reluctant later on, when the Lord sent him to the Gentiles of Acts chapter 10. In fact, Peter later agreed to confine his ministry to the Jews, while the apostle Paul was to go to the Gentiles (Gal. 2:9). As a result, Isaiah's prophecy again held true, and the Lord still used tongues to speak to the nation of Israel, in Acts chapter 8.

The same is true in the final account of tongues. In Acts chapter 19, Paul found twelve disciples in Ephesus, who had never even heard of the Holy Ghost. These disciples had only received the baptism of repentance, as preached by John the baptist. Therefore, these disciples must have also been Jews, since no uncircumcised Gentile would have been allowed to partake of John's baptism at any time. After preaching to them, Paul proceeded to lay his hands upon them, in Acts 19:4-6 -

"Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."

Since Paul was an apostle, he had the ability to impart the gift of the Holy Ghost unto the disciples by the laying on of his hands. Also, since these were Israelites, the gift of tongues was clearly the Lord's way of speaking to them - just as Isaiah had prophesied. Notice also that it was only through the hands of the apostles that the Holy Ghost was imparted to these believers. The ability to impart the Holy Ghost through the laying on of hands was never given to anyone but an apostle. Although there are many today who claim to possess this gift, there is no scriptural support for such a claim.

We have now looked at each instance in which tongues were spoken during the book of Acts. In every case, there were always Jews present, in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy that the Lord would use tongues to speak to Israel. Nowhere did a group of Gentiles speak in tongues when there were only other Gentiles present, as many do today; this was not the Lord's purpose for tongues.

"...whether there be tongues, they shall cease..." (1Cor.13:8)

During the book of Acts, it was Paul's manner to go to the Jew first (Acts 17:2). Since these were never Jews who had already had an opportunity to believe in Jesus Christ, Paul always seized the golden opportunity of witnessing to them right there in their own synagogues. Many of the Gentiles to whom Paul initially preached were also worshiping in the Jewish synagogues (see Acts 13:42-48; 14:1; 17:1-4; 18:4; etc.), so there was a close association between these Jews and Gentiles who had never heard about Jesus Christ. These Gentiles were obviously observing the Jewish laws and ordinances in order to have fellowship with the Jews; otherwise, they would have been cast out (just as a Gentile today would be cast out of a modern synagogue for the same things). The Biblical circumstances were therefore entirely different from those found in the Pentecostal churches today, and there was ONE prophetic requirement that was always fulfilled: There were ALWAYS Jews present.

As a result, when Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 13:8 that tongues were to cease, he was not referring to some far off time in the future. He was actually expecting this to happen soon as the result of a dispensational change, because the Lord would not continue to deal with Israel in this manner for much longer. Paul went to these Jews for only a short time himself; once they rejected the Lord Jesus Christ, he never continued trying to convince them of the truth. Instead, he promptly

turned from the Jews, and turned to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46; 18:6; 28:28). Neither would the Lord continue to speak to Israel much longer with tongues. Once Israel had been given ample opportunity to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord would take away the gift of tongues.

In 1 Cor. 14:39 Paul makes an interesting statement, one which is often quoted by those in the Pentecostal churches who feel threatened whenever someone has the courage to speak out against the doctrine of tongues. Here, Paul specifically commands the brethren not to forbid speaking in tongues. Again, we should take into account those to whom this commandment was given. Paul was not writing strictly to a bunch of Gentiles who were speaking in tongues as part of their worship services, as the Pentecostal churches do today. Since Paul's first epistle to the Corinthian church deals with the issue of tongues, there also must have been Jews in this church, as well. This fact can also be proven from the scriptures. In Acts chapter 18, Crispus (the ruler of the Jewish synagogue in Corinth) believed, along with all his family, when the church at Corinth first began. He is mentioned by name in 1 Cor. 1:14 as being among the Corinthians at the time this epistle was written; therefore, there were also Jews (such as Crispus) present when tongues were spoken in the Corinthian church.

