

Have Tongues Ceased? Not so!

By Evangelist Sean Bonitto

There are those who have identified themselves as “cessationists,” which means that they believe that tongues as clearly recorded in the pages of Holy Scripture have ceased.

Some also believe that the other gifts of the Holy Ghost found in the Word of God have discontinued (Acts 2:4; Acts 10:45-46; Acts 19:6; 1 Corinthians 12:11-31; 1 Corinthians 13:1-2,8-10; 1 Corinthians 14:1-31; 1 Thessalonians 5:20; Hebrews 2:4).

This proposition and argument, as we shall observe from the clear teaching of the Holy Bible, is not only in error, but is completely fallacious.

The only mention in Holy Scripture that reveals that tongues, and the other gifts of the Holy Ghost will one day vanish, or cease is found in 1 Corinthians 13:8-12.

However, before we enter into the text of the aforementioned passage, it is essential that we take into account the context surrounding these verses of Holy Scripture.

The context surrounding the passage of 1 Corinthians 13:8-12

The Holy Ghost through the Apostle Paul is writing to the Church at Corinth, in 1 Corinthians 1:1-2, **“Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours”** (1 Corinthians 1:1-2).

In 1 Corinthians 12:1, the Holy Ghost through the Apostle Paul, writes concerning the importance of the gifts of the Spirit to the saints at Corinth, **“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.”**

The word **“ignorant”** literally means to ignore, or not to know. Thus, it is was extremely important to the Spirit of God for the Corinthian Church to be informed, educated, and to have knowledge of **“spiritual gifts”** given to the Church by the Holy Ghost, who is God, the Third person of the Triune God, one God in three persons (Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19-20; 1 John 5:7).

It is clear that 1 Corinthians 12:1-31 gives specific attention to the importance of the gifts of the Holy Ghost within the church of God, along with the necessity of the gifts operating in the lives of true born again Christians.

“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal” (1 Corinthians 12:4-7).

After describing in detail the different gifts of the Holy Ghost, and the necessity of the gifts functioning within the church, the Holy Ghost through the Apostle Paul says, **“But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way”** (1 Corinthians 12:31).

The words **“covet earnestly”** is translated from the Greek word, **“zeloo”** which means to desire, to be jealous over, to have warm feeling towards. However, those who advocate cessationism teach the contrary. They contradict the Word of God by warning against the use of the gifts in the church, and encourage the rejection of the power of the Holy Ghost (2 Timothy 3:5).

This Greek word **“zeloo”** is also seen in 1 Corinthians 14:1, which is translated in the King James Version as follows, **“Follow after charity, and desire (zeloo) spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy”** (1 Corinthians 14:1).

Therefore the Holy Ghost through the Apostle Paul clearly establishes that a true born again Christian should **“desire,” “covet earnestly,”** and not ignore the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which of course includes speaking in tongues or diversities of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:28; 1 Corinthians 13:1), and an unknown tongue (1 Corinthians 13:1; Corinthians 14:2-5).

The difference between diversities of tongues, and an unknown tongue

Diversities of Tongues

Speaking in tongues, with respect to diversities of tongues as recorded in 1 Corinthians 12:28, clearly refers to speaking by the utterance of the Holy Ghost, in a known human language as a sign to unbelievers (1 Corinthians 14:21-22).

Acts 2:4-11, is a clear Biblical example of the diversities of tongues on the Day of Pentecost, used for the purpose of being a sign to unbelievers. This occurred, when the unsaved heard all those in the upper room who were baptized with the Holy Ghost, and responded to what they heard by saying, **“...we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God”** (Acts 2:11).

This special gift of the Holy Ghost, where one is speaking in a known human language as a sign to unbelievers, is not given to all, as the scriptures clearly teach, **“...do all speak with tongues?...”** (1 Corinthians 12:30).

An Unknown Tongue

However, speaking in tongues with reference to **“...an unknown tongue...”** (1 Corinthians 14:2), is clearly not a known human language, **“...for no man understandeth him...”**(1 Corinthians 14:2). It is a heavenly language, or the tongues **“...of Angels...”**(1 Corinthians 13:1), used by the true born again believer after being Baptized with the Holy Ghost, whereby **“...in the spirit he speaketh mysteries”** unto God (1 Corinthians 14:2).

