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# That They all May Be One



John 17:21

## Chapter six The Holy Spirit and Tongues

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## Chapter Six

# The Holy Spirit and Tongues

The modern day tongues movement is very popular. One of the reasons it is popular is because people are looking for deeper meaning in life. Many look for this deeper meaning in the modern tongues movement. There are other people who simply enjoy the thrill and excitement of the movement. Others are looking for spiritual maturity and strength, and some are involved because their friends or family are involved. These reasons and others make the modern tongues movement very popular.

The modern tongues movement is another issue that divides religious people. It is a subject that we must address in our endeavor to restore New Testament Christianity. We want to identify a clear Bible basis where all who desire can stand together upon the common ground of God's word. Our aim is to heal the division that Satan has created.

You might be surprised to learn that our restoration efforts do not include the modern tongues movement. In this chapter we will look at the many reasons why we do not participate in the modern movement.

## Two Common Mistakes

Two mistakes are common in the modern tongues movement. First, scriptures are abused and mishandled, and second, emotions are allowed to take the lead. The Bible warns us about both of these mistakes. Peter warned us that people would , *"...twist [Paul's writings] to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures"* (II Peter 3:16). In Proverbs 28:26 we are warned that, *"He who trusts in his own heart is a fool."*

## But I Know What I Felt

It is difficult for people who get caught up in the modern tongues movement to deal with the feelings that they have experienced. Many people have had exhilarating experiences in the modern tongues movement. There can be no question about whether or not they have had an uplifting experience. The question is, was the Holy Spirit truly the source of their experience, or was it something else?

You might be surprised to learn that people outside of Christianity also claim to speak in tongues. Many of the world's religions throughout history have claimed the ability to speak in tongues, even before the time of Christ. The modern practice of tongues is nothing unique in the world wide religious community.

The earliest account of tongues is that of Wen-Amon in Byblos in 1100 BC. Tongues are found in Hindu writings as early as 1000 BC. Plato (429-347 BC) mentions tongues in three different writings, the Phaedrus, Ion, and Tunaeus. Virgil (70-19 BC) mentions the practice of tongues among the Sibylline priestesses on the isle of Delos. The practice of speaking in tongues is found in connection with the ancient Apollo cult, the Dionysus mystery cult, the god Oro, the Shango cult of Trinidad, and many, many others.

Many non-Christians have experienced speaking in tongues. They are also certain that their experience is proof that they have been blessed with a gift from their god, or their gods. We don't deny that they have had an exhilarating experience, but we do deny that anything miraculous has happened.

Many who get caught up in the modern tongues movement also think that their emotional experience is proof. They forget that feelings are not our guide. God warned, *"He who trusts in his own heart is a fool"* (Proverbs 28:26). The fact that people have exhilarating experiences in the modern tongues movement, or in pagan religions, does not prove a thing. We are looking for a solid book, chapter, and verse Bible foundation.

Many today have been misled by the excitement of the modern

tongues movement. The joy that they feel is their proof that they are right. They feel so good that they can't imagine that they might be wrong. This is likely how those condemned in Matthew 7:22,23 felt, too. Jesus said, *"Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord,' have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in your name?" And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"* Jesus teaches us that Christianity is more than just feeling right. He teaches us to love the Lord, *"...with all your mind"* (Matt. 22:37). He teaches us that, *"...if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch"* (Matthew 15:14).

Please don't misunderstand us, we believe that Christianity involves the emotions of man. We don't want to turn Christianity into a stoic religion. We believe that Christians should be the happiest people in the world. Our point is that emotions do not prove we are right. Solomon warned us that, *"There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death"* (Proverbs 14:12). Jesus said, *"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"* (John 8:32). Belief must be based on a solid book, chapter, and verse foundation. First we come to know the truth, and then we rejoice.