In the context of 1 Cor. 14:39, Paul's commandment not to forbid speaking in tongues was therefore given with the intent of setting things in order in a carnal and disorganized church. To take this passage as a commandment to the church today is to completely ignore the context in which it was given. If we do this, we might as well also claim all other commandments as being to us, as well (such as Matt. 10:5-6, in which the Lord gave a specific commandment not to preach to Gentiles). Here, the Lord also meant exactly what He said, but this passage is obviously not a commandment to the church today. Likewise, Paul meant exactly what he said in 1 Cor. 14:39, that the Corinthian church was not to forbid speaking in tongues. Yet he was writing under entirely different circumstances, at a time when the Lord was still speaking directly to Israel. Since the Lord is no longer dealing with Israel, however, it would be useless to forbid something that He is not using. We should therefore allow 1 Cor. 14:39 to mean exactly what it says, to whom it was written.

Just as Paul had promised in 1 Cor. 13:8, the spiritual gifts - tongues, prophecies, and knowledge - actually did come to a stop, once the Lord was finished with Israel. There will, however, come a future time in which the Lord will again deal directly with the nation of Israel. At that time, during the tribulation period, the Lord will again use prophets to prophesy His words (Rev. 11:3-12). Therefore, even though these spiritual gifts have stopped for the present, they have not been done away with permanently. These gifts will resume when the Lord begins to deal with Israel again, and will afterwards be permanently done away with, as Paul writes in 1 Cor. 13:8-12 -

"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. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

Clearly, "that which is perfect" has not yet come; otherwise, we would no longer know in part, as Paul states in verse 12. Since we Christians still disagree among ourselves concerning the scriptures, we clearly still know only in part. However, the spiritual gifts have all definitely ceased today, since Israel had plenty of opportunity to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ during Paul's day. It is therefore crucial that we understand the difference between the future ending of all of the spiritual gifts (verse 10) - which will be a permanent ending - and the temporary ceasing of these gifts, which has already taken place.

According to verse 10 above, there will be a future time when "that which is perfect" comes, at which time the gifts will be permanently done away with. There will no longer be any need for these gifts, for at that time we will have full knowledge and understanding. Since we have already covered the fact that the Lord no longer uses these gifts today, though, we can understand why prophecies do indeed fail, tongues have already ceased, and the gift of knowledge has in fact vanished away. Yet since prophecy is to be reinstated at some future date (see Rev.11:6, concerning two future prophets), prophecy has not yet been completely done away with (as it will be, according to 1Cor.13:10 above).

The scriptural reason for the gift of tongues, then, was based upon Isaiah's prophecy that the Lord would speak to Israel with tongues (again, see 1 Corinthians 14:21-22; compare Isaiah 28:11-12). Of course, the majority of Pentecostal believers today have been misled into believing that speaking in tongues is a sign to unbelieving Gentiles; therefore, they do so in ignorance (or denial) of what Isaiah prophesied. If, however, we take a Mid-Acts Dispensational approach to the scriptures, we can only be led to the conclusion that tongues have no place in the Christian's life today.

The unknown tongue

In addition, there is also another doctrine in 1 Corinthians 14, concerning the unknown tongue, that should be considered at this time. This is the only chapter in the Bible in which the unknown tongue is mentioned. And the unknown tongue, being unprophesied, was completely different from the gift of tongues (which was prophesied in the book of Isaiah). It is therefore

crucial that we distinguish between the gift of tongues, and the unknown tongue. As we saw in the previous section, the Lord used the gift of tongues to speak to the Jews (again, see Is.28:11-12; compare 1Cor.14:21-11). By contrast, though, according to 1Cor.14:27-28 (see below), whenever men spoke in an unknown tongue, they were speaking to the Lord.

Moreover, since unknown tongues were different from the gift of tongues, an interpreter was always required to be present, as Paul writes in 1 Cor. 14:27-28 -

"If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God."

As a result, just as those who spoke in tongues always needed to be in the presence of an Israelite, so also those who spoke in an unknown tongue were required to have an interpreter. Based upon the above passage, the presence of an interpreter was not simply an option. Instead, it was a requirement; otherwise, men were commanded to be silent.

By contrast, though, the gift of prophecy was never forbidden. Instead, Paul writes that he would rather have men prophesy than speak in tongues, in 1Cor.14:1-5 -

"Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. 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. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying."