Speaking in an unknown tongue, is for all believers to receive personal edification in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 14; Jude 1:20), and to speak **“...mysteries...”** (1 Corinthians 14:2) unto God.

An example of believers possibly speaking in an unknown tongue is revealed in the book of Acts.

The context of Acts 10:44-47 and Acts 19:1-6, both seem to refer to believers speaking in an unknown tongue, as there were no known unbelievers present in order for the gift of diversities of tongues to be made manifest, as a sign to the unregenerate (1 Corinthians 14:21-22).

In Acts 8:14-17, while not explicitly mentioning tongues after being baptized with the Holy Ghost, the text strongly implies that the saints in Samaria manifested speaking in tongues as “...**Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money**” (Acts 8:18).

Notice, the words, “...**Simon saw...**” This clearly refers to a manifestation of the Holy Ghost that he witnessed after the “... **laying on of the apostles' hands...**” (Acts 8:18).

And the Biblical initial manifestation or evidence of one being baptized with the Holy Ghost as recorded in Acts 2:4, Acts 10:44; Acts 19:6, was always speaking in tongues. And in the case of Acts 8:14-17, due to the fact that no known unbelievers were present, it is likely that the believers in Samaria spoke in an unknown tongue (1 Corinthians 14:1-2).

As we can observe from the clear teaching of Holy Scripture, that it was extremely important for all believers to receive the baptism with the Holy Ghost (Acts 1:8; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:14-17; Acts 19:1-6).

The Apostles clearly taught that it was a necessary experience, in the life of every true born again Christian, not for salvation, but for empowerment to evangelize, service, and edification in the life of a believer (Acts 1:8; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:14-17; Acts 19:1-6; 1 Corinthians 14:1,2,4).

Fallacious arguments given by Cessationists

If this is the case, that the baptism with the Holy Ghost was necessary in the life of the believer, as we see from the clear teaching of the Holy Bible that it is, then why do cessationists insist that speaking in tongues have ceased? We will only focus on two fundamental views by which many cessationists base their fallacious argument.

The first, they believe, is found in 1 Corinthians 13:8-10, and the second is based on an argument from silence, that states that since tongues is not explicitly mentioned after 1 Corinthians chapter 14 it must have ceased.

In 1 Corinthians 13:8, the Bible teaches that three things will discontinue in the future, and they are prophecy, tongues, and knowledge. **“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.”**

It is important to point out that the Holy Scriptures do not indicate in any way, shape, or form that tongues, or the other gifts will discontinue, after the writing of 1 Corinthians, or after the completion of the canon of the Word of God, or after the death of Apostles, or 100, 200,

300, or 1000, years from the first century A.D.

Secondly, while the words “speaking in tongues” is not explicitly mentioned after 1 Corinthians 14, it is implicitly mentioned in Ephesians 6:18, **“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit”** and in Jude 1:20, **“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.”** We will prove this point later in greater detail.

Tongues have not ceased, but will cease

However, the Word of God clearly indicates that prophecy, tongues, and knowledge will discontinue only in the eternal state, once the true born again Bible believing church of God is with the Lord Jesus Christ forever (1 Corinthians 13:8-12).

“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” (1 Corinthians 13:10-12).

The false argument that cessationists propagate, is that tongues have now ceased. It is essential to understand, that there is absolutely no basis for this teaching found in the Word of God at all. The Bible says, **“...whether there be tongues, they shall cease...”** (1 Corinthians 13:8).

The words **“they shall cease”** in the King James Version, is the Greek word **“pausontai”** which is in the future tense and middle voice. This means that tongues will in fact cease on its own at some point in the future. We understand this by the fact that the future tense indicates an action that will take place in the future, and the middle voice speaks in reference to the subject, in this case tongues, acting in some way upon itself.

Therefore, the question is, at what point in the future will tongues cease on its own?

Tongues will only cease in Heaven and the Eternal state when it is no longer needed

According to 1 Corinthians 13:8, tongues is mentioned together with prophecy, and knowledge, and that all three gifts will no longer exist at some point in the future. This is due to the fact that they all have Greek verbs in the future tense, indicating action being completed in the future.