## The Gift of Tongues Has Turned Many lives Around

It is absolutely true that some people have cleaned up their lives because of their involvement in the modern tongues movement. Most people in the modern movement believe in good old-fashion Bible morals, and this is good. But, just because someone would give up drugs, adultery, or other sins due to their involvement in the modern day tongues movement, does not prove that it is right.

Consider a similar example in Romans 10:1-3, Paul wrote, *"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and*

*seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.*" Notice first that Israel was lost and Paul desired that they might be saved. Even though they were lost, their religious beliefs contained some of the strictest moral codes known to man. Anyone who follows the Ten Commandments and the rest of the Old Testament, as the Jews did, would truly live a life of exemplary morals, but they would also be lost just as Israel was lost. There is more to Christianity than just being moral.

Consider also the fact that many non-Christian religions change people for the better. Some of the world's religions embrace strict moral standards. If an immoral person truly began to follow some of the non-Christian religions, his life would change dramatically, but he would still be lost, because there is more to getting to heaven than just living a good moral life. Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me"* (John 14:6).

Likewise, just the fact that lives are turned around in the name of Christ, does not prove that people are acceptable to God. Consider the people of Matthew 7:22,23, Jesus said, *"Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"* These people had been very active in the name of the Lord, but they learned too late that there is more to being a Christian than just religious activities.

Revelation 3:1 records a similar case, *"And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: 'I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.'"* The church in Sardis had a great reputation among men, but God's judgment was completely opposite. This teaches us that just because we can point to some good things that a religious group has accomplished, that does not prove that they are acceptable to God. What we need is a solid book, chapter, and verse Bible foundation.

## What Is Our Need?

Some people in the modern tongues movement claim that the Bible is incomplete. Others claim that the Bible is a puzzle that can't be solved without the gift of the Holy Spirit. These are serious claims and we must ask, is the Bible incomplete? Is it a puzzle that man cannot understand without the gift of the Holy Spirit? Let's look at how the Bible answers these questions.

Is the Bible incomplete?

Paul taught that the Scriptures give man everything man needs. Paul wrote, *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work"* (II Timothy 3:16,17). The Scriptures make us complete and thoroughly equipped for every good work. In other words, the Bible is complete; it's perfect.

Jude said that the faith was, *"...once for all delivered to the saints,"* (Jude 3). According to Jude, the faith was fully delivered nearly 2000 years ago. The Bible is complete.

Peter taught that God, *"...has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness..."* (II Peter 1:3). Nearly 2000 years ago, all things that pertain to life and godliness were given to man. Obviously, the Bible is perfect, it's complete. If there is a need for further revelation, then the Scriptures are not complete. This would make the Bible false because the Bible clearly states that it is complete.

Next, is the Bible a puzzle that man cannot solve without the gift of the Holy Spirit?

Paul said that we could understand the mysteries of Christ by reading the Scriptures. Paul wrote, *"...He [God] made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)"* (Ephesians 3:3,4). Paul said that a person can understand the mystery of Christ by reading the Scriptures.

Later Paul writes that we can understand how to behave ourselves by

reading the Scriptures. He wrote, *“But if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God,”* (I Timothy 3:15). Paul believed that his letters were understandable.

Luke also believed that the things he wrote could be understood. He wrote, *“Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus”* (Luke 1:1-3). Luke continued to write for Theophilus in the book of Acts (Acts 1:1).

John also believed that the things he wrote could be understood. He wrote, *“And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name,”* (John 20:30,31).

The Bible writers clearly believed that their writings could be understood. They never taught that the gift of the Holy Spirit was first required in order to understand their writings. The teaching of many in the modern tongues movement is contrary to the Bible. We cannot build a basis for unity upon such mishandling of the Scriptures.

## The Problem of Variations

The modern tongues movement does not have a solid Bible basis. For example, there are serious doctrinal variations among those who claim to be speaking by the Spirit. Some teach that women can't be preachers, while others teach that women can be preachers. Some teach that water baptism is essential, while others teach that it is not essential. We wonder why these major differences exist. If these people are all speaking by the Holy Spirit, then why don't they speak the same things? The Bible teaches us that *“God is not the author of*

*confusion*" ( I Corinthians 14:33). It teaches us that God desires us to *"...be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment"* ( I Corinthians 1:10). Obviously, something is wrong with the modern tongues movement.

