

TESTING TONGUES

**Answering the question—
“Are the miraculous gifts of the Spirit
for the Church today?”**

An Outline Series of Bible Studies

By Jack W. Langford

GOD’S “TIME” Capsule for Miraculous Manifestations

Pentecostals often quote Hebrew 13:8—“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever”—as if this proves Christ is doing the same things today as was done in the Gospel accounts.

As to Christ’s person, He is the same.

As to His works and how He communicates, the very first verse of the book of Hebrews (Heb. 1:1) says, “God” speaks “at various TIMES and in various WAYS”

As to Christ’s program of Miracles—

- 1.) For the first 30 years of His life on earth He was a quiet, Law keeping Jew. When His mother asked for a miracle, He replied “My hour has not yet come” (John 2:4).

- 2.) Then He stated, “The Time is Fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:15). “And when He had called His twelve disciples, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of diseases” (Matthew 10:1).

- 3.) Though Israel rejected their King and the Kingdom yet, in God’s forbearance, He offered to them the Kingdom once again on the resurrection side of the cross—see Acts 3:19-21 and Acts 7:51-53. Thus, various miraculous manifestations gave testimony of this during the time of the Acts period and before the final destruction of the Temple and the Nation.

- 4.) In addition, God gave abundant miraculous attestations to the validity and the divine authorization of the apostleship.

NOTE the IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE
Between
The Miraculous Gifts of the Spirit
And
Being Filled with the Spirit

- I. A. John the Baptist was said to be “filled with the Spirit” even from his mother’s womb—Luke 1:15.
- B. Yet John “performed no [miraculous] signs”—John 10:41.

On the other hand

- II. A. The Apostles were empowered by Christ to perform many miracles—Matthew 10:8.
- B. Yet the Apostles were never said to be “Spirit Filled” as was John the Baptist.

And Again

- III. A. The Apostle Paul could not speak of the Corinthian saints “as spiritual” but only as “carnal, walking like men”—1 Corinthians 3:1-3.
- B. Yet the Corinthian saints practiced all the miraculous gifts of the Spirit—1 Corinthians 12:1 etc.

On the other hand

- IV. A. In the very spiritual book of Ephesians (16 references to the Holy Spirit in 6 chapters), the believer is commanded to be “filled with the Holy Spirit”—Ephesians 5:18
- B. Yet nowhere in Ephesians does Paul mention the miraculous gifts of the Spirit.

The Parallel Between
Israel's 40 year wilderness journey
out of Egypt and into the Promised Land
and
The Church's 40 year Transition
out of Judaism and into Pure Christianity

Both Entities were sustained
by Miraculous provisions from God

<u>ISRAEL</u> <i>Miraculous Provisions</i>	<u>The CHURCH</u> <i>Miraculous Gifts of the Spirit</i>
1. Leadership of Moses	Word of Wisdom
2. The Anointing of the 70	Word of Knowledge
3. Passage through Red Sea	Gift of Faith
4. Divine protection of Health	Divine Healing
5. Miraculous Water	Working of Miracles
6. Miraculous Bread	Gift of Prophecy
7. Preservation of Clothing	Discerning of Spirits
8. Cloud to Guide and Protect	Tongues Reveal Mysteries
9. Fire to Protect at Night	Interpretation to Protect

THE PURPOSE OF TONGUES

Is Two-fold

I. “Tongues are for a Sign” to Israel

A. “In the Law it is written:

*With men of other tongues and other lips
I will speak to this people [Israel]. . .”*

1 Cor. 14:20-21—Isaiah 28:11-12

B. The Jews asked—“We would see a sign”—Matt. 16:1

C. “The Jews require a Sign”—1 Cor. 1:22

D. “Therefore Tongues are for a Sign . . . to unbelievers [i.e., the Jewish people]”—1 Cor. 14:22

E. Tongues were a sign to the Jewish disciples of the acceptance of Gentiles—Acts 10:45 & 11:17

II. Tongues are to “edify” the Church

A. “Let it be for the edification of the Church”—1 Cor. 14:12

B. DIVINE REGULATIONS regarding the use of “TONGUES” in an Assembly—

1. “Two or at the most three”—1 Cor. 14:27

2. They must take their turn—1 Cor. 14:27

**3. If there is no Interpreter—no tongues—1 Cor. 14:28
[i.e., The Church could only be edified by the
interpretation. Only the individual could be
edified by the experience—1 Cor. 14:4]**