Understanding how and when tongues will cease

Notice the three Greek words in the verse, pointing to action being completed in the future, **“Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail** (*katargethesontai*)(future tense); **whether there be tongues, they shall cease**(*pausontai*)(future tense); **whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away** (*katargethesontai*)(future tense).

All three gifts, tongues, prophecy, and knowledge will one day fail, cease, and vanish,

in the future. However, tongues will not cease in the same manner as prophecy and knowledge. This is due to the fact that the Greek word “**pausontai**” referring to tongues, “**...they shall cease...**” is not the same Greek word “**katargethesontai**” speaking in reference to prophecies, “**...they shall fail...**” and knowledge, “**...it shall vanish away.**”

The Greek word, “**pausontai**” is in the future tense, meaning action that will occur in the future, but it is also in the middle voice, as was mentioned earlier, which points to action occurring on the part of the subject. In other words, tongues will cease on its own. As opposed to someone, or something else causing tongues to cease or stop.

This is different from the Greek word, “**katargethesontai**” which is also in the future tense, but is in the passive voice, meaning that action is occurring to the subject by someone or something other than the subject.

In other words, prophecy, and knowledge “**shall fail**” and “**shall vanish**” because God will no longer give these revelatory gifts to His people, for they will no longer be necessary when all true born again believers are with the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 13:8-13).

The Lord Jesus Christ will cause prophecy and knowledge to fail, and vanish when His people are with Him forever, at which point they are no longer needed, because, “**...that which is perfect is come...**” (1 Corinthian 13:10). Perfect knowledge and understanding will one day come to fruition to those in Christ Jesus (1 Corinthians 13:12; 1 John 3:2).

Tongues will cease on its own in the eternal state

The reason why tongues will cease on its own, is because it is not a revelatory gift, but a gift where one speaks to God, and not God speaking to man as in the case of prophecy, and knowledge (Acts 2:4-11-diversities of tongues); 1 Corinthians 14:2-an unknown tongue).

Diversities of tongues will cease because there is no more need for tongues to be a sign to the unbeliever (1 Corinthians 14:21-22), for every eye, including all unbelievers, will one glorious day see the Saviour, “**...the sign of the Son of man...**” (Matthew 24:30; Revelation 1:7; Revelation 19:11-21).

At this point when all true born again Christians are with the Lord Jesus Christ, and are ruling and reigning with Him, there will no longer be a purpose to speak mysteries unto God (1 Corinthians 14:2), or the necessity to be edified in the faith (Jude 1:20).

All the saints of God will be face to face with Him, the Lord Jesus Christ, the author and finisher of our faith. Thus the cessation of an unknown tongue will come to pass, for the unknown will be known, and we will communicate to Him in a language that we know and understand (1 Corinthians 13:12; Hebrews 12:2; 1 John 3:2-3).

This is understood in 1 Corinthians 13:12, “**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**” (1 Corinthians 13:12).

Tongues will cease on its own, due to the fact that one will have perfect understanding and knowledge. As a result, one will no longer be communicating to God in mysteries, or

without understanding the unknown language, but will have perfect communication with the Lord Jesus Christ without need of interpretation.

At this time, there will be no need to speak in an unknown tongue, for we will understand the language of Angels “...**now I know in part; then shall I know even as also I am known**” (1 Corinthians 13:12).

Thus, tongues at this point, and only at this future point will cease, due to the fact that an unknown tongue will be known, and therefore it will immediately cease, or stop on its own.

An example of how tongues will cease

An example of this is when one communicates to someone in a foreign language that he does not understand with the use of an interpreter. However, once he understands the foreign language, he has no need for one to interpret, nor is the language a mystery to him, for he has perfect understanding concerning the language spoken. As a result, the unknown language will no longer be unknown, for it will be understood, and fully known.

The same will occur with use of tongues in the eternal state, when there will be no more need to speak mysteries unto God, and also no longer a use for tongues (diversities of tongues) to be a sign to the unbeliever (1 Corinthians 14:21; Corinthians 14:21-22).