The modern movement actually increases division and confusion by teaching people to follow the "leading of the Spirit," even if it leads in contrary directions. This, of course, is counterproductive. Our goal is to cut through confusion and find a solid Bible basis for unity. Jesus prayed that we, *"...all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us"* (John 17:21). We propose going back to the Bible and building on a solid book, chapter, and verse foundation. We believe that this will lead us to common ground where the wounds of division can begin to heal.

## Extra Power

Some in the modern tongues movement further ignore the Bible by teaching people that they can receive extra power by speaking in tongues. This extra power is suppose to enable its possessor to combat sin with greater success. Sadly, people have been misled into thinking that they will easily rise to new levels of spiritual maturity and strength if they get the gift of tongues.

The Bible does not teach that those who speak in tongues become stronger Christians. Rather, the Bible records for us the problems that the Corinthians suffered, even though they had the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Paul wrote, *"It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles,"* (I Corinthians 5:1). Their problems were not prevented or even lessened by possessing the gifts. I Corinthians 6:6; 7:10; 8:12; 10:14 and 11:21 reveal more about the problems of the Corinthians.

The apostle Peter was still subject to sin even after he had had many miraculous experiences. In one case Paul opposed Peter to his face.



Paul tells us about the incident, “*Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed*” (Galatians 2:11). The hope of receiving extra power through tongues and thus becoming a superior Christian is a false hope. It is not a Bible teaching.

This hope of gaining extra power through speaking in tongues is also a dangerous teaching. It causes many to neglect their studies and to rely upon feelings as their guide. Some people trust their feelings even when their feelings are exactly opposite of what the Bible teaches. Paul warned us about departing from the Bible when he wrote, “*...if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed*” (Galatians 1:9).

This teaching of gaining extra power also gives people a false sense of security. In the first century, having the gift of tongues was not a short cut to spiritual security. Security comes through the study (John 8:32) and application (Hebrews 5:14) of God’s Word. Security comes by putting on the “whole armor of God” (Ephesians 6:10-17). There are no magical shortcuts. Spiritual security, strength, and maturity are developed through constant attention to study and self discipline. The emotionalism of the modern tongues movement actually keeps people from gaining the strength and maturity they desire.

## The Apostle’s Hands

The modern movement again ignores the Bible by teaching its followers to *pray through* for the gift of tongues. The fact that not once in the Bible is a Christian ever told to *pray through* for any gift of the Holy Spirit is ignored. The leaders of the modern movement, claiming to be led by the Holy Spirit, ignore this fact and keep on encouraging their people to *pray through* for the gift of tongues.

These modern leaders also ignore the fact that in the first century the gift of the Holy Spirit was imparted through the laying on of the apostle’s hands. Acts 8:14-18 shows this, “*Now when the apostles who were at*

*Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money."*

Notice that the apostles personally traveled to this city to impart the gift, they did not teach Christians to *pray through* for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Simon, one of the local people, easily understood that only the apostles could impart the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands.

Later in Acts 19:6 we read of another account, *"And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied."*

In Romans 1:11 we read, *"For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established."* Why didn't Paul just tell them to *pray through*? The reason he did not tell them to *pray through* was because Christianity knows nothing about *praying*

## God's Plan of Salvation

Hear the Gospel: Romans 10:14-17

Believe: John 3:16; Hebrews 11:6

Repent: Luke 13:3, Acts 17:30,31

Confess: Romans 10:9,10; Matthew 10:32,33

Be united with Christ in baptism: Romans 6:3-5

None of the above steps save in and of themselves. It is the grace of God that appointed these as steps leading to the saving blood of Jesus. To get to the saving blood each step must be taken just as it is presented in the Bible. These steps only have value because God's grace has so granted. Without God's grace these steps would be worthless. Have you followed these steps to the saving blood of Jesus?