4. “Women are to keep silent”—1 Cor. 14:34

Important Facts
About speaking in Tongues

- 1.) Not all had the gift of speaking in Tongues—
1 Cor. 12:29, 30**
- 2.) Tongues were primarily a Sign to unbelieving Jews—
1 Cor. 1:22 & 14:20-22**
- 3.) Tongues were speaking to God and not to man—
1 Cor. 14:2; Acts 2:11 & 10:46**
- 4.) The Tongues (Languages) were of men and Angels—
1 Cor. 13:1**
- 5.) The one who spoke in Tongues spoke “Mysteries”—
1 Cor. 14:2**
- 6.) The women were not to speak (in Tongues) in the Church—1 Cor. 14:34**
- 7.) The Miraculous gift of Tongues would “cease” when
“maturity has come”—1 Cor. 13:8-10**
- 8.) There is “A More Excellent Way” than the way of
The miraculous gifts—1 Cor. 12:31**

ANGEL FOOD-and-ANGEL TONGUES

Israel in the Wilderness

Miraculous Bread for 40 years

Exo. 16:35

The Church in Transition

Miraculous Tongues for 40 years

AD 30 to AD 70

1. Both were Angelic

“Men ate Angel’s food”

Psalm 78:25

“... tongues of Angels”

1 Cor. 13:1

2. Both were from Heaven

“I will rain Bread from Heaven”

Exo. 16:4

“From the Father. . .the Holy Spirit”

Acts 2:33

3. Both were Mysterious

Israel asked “What is it?”

Exo. 16:13-15

Jews asked “What does this mean?”

Acts 2:12

4. Both were Strengthening

“You shall be filled with Bread”

Exo. 16:12

“Edifies himself. . .the Church”

1 Cor. 14:4, 5

5. Both were Spiritual

“Taste of oil . . . spiritual food”

Num. 11:7-8, 1 Cor.10:3

“Gifts of the Spirit”

1 Cor. 12:4

6. Both were Signs to Test

“... that I may Test them”

Exo. 16:4

“Tongues are for a Sign”

1 Cor. 14:22

7. Both had Regulations

“Gather only according to need”

Exo. 16:16-20

“[See the regulations of]”

1 Cor. 14:26-28

8. Both Memorialized as Confirmation

“Keep for generations . . .to see”

Exo. 16:32-35

“Confirmation . . . was confirmed”

Mark 16:20 & Heb. 2:4

9. Both taught the need of the Word of God

“Man does not live by Bread alone”

Deut. 8:2-3

“...I put away childish things”

1 Cor. 13:11, 12 & 2 Tim. 3:16

10. Both were to Cease

“Then the Manna Ceased”

Joshua 5:12

“Tongues will Cease”

1 Cor. 13:8

TESTING TONGUES

“Test all things”—1 Thess. 5:21

“Test the spirits, whether they are of God”—1 John 4:1

SEVEN TESTS

that all modern Tongue speakers Fail

- 1.) Wait for an Interpretation. If there is none—Violation No. 1
1 Cor. 14:28**
- 2.) If the Tongues’ speaker himself gives one—Violation No. 2
Interpretation is a separate gift to “another”—1 Cor. 12:10**
- 3.) If the Interpretation is a message to man—Violation No. 3
When one speaks in Tongues, he speaks to God—1 Cor. 14:2**
- 4.) If the Interpretation is against an unbeliever—Violation No. 4
Unbelievers should already understand—1 Cor. 14:22**
- 5.) If the Interpretation is King James English—Violation No. 5
The Holy Spirit is not archaic.**
- 6.) If the Interpretation contains no mysteries—Violation No. 6
The speaker in Tongues speaks “mysteries”—1 Cor. 14:2**
- 7.) If Tongues’ speaker is a woman in a crowd—Violation No. 7
Women are not to speak in Tongues in an assembly—
1 Cor. 14:34, 35**

TESTING TONGUES

*The “tongues” performer finally came to an end of his demonstration.
With an air of confidence he cocked his head and challenged,
“Now what are you going to do with that?”
I responded that I could easily prove that his demonstration
of speaking in tongues was false and ungodly.
He looked at me in curiosity and asked “How can you do that?”
The crowd of spectators also wanted to know.*

Yes, this really happened!