Therefore it is clear from the Word of God, that tongues will only cease when all the saints of God are with the Lord Jesus Christ. And will not cease during the church age, nor during the seven year period of tribulation, that occurs only after the rapture, but specifically, and only when all true born again Christians are forever with the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 13:8-13; Joel 3:28-32; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12; Revelation 11:1-6; Revelation 20:1-6).

More evidence disproving that tongues have ceased!

Some erroneously believe that tongues have ceased when the canon of scripture was completed. However, the context of the passage in 1 Corinthians 13:8-12 never mentions the scriptures at all, much less the canon being completed.

Also the death of Apostle Paul, who never saw the completed canon of Holy Scripture, is solid evidence that the Holy Ghost through the Apostle in 1 Corinthians 13:8-13 was never referring to tongues ceasing as a result of the canon of the Holy Bible being completed, for he did not come “...**face to face**...”(1 Corinthians 13:12) with its completion.

Another fallacious argument, propagated by some cessationists, is that tongues have ceased at the death of the Apostles, or sometime after 1 Corinthians chapter 14. This is even more erroneous, and a greater fallacious argument than the aforementioned.

The reason for this, is because, as was mentioned earlier, there is absolutely no Bible reference at all that remotely indicates that tongues will cease, or have discontinued at the death of the Apostles, or after 1 Corinthians 14, or at any time. Absolutely none! Zero!

As a matter of fact the Holy Scriptures clearly teach the opposite. In Acts 2:38,

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”

Notice the Bible says, **“For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call”**(Acts 2:39).

The **“promise”** mentioned here is clearly **“...the promise of the Father...”** (Luke 24:49), the Baptism with the Holy Ghost (Acts 1:8), or the gift of the Holy Ghost, which was evidenced by speaking in tongues (Acts 2:4).

Notice that this promise was not only available to the adults present, but also for their children, and **“...even as many as the Lord our God shall call”**(Acts 2:39).

Their children, referring to the children of those present at the day of Pentecost, were more than likely to out live the Apostles. Also the gift of the Holy Ghost was for everyone who comes to the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, **“...even as many as the Lord our God shall call”**(Acts 2:39).

This clearly refers to all true born again believers throughout the centuries, who have repented of their sins, and trusted the Lord Jesus Christ by faith alone for their salvation (Romans 10:13). Therefore, the **“...promise...”** must be available for every true born again Christian, throughout every century until the coming of the Saviour (1 Corinthians 1:7).

Again, the Holy Scriptures in no way, shape or form supports the fallacious teaching that tongues have ceased. It is in fact the fallacious argument from silence.

However, we will continue with more evidence how the Holy Bible clearly rejects the perverse teaching of cessationism.

In 1 Corinthians 1:7, the Bible says, **“So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”** The word **“gift”** here is the Greek word, **“charisma”** clearly speaking in reference to the gifts of the Holy Ghost as recorded later in 1 Corinthians chapters 12, 13, 14.

Notice that the gifts are to remain until **“...the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”**(1 Corinthians 1:7). This is clearly understood by the fact the Holy Ghost through the Apostle Paul encourages using the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which of course includes tongues (1 Corinthians 12:28), until the coming of the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:7).

This fact cannot be denied!

Also, tongues is mentioned implicitly after 1 Corinthians chapter 14, in Hebrews 2:4, **“God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?”** Again speaking in tongues is clearly one of the gifts of the Holy Ghost (1 Corinthians 12:28), and therefore it is definitely mentioned here in Hebrews 2:4.

Ephesians 6:18 and Jude 1:20 clearly teach believers to pray in an unknown tongue

Tongues with respect to an unknown tongue, is also implicitly mentioned in Ephesians 6:18, and Jude 1:20.

“Praying in the Holy Ghost” or **“in the Spirit”** as recorded in Jude 1:20, and Ephesians 6:18 is also clearly referring to praying in an unknown tongue, due to the fact that it is a gift of the Holy Ghost, were one is speaking to God in mysteries, in his spirit, by the power of the Holy Ghost (1 Corinthians 14:2; Ephesians 6:18; Jude 1:20).