*through* to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

In II Tim. 1:6 Paul wrote, *“Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.”*

Repeatedly, the Bible tells us that the gifts were imparted through the laying on of the apostles hands. The modern movement ignores these direct scriptures and keeps on encouraging its members to *pray through*.

## The Case of Cornelius

Another Bible passage that the modern movement mishandles is Acts 10. This is the account of Cornelius, a gentile, receiving the Holy Spirit in the presence of Peter without the laying on of hands. However, in this passage there is no *praying through*. In fact, the Holy Spirit was upon Cornelius and his friends without any praying at all. They had no idea that they were about to receive the Holy Spirit. The Bible records that, *“While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word,”* (Acts 10:44-48).

The purpose of this event is generally overlooked by those in the modern tongues movement. The purpose was to show the Jews that the gentiles were included in Christianity. This was a difficult idea for the Jews to understand. The Old Testament system had not included the gentiles like the New Testament. The Old Testament did not set out to evangelize the world. It made some limited provisions for gentile converts, but it did not have a “Great Commission” directing the Jews to go into all the world and convert the gentiles. The Jews were slow to accept the gentiles so God provided a sign to the Jews through Cornelius. It was only after this event with Cornelius that the Jews truly began to understand the scope of the Gospel. Luke writes, *“When they [the Jews] heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, ‘Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life,’”* (Acts 11:18).

Unfortunately, many people have been misled to ignore the context of Cornelius’ story. Many good and sincere people have spent hour

after hour *praying through* for the gift of tongues only to be disappointed. Many are left feeling guilty as though they are somehow inferior to others who claim to have the gift of tongues. This has even caused some people to faked speaking in tongues to avoid the stigma of attached to not receiving the gift.

## Every Christian Speaking In Tongues?

The Bible is again ignored by some in the modern movement when they teach that every Christian is suppose to speak in tongues. There are others in the modern movement who do not believe that every Christian should to speak in tongues. This is one of those variations that causes us to question the validity of the modern movement. If they are all being led by the same Holy Spirit, then why this disagreement about who is suppose to be speaking in tongues? Obviously, someone in the movement is wrong.

Those groups that teach that every Christian is to speak in tongues ignore the direct teachings of Paul. He emphasized the fact that not all Christians speak in tongues. He wrote, *“Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?”* (1 Corinthians 12:29,30). The answer to each of these questions is *NO!* Paul directly teaches that all Christians do not speak in tongues. In fact, 1 Corinthians 12:4-30 is written to show that every one does not have the same gift. Yet, many modern day supporters of the tongues movement ignore nearly an entire chapter of Scripture and teach that every Christian is to speak in tongues. A few even teach that a person is not really a Christian until he speaks in tongues.

## Acts 1:15

Some members of the modern movement mishandle Acts chapter one and two by claiming that the people in Acts 2:1 are all the same people mentioned in Acts 1:15. Their first mistake is that they overlook the fact that different days are under consideration. Acts 2:1 says, *"When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place."* This is a different day from the one mentioned in Acts 1:15.

Further more, the last group in focus in Acts 1 is not the 120 of Acts 1:15 but specifically the apostles. Acts 1:26 says, *"And they cast their*

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*lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles.*" The antecedent of "they" in Acts 2:1 is the "apostles" in Acts 1:26. By ignoring the context, some have concluded that all 120 spoke in tongues on the day of Pentecost. Then, from that position the illogical jump is made that all Christians for all time should speak in tongues.

Even if we allow that all 120 people spoke in tongues, it still does not prove that tongues were to last until the end of time. The actual number of people who spoke in tongues during the first century does not prove anything about the modern practice. (If numbers prove the modern practice, then why don't these modern groups insist on water baptism too? The Bible says that 3000 were baptized in Acts 2:41)

## Mark 16:17,18

Mark 16:17,18 is a favorite of many in the modern movement. Mark wrote, *"And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."* These two verses are held up as proof that miracles are to be practiced until the end of time.