By Jack W. Langford

There was a big Pentecostal conference held in downtown Dallas, Texas back in the 1980s. I went with a number of my Christian brethren to pass out literature and to challenge whomever we could with sound Biblical facts. Some of our number had at one time even been in Pentecostalism. I stood outside one doorway and as those attending the conference came out, I passed out our Bible tracts. Soon a crowd of mostly young people attending the conference wanted to know what I was doing there. I began to preach to them from the Scriptures why the modern revival of so-called “speaking in tongues” was false. A good sized audience of young people gathered and listened carefully to what I was saying. They questioned me further.

Then I caught sight of an older man who was obviously disturbed that these young Pentecostals would even give me an audience. This man was well dressed, white haired and obviously a person with an air of importance. He quickly pushed through the ranks of spectators and stepped into the center of the space between me and the crowd surrounding me. He struck a very dramatic pose and launched into a long demonstration of “speaking in tongues.” There was no doubt in anyone’s mind that this man could do it. His performance was very dramatic, to say the least. When he finally stopped, he looked me in the eye and challenged—“Now what are you going to do with that?” He thought that by this demonstration he would put a quick end to this discussion about whether or not “tongues were for us today.”

I actually deliberately waited for a few moments as he made louder and bolder statements. He then looked at me again and reminded everyone of his challenge—“I said, ‘What are you going to do with this demonstration of tongues?’”

I then responded that I believed I could biblically prove that it was both ungodly and false! **“How can you do that?”** he demanded. The curiosity in the crowd was obvious and they listened carefully to what I said—

and I pray that you, the reader, will do the same.

Violation Number One

I then told the audience that it was obvious that no one here understood a single thing this man uttered in his demonstration of “tongues.” And I, most certainly, did not remotely understand any of the gibberish that came out of his mouth. Now, because of situations like this, the apostle Paul repeated before the Corinthian saints a “commandment of the Lord” (1 Cor. 14:37), that no one was to speak in tongues before a group of believers unless there was an “interpreter” present to give the interpretation of the “tongue” (1 Cor. 14:28). I explained that as I had deliberately waited and there was no interpretation given, therefore I know that this was done in disobedience to a clear command from God—and that is ungodly!

The older gentleman quickly gathered his wits and said, “I can take care of that!” He then quickly struck another pose and very dramatically, like a theatrical performer, began to utter lengthy condemnations against me, and warnings to the crowd not to give any heed to anything I had to say since I was sent from the Devil. After a lengthy condemnation, to equal his lengthy demonstration of tongues, he concluded with a mighty “Thus saith the LORD!” Of course all of this was in perfect, archaic, 1611 King James English. He would have made Shakespeare envious. And once again he smiled and brushed his hands asking, “now what are you going to say?” So the crowd looked back at me for an answer.

Violation Number Two

I then said, “Now I know positively this man’s demonstration was both ungodly and unbiblical!” You see, when the apostle Paul was inspired to give the divine revelation concerning the miraculous gifts of the Spirit he very plainly stated that to one brother was given the gift of “tongues” and “to ANOTHER the interpretation of tongues” (1 Cor. 12:10). Paul explained that the Spirit “distributes to each one individually as He wills (v.11). Therefore, if there was no one present who had “the gift of interpretation,” the one who had the gift of tongues “was to keep silent and speak to himself and to God” (1 Cor. 14:28).