According to verse 2 above, those who spoke in an unknown tongue could not be understood by men, since they were speaking to God; thus the need for an interpreter. However, since verse 4 states that speaking in an unknown tongue edifies the believer, there will always be those who reject these instructions and speak in an unknown tongue anyway (by claiming to be edifying themselves). However, those who desired spiritual gifts were to seek to edify the CHURCH instead of themselves, as Paul also writes in 1 Corinthians 14:12-14 -

"Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church. Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful."

Consequently, those who still speak in an unknown tongue are not practicing the gift of tongues at all. Instead, since their understanding is unfruitful (1Cor.14:14 above), they are only fulfilling the lust of their own flesh, in their attempt to edify themselves.

Paul then concludes the above thought on the unknown tongue in 1 Corinthians 14:15-19 -

"What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue."

However, in yet another attempt to justify speaking in tongues, there are also those who interpret the above singing and praying with the spirit [1Cor.14:15] as being different from singing and praying with the understanding. Here, their interpretation is that Paul "really means" that when they pray or sing in tongues, they should immediately give the interpretation of what was said. By doing this, those who speak in tongues today will try to interpret singing and praying with the spirit as meaning singing and praying "in tongues" - thereby ignoring verses 12-14, which we covered previously. Such interpretations, though, are desperate indeed, since there are no scriptures in which anyone ever "sang" in tongues. Instead, men spoke in tongues.

In fact, Paul makes it clear 1Cor.14:16 (above) that when men pray "with the spirit", they are to pray understandably. The passage therefore means exactly what it says - that those who sang and prayed with the spirit were to pray with the understanding, so that others could understand when to say "Amen". As a result, to sing and pray with the spirit is not the same as singing and praying "in tongues"; rather, it is singing and praying "with the understanding".

Being "filled with" the Spirit (or Holy Ghost) does NOT always mean speaking in tongues

Nor did men always speak in tongues when they were filled "with" the Spirit. For example, Zacharias was "filled with the Holy Ghost"; however, instead of prophesying in tongues, he prophesied in words that could be understood, according to Luke 1:67-79 -

"And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; As he spake by the mouth of his holy

prophets, which have been since the world began: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; The oath which he swore to our father Abraham, That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life. And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

Plus, in Acts chapter 4, Peter was filled "with" the Holy Ghost. Yet he spoke to the Jewish high priest in words understandable to everyone, according to Acts 4:8-12 -

"Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

In addition, Paul also was filled "with" the Holy Ghost when he reprimanded Elymas the sorcerer, in Acts chapter 13. But again, Paul spoke in understandable words, according to Acts 13:9-10 -

"Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?"

Nor is Paul encouraging anyone to speak in tongues in Eph. 5:18-19 -

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;"

But again, some Christians will interpret the above passage to mean that we should always speak in tongues today "if" we want to be filled with the Spirit. However, in order to support this view, they must ignore the previously mentioned accounts, when men spoke understandably as they were filled with the Spirit (Luke 1:67-79; Acts 4:8-12; Acts 13:9-10).

Instead, in the above passage, Paul is contrasting drunkenness - the result of being controlled by wine - to being filled with the Spirit. The point, then, is that we do not have to speak in tongues today when we are filled with the Spirit; instead, we are simply controlled (or led) by the Spirit of God (see for example, Ro.8:14).

In Conclusion

In view of Paul's statement in 1 Cor. 13:8 that prophecies would "fail", tongues would "cease", and knowledge would "vanish away", the supernatural gifts of 1 Cor. 13:8-9 must not be in effect today. It is evident, though, that these gifts have only temporarily ceased for the remainder of this dispensation. Paul's statement in verse 10 indicates a permanent cessation that will occur at some point in the future, because these gifts shall be "done away" with when "that which is perfect" is come. And because Revelation 11:3 speaks of two future witness who will prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days for God, we know "that which is perfect" has not yet come. Otherwise, if all prophecies have been permanently done away with, Rev. 11:3 would be referring to an event that has already taken place.