Look at the text carefully. Does it say that miracles will be practiced until the end of time? If so, then apparently John did not understand the perpetual nature of miracles because he made a record of miracles for later generations. John wrote, *"And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name"* (John 20:30,31).

The signs do follow us today wherever the Gospel is preached. While the miracles are not being performed today, the recorded miracles testify even to this day that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God. We do not have to have miracles performed in the present for miracles to be a

part of our faith. Christ made this point when He was telling about the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16. Let's begin at verse 27, *"Then he [the rich man] said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'"* We learn here that God's inspired word continues to speak throughout time. Once it has been confirmed, God is not obligated to reconfirm His word for each new generation. Just as the signs Moses performed continued to follow the Jews and provide sufficient proof for hundreds of years after Moses was gone, so likewise it is for us concerning the New Testament miracles. The miracles follow us in the Gospel we preach and are sufficient proof for all time to come.

## Tongues Will Cease

Nearly 2000 years ago Paul was teaching people that tongues were temporary. He wrote, *"...But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away"* (I Corinthians 13:8-11).

Paul's basic point is that the gifts are temporary. The question for us is, when will tongues cease? Paul answers that question, *"But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away."* Tongues were intended to last only until the "perfect" arrived.

Our next question, of course, is, what does Paul have in view as that which is perfect? The context clearly answers this question. In verse 9 Paul said, *"For we know in part and we prophesy in part."* In this text

Paul refers to their imperfect, or incomplete, knowledge. Therefore, the “*perfect*” that Paul has in view is complete knowledge and prophesy. Paul is simply telling them that when the knowledge and prophesy that God intended to reveal is complete, then the gifts would cease.

Some people ignore the context and insist that only heaven, or the second coming of Christ, can be what Paul had in view as “*that which is perfect*.” They ignore the context and insert their own ideas into the text in an attempt to defend the modern practice tongues. Further more, they focus in on a very narrow meaning of the word “perfect” and then claim that it could only describe heaven. They forget that “perfect” also means: excellent, complete, exactly fitting the need, correct, pure, and having all parts present. The word “perfect” superbly describes the complete revelation of knowledge and prophecy that we have in the Bible today. When we understand the word “perfect” in this way we are also respecting the context of I Corinthians 13:8-10.

## I Corinthians 13:8 and Knowledge

Some people ignore the context of I Corinthians 13:8 where Paul refers to the special gift of knowledge. They claim that the knowledge of this text is secular knowledge such as medical, computer, and scientific knowledge. They overlook the fact that Paul is referring to the gift of prophecies (I Cor. 12:10) and the gift of tongues (I Cor 12:10) and the gift of knowledge (I Cor. 12:8). They ignore the context entirely and twist the text to support their own desires.

If they were consistent with their use of the word *knowledge* then they would have to conclude that at Jesus’ return God will no longer know everything because “knowledge” will vanish away. Likewise , we will also become ignorant at Christ’s return because our “knowledge” will vanish. If we accept their misuse of the word knowledge then all sorts of foolishness results. But, if we respect the context and understand that Paul is referring to the gift of knowledge given by the Holy Spirit, then it



all begins to make sense again.

## Face to Face

I Corinthians 13:12 has also been taken out of context and used to defend the modern tongues movement. In this verse Paul writes, *“For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.”* Twice Paul ties this verses into the context. Paul writes, *“For now we see...dimly”* and *“Now I know in part.”* This is the same thing that Paul was talking about in verse 9 when he wrote, *“For we know in part and we prophesy in part.”* Paul has not changed topics. He is still referring to the incomplete revelation of their day. They did not yet have the complete Bible to sit before and study as we do today.

Some will argue that the phrase *“face to face”* can only be understood as referring to a time when we are in heaven with God. This argument ignores other Bible usages of the phrase *“face to face.”* Consider the following references.