Ephesians 6:18

This fact is revealed in Ephesians 6:18 where the Holy Ghost through the Apostle Paul distinguishes praying **“in the Spirit”** by speaking mysteries unto God (1 Corinthians 14:2) for personal edification in the Lord (1 Corinthians 14:4), to praying with the understanding (1 Corinthians 14:14-15), as he mentions, **“...all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”**

The first part of Ephesians 6:18 points to personal edification by praying in an unknown tongue unto God (1 Corinthians 14:2,4), the second part of the verse refers to praying with the understanding for the edification of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 14-15).

“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”
(1 Corinthians 14:15).

Jude 1:20

Speaking mysteries unto God by praying in an unknown tongue (1 Corinthians 14:2), as previously mentioned, is edifying the true Christian in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible says, **“He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church”** (1 Corinthians 14:4).

The word **“edifieth”** is the Greek word, **“oikodomeo”** which means a house builder, to build, to edify. This is why the Holy Ghost through the Apostle Jude said, **“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost”** (Jude 1:20).

The words **“...building up...”** found in Jude 1:20 is translated from the Greek word, **“epoikodomeo”** meaning, to build upon. This no doubt directly corresponds, and points to the personal edification of one praying in an unknown tongue found in 1 Corinthians 14:4.

Therefore Jude 1:20 is clearly referring to one edifying or **“building”** themselves **“...on your most holy faith...”**, by speaking in an unknown tongue unto God through **“...praying in the Holy Ghost”** (Jude 1:20).

One last important fact

The fact that there remains unbelievers, who still have the opportunity to be saved, and also true born again Christians on earth who are not yet with their Saviour, are evidence alone that proves tongues have not yet ceased.

The Bible clearly teaches that, “...**tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not...**” (1 Corinthians 14:22), and that an unknown tongue is given to believers to speak “...**mysteries**” unto God, for personal edification, and to be built up in the faith (1 Corinthians 14:4, Jude 1:20).

This does not mean that tongues has been used as a sign to every unbeliever, nor does the Holy Scriptures suggest that the only means of personal edification for the Christian, is to speak in an unknown tongue.

Nevertheless praying in an unknown tongue is strongly encouraged and promoted in the life of the believer (1 Corinthians 14:5; Ephesians 6:18), and is a necessary ingredient in spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6:18), especially in the last days (Jude 1:20).

The Word of God clearly teaches, that the Lord has given tongues for a serious purpose in the lives of the saved, and a sign to the lost (1 Corinthians 14:1-4, 20-21).

Thus, tongues will not cease until all unbelievers see the sign of the Son of man in the clouds (Revelation 1:7). At this time, there will no longer be a need for tongues to be a sign confirming the truth of the gospel, and will cease when all the saints of God are united with the Lord Jesus Christ, where personal edification is forever obsolete (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 20:4).

The Bible clearly teaches that tongues have not ceased!

In conclusion, tongues is clearly mentioned in Ephesians 6:18; Hebrews 2:4, Jude 1:20, and did not cease after 1 Corinthians chapter 14, death of the Apostles, or after the completion of the canon of the Holy Bible, or after the first, second, or third century A.D. etc.

Thus, the cessationists argument that tongues have ceased is a complete fallacy, without any valid substance, or sound Biblical Authority to defend their erroneous proposition.

In light of the aforementioned facts, for one to suggest that tongues have ceased at some point in the past, is a rejection of the clear teaching of Holy Scripture, the choice for one to remain ignorant to the plain teaching of the Word of God, or in many cases wilful and fundamental rebellion, and opposition to the Lord Jesus Christ who gave these gifts to His Church (Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians chapter 12, 13, 14, Hebrews 2:4).

Have tongues ceased? Not so! Absolutely not, according to the clear teaching of Holy Scripture (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:38-39). But will remain, until all true born again Bible believing Christians are with the Lord Jesus Christ, when we will no longer need to speak mysteries unto God, and when diversities of tongues will no longer be needed as a sign to the unbeliever (1 Corinthians 13:8-13).

Therefore, until then my “... **brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues**”(1 Corinthians 14:39).

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