Furthermore, this man has demonstrated another violation—

Violation Number Three

This man characterized me as an unbeliever, and a deceiver sent by the Devil. Now it just so happens that the Scripture says “tongues” were “a sign to the unbeliever” (1 Cor. 14:22) because the unbeliever would not need an interpreter in that he would miraculously understand the tongue. So this man’s supposed gift of “tongues” was only a “sign” that he was a phony.

Violation Number Four

Furthermore, in his “interpretation” this man’s “tongue” spoke both to all the crowd listening and to me personally. This is a demonstration of another lie. The Scripture clearly says that one who spoke in the miraculous gift of tongues “does not speak to men, but to God” (1 Cor. 14:2). This man didn’t say anything to God, but everything to us!

Violation Number Five

In addition, the same verse (14:2) says that the one who speaks in “tongues,” “speaks mysteries.” I then stated, “This man spoke no mysteries. He only repeated accusations and warnings that were already given by some of you. He did not tell anyone here sometime new or mysterious.”

Violation Number Six

In finality I said, “I think you all realize that the Holy Spirit of God is not archaic in the miraculous gifts. If God speaks to us today He does not speak in 1611 English.” I am quite sure that those who actually spoke in tongues in the Bible were understood by the unbeliever, and by the church when interpretation was given in the standard language of the day, whether it be Hebrew, Greek or Latin.

After this, the man was obviously embarrassed and quickly turned back through the crowd without saying a word. After further discussion two other younger men came up to me and said, “We also knew that he was just putting on and not really speaking miraculously.” I then said to them, “If you knew that, why didn’t you confront him yourselves since you are Pentecostals as well and profess to honor the Holy Spirit?” They obviously were ashamed as were all the other young people who witnessed this event.

The
“More Excellent Way”
1 Cor. 12:31

<u>The Fruit</u> of the Spirit	vs.	<u>The Miraculous Gifts</u> of the Spirit
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|-------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| 1. Love | | Wisdom |
| 2. Joy | | Knowledge |
| 3. Peace | | Faith |
| 4. Longsuffering | | Healing |
| 5. Kindness | | Miracles |
| 6. Goodness | | Prophecy |
| 7. Faithfulness | | Discernment |
| 8. Gentleness | | Tongues |
| 9. Self Control | | Interpretation |

Galatians 5:22-23

I Cor. 12:8-10

LOVE

“A More Excellent Way”

An outline of I Corinthians 13

I. Seven things that are as nothing without Love—verses 1-3:

- (1) Tongues, (the miraculous gift)
- (2) Prophecy, (the miraculous gift)
- (3) Understanding, (the miraculous gift)
- (4) Knowledge, (the miraculous gift)
- (5) Faith, (the miraculous gift)
- (6) Charity
- (7) Persecution

II. Eight things Love does not do—verses 4(b)-6(a)

- (1) Does not envy
- (2) Does not parade itself
- (3) Is not proud
- (4) Is not rude
- (5) Seeks not its own
- (6) Is not easily provoked
- (7) Does not think evil
- (8) Does not rejoice in iniquity

III. Eight things Love does do—verses 4(a), 6(b)-8

- (1) Suffers long
- (2) Is Kind
- (3) Rejoices in Truth
- (4) Bears all things
- (5) Believes all things
- (6) Hopes all things
- (7) Endures all things
- (8) NEVER FAILS

“TONGUES SHALL CEASE”

1 Corinthians 13:8-13

- Verse 8 “Love [*the fruit of the Spirit*] never fails.
But whether there are prophecies [*mirac. gift of*],
they will fail [*lit. be abolished*];
whether there are tongues [*mirac. gift of*],
they will cease [*lit. to stop, make an end of*];
whether there is knowledge [*mirac. gift of*],
it will vanish away [*lit. be abolished*].
- 9 For we know [*mirac. gift of knowledge*] in part
and we prophesy [*mirac. gift of*] in part.
- 10 But when that which is perfect [Greek, *teleios*—
lit. of full age, mature, complete]
has come, then that which is in part
will be done away [*lit. be abolished*].
- 11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child [*as with tongues*],
I understood as a child [*as with wisdom*],
I thought as a child [*as with knowledge*];
But when I became a man [*when he grew up to manhood*],
I put away childish things [*parallel with v. 10*].
- 12 For now we see through a mirror dimly, but then [*when a man*]
face to face. Now I know [*mirac. gift*] in part, but then
[*when mature*] I shall know just as I am known.
- 13 And now abides faith, hope, love [*fruit of the Spirit*],
these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