Genesis 32:30, *“So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: ‘For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.’”*

Numbers 14:14, *“...They have heard that You, Lord, are among these people; that You, Lord, are seen face to face and your cloud stands above them.”*

Deuteronomy 5:2-4, *“The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, those who are here today, all of us who are alive. The Lord talked with you face to face on the mountain from the midst of the fire.”*

Ezekiel 20:35,36, *“And I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will plead My case with you face to face. Just as I pleaded My case with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will plead My case with you,” says the Lord God.”*

We easily understand that these verses do not use the phrase *“face to face”* in a literal sense, but rather a figurative sense. We know this because in Exodus 33:20 God says, *“You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.”*

In I Corinthians 13:12 the phrase is not restricted to meaning only in heaven. We can see God “face to face” today in the same sense that the Jews in the Old Testament days saw God “face to face.”

## Know As I Am Known

In I Corinthians 13:12 Paul wrote, “...*Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.*” Some people take Paul’s words here in the strictest literal sense and claim that such a state of knowing can only be achieved in heaven. This attempt to defend the modern practice of tongues, unwittingly makes men equal with God. If Paul’s words are taken in the strictest literal sense, then when we get to heaven we will know everything that God knows, just as surely as He knows every thing there is to know about us.

I do not believe that Paul is teaching that Christians will become omniscient in heaven. I believe that Paul is saying that when the revelation of God is complete, then we will know everything that we need to know. We will have complete access to that revelation, just as God has complete access to us. Understanding Paul in this way fits the context of I Corinthians 13:12, and also avoids the problem of making man God’s equal.

## Now Abide Faith, Hope, and Love

A common defense of the modern movement is to say that tongues will last until the perfect comes, and the perfect is heaven. In heaven tongues will stop, but faith, hope, and love will continue on into eternity. This explanation is in conflict with other Bible verses.

For example, in Romans 8:24,25 Paul wrote, “*For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly*

*wait for it with perseverance.*” Our Christian hope ends upon our victorious entrance into heaven. It does not continue on into eternity.

The faith we exercise in the course of this life will not be carried on into eternity. In this life we, *“walk by faith, not by sight”* (II Corinthians 5:7), but in heaven we will see. In this life our faith, *“...is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”* (Hebrews 11:1), but in heaven we will see.

Paul saw a day coming, long before the end of time, when Christians would no longer speak in tongues, but they would continue on in faith, hope, and love.

## Do not forbid to speak in tongues

Some think that they find support for modern day tongues in I Corinthians 14:39. In this verse Paul writes, *“...and do not forbid to speak with tongues.”* In their zeal to support the modern day movement, they don’t stop to consider the inconsistency that they create. Paul said tongues would cease, but now they have Paul saying that tongues will not cease. Is Paul contradicting himself and now saying that tongues will last until the end of time? No, of course not. Paul is simply looking ahead and preventing an overreaction against tongues. Paul has told them that the gift of tongues is not the greatest gift, he has told them to do things decently and in order, and he now anticipates that some may decide that it would be best to forbid tongues completely.

Paul does not contradict himself in the least. As long as God chose to give man the gift of tongues, man was not to suppress the gift. Paul is saying that it is not man’s place to end the gift of tongues. It is God’s place. God would bring tongues to an end when He completed His revelation of knowledge and prophecy, which He did sometime before the end of the first century.

## Do Not Quench the Spirit

Some think that they find support for the modern tongues movement in I Thessalonians 5:19 where Paul writes, “*Do not quench the Spirit.*” They interpret this to be saying, “Do not stop talking in tongues until the end of time.” Quite a difference, isn’t it? Again this makes Paul contradict himself, he tells the Corinthians that tongues would cease and then tells the Thessalonians that tongues would not cease.