What, then, causes people to speak in tongues today, if it's not the Holy Spirit? There are four options:

1. Some people may be "faking it" when they speak in tongues. Unfortunately, it is a well-known fact that even saved Christians have been known to practice deceit, in a sincere attempt to influence others. Take, for example, the practice of certain evangelists, who set up "shills" in their audiences, in order to entice others to "walk the aisle for Jesus" (the philosophy behind this practice is that in a large congregation, such as a stadium, some people may be too intimidated by the large crowd to "walk the aisle for Jesus", unless they see others leading the way). Many of us have known sincere Christians who rationalize that if it is OK for evangelists to deceive people by setting up "shills" (although it really isn't OK), then it's also OK for them to "fake it", if they can't speak in tongues "on demand".

2. There are also occasions when speaking in tongues is purely psychosomatic. Many of us have also known Christians who have spoken in tongues after becoming "worked up" in a revival meeting; but later, they realize they had only succumbed to psychosomatic influence. The common practice of having someone repeat a specific phrase over and over, while exposing them to a stimulating environment, often leads to speaking in tongues. For some people, if this is the only way they are able to do so, their speaking in tongues may be nothing more than psychosomatic.

3. Some people may even be influenced by demons when they speak in tongues. Although saved people cannot be demon possessed (2 Tim. 1:7 states that God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind), we can still be subject to demonic influences. For example, it is still possible for saved individuals to become addicted to the demonic influence of alcohol, drugs, etc. We do not lose our salvation if this happens, but our state does not match our standing; and our witness may be diminished. Such may also be the case with some saved individuals who speak in tongues. If we are still susceptible to the demonic influence of alcohol or drugs, why wouldn't we also be susceptible to demonic influence when it comes to speaking in tongues?

4. And finally, since fundamental Christians are not the only ones who practice speaking in tongues, even people who have never known the Lord Jesus Christ might speak in tongues. Even Mormons speak in tongues on certain occasions (although they do not like to admit this), along with others who deny the Deity of Jesus (thereby preaching "another Jesus", see 2 Cor. 11:4, quoted below). Even people in the occult (including satanists and witches) speak in tongues, when they become demon-possessed.

In conclusion, then, prophecies have failed today; tongues have ceased; and knowledge has vanished away, according to 1 Cor. 13:8. These are all temporary cessations, because prophecy (at least) will be reinstated when Rev. 11:3 comes to pass. Then, when "that which is perfect" has finally come, they will all be completely done away with.

So, those who speak in tongues today - no matter how honest and sincere they may be - are not being filled with the Holy Spirit. Instead, they are filled with another spirit, which Paul specifically warns against in 2 Cor. 11:4 -

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.

And the Corinthians had to be warned about receiving "another spirit", because Satan is very deceptive in the area of religion, as Paul later states in 2 Cor. 11:13-15 -

"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. 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."

Indeed, many of Satan's ministers have truly been transformed as tongue-speaking ministers today. Consequently, Christians who are brave enough to speak out against them are promptly labeled as heretics.

Paul also warns against these SEDUCING spirits which cause sincere but misled Christians to speak in tongues, in 1 Timothy 4:1-2 -

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;"

Therefore, since the Holy Spirit no longer causes men to speak in tongues, the spirit currently residing in the Pentecostal church might fit the description of a seducing spirit, as described in verse 1 above. Due to the fact that many Pentecostal believers actually worship this seducing spirit, these sincere Christians have actually been seduced by Satan himself into unwittingly committing IDOLATRY. Such Christians, although they may be sincere, have only heaped to themselves teachers to tickle their ears after their own lusts, as Paul also warned about in 2 Tim. 4:2-4 -

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

We must therefore preach the word in all truth, being careful to prove all things by the word of God alone. Of course, those who hold to the views presented in this study will certainly be accused by the more devout Pentecostal Christians of being prejudiced, but nothing could be farther from the truth. Nowhere have we attempted to interpret any passage to "mean" something it doesn't say; nor have we run to the Greek in an effort to retranslate certain passages (as many Charismatic Pentecostals will do). Such tactics are not only dishonest, but they also lead to further error by casting doubt upon the authority of the Word of God. Instead, we have always let the scriptures mean exactly what they say to whom they are written. We should therefore put on the whole armor of God [Eph. 6:11-19], and have the courage to wield the true sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God [Eph. 6:17], without compromise.