Continued use of *TELEIOS*

1. 1 Corinthians 13:10-11, “child – man”
2. 1 Corinthians 14:20-22, “child – man”
3. Isaiah 28:9-11, “as a child weaned – to a man”
4. Hebrews 5:11-14, “child – man”
5. Ephesians 4:11-14, “children – men”
6. Philip. 3:15, Col. 1:28 and 4:12

Concerning the word “Perfect” (KJV) as found in I Corinthians 13:10.

(Notes by Jack Langford)

The Expanded Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words serves as an example of what most all lexicons give—

“TELEIOS, signifies having reached its end (telos), finished, complete, perfect.

It is used (1) of persons, (a) primarily of physical development, then, with ethical import, fully grown, mature, [translated] ‘*men*’, ‘*of full age*’, ‘*fullgrown*’, and ‘*of full age*.’”

The idea of “*maturity*” best expresses the meaning of the word. One can easily see this by the way it is used in the Greek Scriptures. Notice the context in the following cases:

I Cor. 13:10 is immediately followed by verse 11, “When I was a *child*, I spoke as a *child*, I understood as a *child*, I thought as a *child*; but when I became a *man*, I put away *childish* things.” (The contrast is obviously between *childhood* and *maturity*, or *manhood*).

I Cor. 14:20, “Brethren, do not be *children* in understanding; however in malice be *babes*, but in understanding be **mature** (Greek- *teleios*).” (Note verses 21 and 22 in order to see that the saints can be *mature* in understanding the purpose for tongues as a sign for unbelievers).

Ephesians 4:13 & 14, “Till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a **perfect man** (Greek, *teleios*)...that we no longer be *children*...”

Heb. 5:11-14, “...for he is a *babe*. But solid food belongs to those who are of **full age** (Greek, *teleios*).”

Other passages which use the word and demonstrate that the church collectively came to a condition of *maturity* are the following:

Eph. 4:13 (see context above).

Philip. 3:15, “Let us therefore, as many as are **mature** [*teleios*], have this mind...”

Col. 1:28, “...that we may present every man **perfect** or complete [*teleios*] in Christ...”

Col. 4:12, “...that you may stand **perfect** [*teleios*] and complete in all the will of God.”

This condition of the church's collective *maturity* was reached with the completion of the Word of God for this dispensation of time. As of that time (at the end of the first 40 years) of the church's history it came to *full age*, and every succeeding generation of believers could likewise reach spiritual *maturity*, by reading the revelation of God that was completed. Much like Israel of old, who needed special miraculous support for its first 40 years, so did the church for its first 40 years. Once the Law of Moses was complete and Israel crossed over Jordan, the miraculous supports ended. Likewise, once the instructions for the body of Christ was complete and the physical Temple was destroyed, the miraculous supports ended.

The Cessation of the Miraculous

Demonstrated

James 5:14-15 It is generally believed that the epistle of James was one of the first letters written in the New Testament. Note what James says about miraculous healing—

“Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.”

—*In Contrast*—

1 Timothy 5:23 It is generally understood that 1st and 2nd Timothy were the last books written to the “church which is Christ’s body.” Note what Paul now says—

“No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach’s sake and your frequent infirmities.”

2 Timothy 4:20 “. . . but Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick.”

2 Corinthians 4:16 “Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.”

2 Corinthians 5:4 “For we who are in this tent [i.e., the physical body] groan”

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 “And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecution, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

Colossians 4:14 Paul said, “Luke the beloved physician [is with me].”

Philippians 2:25-30 “. . . Epaphroditus . . . was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. For indeed he was sick almost unto death; but God had mercy on him . . . because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life”

Romans 8:11, 23 “. . . Christ . . . will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit Who dwells in you even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.