This interpretation of I Thessalonians 5:19 is self serving. They take a text that is general in nature and twist it down to a very narrow point. They make it say something specific that it does not say. It is this kind of mishandling of the Scriptures that has given religion a bad name. This is one of the reasons why unbelievers scoff at the Bible and claim that it teaches anything that one wants it to teach. In our effort to restore New Testament Christianity, we cannot stoop to such irresponsible handling of the Scriptures.

When God ended tongues, the Spirit was not quenched or harmed in any way whatsoever. If ending tongues somehow hinders the Spirit, then those who believe that tongues will end at the end of time must also believe that the Spirit will somehow be hindered at the end of time. We totally reject this idea. The Spirit will not suffer any harm at the end of time, nor did the Holy Spirit suffer any harm when tongues ceased sometime before the end of the first century.

“*Do not quench the Spirit*” does not mean “Do not stop talking in tongues until the end of time.” Paul is telling Christians not to become indifferent in fighting the good fight. He is reminding us that we are to be a special people, zealous for good works (Titus 2:15). That is what we have been redeemed for, that is the direction the Spirit leads us.

## Tongues of Angels

Some think that they have found a defense for their modern practice of tongues by claiming that they are speaking the tongues of angels, not of men. This is why an earthly language cannot be identified, because they are not speaking any earthly language than man could recognize. Their proof text is I Corinthians 13:1, *"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal."* From this verse they claim that angels have their own special language. Then they claim that this is the language that they are speaking in the practice of tongues.

There are, of course, several problems with this approach. First, if there is such a language of angels, the mere existence of such a language does not prove the modern practice to be correct.

Next, Paul told us to, *"Test, all things"* (I Thessalonians 5:21). John warned us, *"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world"* (I John 4:1). When people in the modern movement claim to be speaking an unearthly language, they make it impossible for us to obey God's instructions in I Thessalonians 5:21 and in I John 4:1. They make God the author of confusion. On one hand He tells us to *"test all things"* and then He gives us something that we can't test to determine whether or not it is really a language.

This defense of modern tongues gets more complicated. When Paul was caught up into paradise, he heard words *"...which it is not lawful for a man to utter"* (II Corinthians 12:4). If what Paul heard was the special language of angels, then that language cannot be the language of the modern tongues movement, because it is not lawful for a man to utter it.

If we will use Bible words in Bible ways, then the Bible clearly defines tongues. The Bible says, *"And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. They were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, 'Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?'"* Acts 2:6-8

Later in Acts we also read, *"While Peter was still speaking these*

*words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God..." Acts 10:44-46.*

According to the Bible's description, the gift of tongues was the ability to speak a language that one had not studied. It was a language that other people could understand. It was not a language unknown on earth. Modern man has no right to reject the Bible's definition and then create his own definition, one that is custom-built to justify their modern day practice. But even this attempt of modern man fails. Jesus described tongues when He said that tongues would be a sign (Mark 16:17). If tongues are nothing more than unintelligible sounds, then how are they a sign? (See I Corinthians 14:8-11)

## You Just Have to Take A Leap of Faith

This is one of the more irresponsible things to come out of the modern tongues movement. The Bible does not encourage people to just take a leap of faith. The Bible writers very carefully set out to provide a solid foundation for faith. John wrote, *"And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God"* (John 20:30,31). Peter tells his readers, *"For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you're the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty"* (II Peter 1:16). Paul told Timothy to, *"...give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine"* (I Timothy 4:13). True Christianity does not side-step man's mind. True Christianity builds upon the solid book, chapter and verse foundation of the Scriptures. True Christians *"Test all things"* and they *"hold fast what is good"* (I Thessalonians 5:21).

## Conclusion

Unfortunately, there is not enough room in this publication to address every argument and question relevant to the modern tongues movement. It is my hope that this chapter has given you enough information to see that the modern tongues movement does not have the solid Bible basis necessary to heal the wounds of division that exist today. In fact, the modern movement actually adds to the division and confusion by encouraging people to follow the “leading of the spirit,” even when it leads in contrary directions and contradicts the Bible. We

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